

**Review of Australian and
New Zealand support to
The University of the South Pacific
2010–2012**

Draft version 3.1

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This report has been prepared by Professor Kate Ashcroft and Professor Joan Cooper under management of the AusAID Education Resource Facility

Amendment history

Version no.	Date	Brief description of change	Author
1	26/10/2010	First draft	Kate Ashcroft
1.1	07/11/2012	Quality assurance	Adeola Capel & Alex Usher
2	18/11/12	Made the changes throughout at the request of reviewers as follows:	Kate Ashcroft
		The structure of the report	
		Style from first person to impersonal	
		Added tables showing links between aid, targets and outcomes	
		Added more material to Executive Summary and Introduction	
		Included more about the methodology up front	
		Moved information on Projects to an annex	
		Made links to ToR, AusAID and NZ MFAT objectives more explicit	
		Made the links between inputs, outcome and processes and AusAID and NZ MFAT Partnership targets more explicit	
		Taken out some text from Background. Have included a brief summary of the main foci of the outcomes and indicators	
		Added more evidence and examples to judgments throughout. Made clear that the ANZ has affected inputs and processes and outcomes and that this last especially can only be inferred.	
		Added more qualitative data and data tables	
		Added recommendation that more focused indicators might help.	
		Put Strategic Plan foci and outcomes in an annex	
3	1/1/13	Make changes as a result of the comments from the review committee as follows:	Kate Ashcroft
		More discussion on why specific recommendations are made, the alternatives considered, the links between the analysis of the area of support and the recommendations made	

		and prioritising of the recommendations.	
		More discussion on possible alternatives modalities of funding and of the links between the recommended area of support	
		Discussion in methodology mitigation of possibility that stakeholders as beneficiaries of Australian and New Zealand support may impede their candour in providing feedback to the team.	
		More discussion of how the success of A/NZ assistance could be measured.	
		More discussion with regard to moving from core funding to funding systems on a per EFT or a per student basis.	
		More discussion of implications of modifying USP's three-year contract policy; reducing inequities between facilities in Suva and regional campuses; and addressing gender and disabilities issues.	
		Specific changes to improve accuracy as requested by USP.	
		More illustrative examples, detailed explanation, and corrections to improve accuracy as requested by AusAID.	
		More discussion of emerging issues in the context for funding	
3.1	8/1/13	Substantive edit of final draft.	Petronella Nicholson

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Acronyms

AARNET	Australia's Academic and Research Network
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANU	Australian National University
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
CAPEX	Capital expenditure
CEDT	Centre for Educational Development and Technology
CELT	Centre for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching
CFDL	Centre for Flexible and Distance Learning
CFS	College of Foundation Studies
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFL	Distance and flexible learning
DFLSC	Distance and Flexible Learning Support Centre
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
EFTS	Equivalent full-time students
ESL	English as a second language
EU	European Union
FALE	Faculty of Arts, Law and Education
FBE	Faculty of Business and Economics
FNU	Fiji National University
FSTE	Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment
GMES	Governance and Management Enhancement and Strengthening Project
HR	Human resources
HLC	High level consultation
HRM	Human resource management
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IoE	Institute of Education
IT	Information technology
ITS	Information Technology Services
KPI	Key performance indicator
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
Moodle	An open-source, community-based tool for learning
NGO	Non-government organisation
NZ	New Zealand
NZ MFAT	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
NZUAAU	New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit
OCAC	Oceanic Centre for Arts and Culture
PACE-CD	Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development
PACLI	Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute
PIAS-DG	Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance
PICPA	The Pacific Islands Centre for Public Administration
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PLP	Pacific Leadership Program

PSA	Postgraduate Students Association
PSO	Public Service Office
PVC	Pro Vice-Chancellor
REACT	Remote Education and Conferencing Tool
SAFT	School of Agriculture and Food Technology
SGDS	School of Governance and Development Studies
SLMD:	School of Land Management and Development
SMT	Senior management team
SPBEA	Secretariat for the Pacific Board of Educational Assessment
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPOMS	Strategic Plan Online Management System
STAR	Strategic Total Academic Review
STHM	School of Tourism and Hospitality Management
ToR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
UGC	University Grants Committee
USP	University of the South Pacific
USPNet	USP's Wide Area Network
USPSA	University of the South Pacific Student Association
VC	Vice-Chancellor
WB	World Bank

1 Executive summary

The University of the South Pacific (USP) is a key contributor to the development of South Pacific nations. USP serves the regional needs of its 12 member countries through education and training, research and consultancy services, and technical expertise. Its steady supply of graduates has contributed to meeting the human resource development needs of the region for 44 years.

Australia and New Zealand have supported USP since its establishment in 1968. The current Australia–University of the South Pacific Partnership Framework 2010–2012 provides support of A\$25.15 million (approximately F\$46.89 million). The New Zealand–USP Strategic Partnership 2010–2012 amounts to around NZ\$14.8 million (F\$21.78 million) over three years.

The two partnerships have provision for an independent review at the end of the period covered. This report reviews both partnership frameworks to evaluate the impact and outcomes of Australian and New Zealand (A/NZ) support and provides recommendations.

Two consultants undertook the review using a range of evaluation methods including desk review, field visits and stakeholder consultations, between September and October 2012.

1.1 Key findings

Australia and New Zealand have been crucial partners in assisting USP to achieve its strategic goals. There appears to have been a positive impact from the partnerships in:

- learning environment for students
- relationships with the region
- relevance to members
- quality and relevance of programs
- inclusivity, especially through improved distance and flexible learning facilities
- some improvement in students graduating with a better range of relevant skills.

USP appears to be a well-run institution, above average for universities in a development context. It has fully or mostly implemented the majority of the 2008 recommendations from the joint audit by the Australian Universities Quality Agency and the NZ Universities Academic Audit Unit. Finances have improved and USP is now operating within its budget. The funding mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation by Australia and NZ work well.

If USP continues to develop at its present rate, it is a realistic objective for it to become an 'excellent' university in many of its activities and to be a more significant contributor to the development of the Pacific region. USP needs time to embed the reforms commenced in the review period, and it would be a different and diminished institution without A/NZ's substantial aid.

1.1.1 Partnership objectives

The objectives of the A/NZ partnerships are designed to be compatible with USP, and almost every objective is explicitly linked with a priority area of the University's Strategic Plan. This makes the partnerships' objectives clear and achievable.

The success of A/NZ's assistance can be measured through the success of USP meeting its goals in the Strategic Plan. Such measurement, however, requires USP to have a robust monitoring and evaluation and performance measurement system. While these systems have progressed, they still require further development.

USP has achieved 80% of its key performance indicators in the 2010–2012 Strategic Plan and the remaining 20% are expected to be completed by the end of 2012. A/NZ funds are reported to have greatly assisted USP in the implementation of its Strategic Plan.

USP has achieved, or is close to achieving, the relevant performance targets in the Australian and New Zealand partnership frameworks in the following priority areas:

- governance
- institutional capacity, management and financial health
- teaching and learning
- research, graduate affairs and innovation
- regional focus.

In student support, USP has made progress towards its performance targets but student satisfaction with information technology services is not at the target level. While A/NZ funding has helped USP initiatives in ICT connectivity, further ICT resources are needed in regional campuses.

The regional campuses were competently run but reliant on having a very capable director. They need capital and human resources investment to provide a quality higher education experience.

USP's capacity to meet its targets is affected by a number of issues including poor human resources management, a need for stronger senior and middle management, and ICT connectivity and resources.

USP is perceived by most of the regional partners interviewed as being responsive to the needs of its member countries. It works closely with a range of regional partners.

1.1.2 Modality

Previously, A/NZ support to USP was through memoranda of understanding. The move to partnership arrangements based on USP's strategic objectives seems to have had an almost entirely positive impact. The A/NZ partnerships provide flexibility to USP in how it uses the core funding. The link to partnership agreements is an effective mechanism to ensure that the major priorities of each donor and USP's own commitment to quality teaching, learning, research and regional service are addressed.

Both aid agencies adequately monitor that their funding is leading to improvement. Australia's approach has the advantage that it achieves a higher profile for its funding and it can actively support progress towards strategic goals through the reports of the incentive funding. New Zealand can also target the achievement of the USP Strategic Plan and manage its direct budgetary support through a relatively smaller staff establishment.

Program-based approaches allow the integration of the effort of more than one donor contribution, and match good change management principles. A/NZ's approach to USP funding fits this model. Therefore, this review does not suggest major changes in modality.

At USP's stage of development, it is appropriate for the partnerships to retain some input and process targets as these still represent barriers to student learning, regional service and research outcomes. However, as the situation has improved over the review period, it may be time for A/NZ to move towards more outcome and output targets.

1.1.3 Level, timing and duration of funding

The levels of funding provided under each of the partnerships were appropriate. At a time when governments were unable to increase their units of funding to USP in real terms, it was important that USP received sufficient funding to support its strategic goals.

The timing of contributions to USP worked well. The volume of funds was known in advance so planning was facilitated. The funds came in at periods that suited the financial and

planning cycle. The three-year period covered by the partnerships was aligned with the USP Strategic Plan and this duration of funding was appropriate.

1.1.4 Management arrangements

The partnership agreements were designed to fit with USP's strategic objectives and the reports fitted with a sensible reporting schedule, so there was little additional accountability burden. The reporting mechanisms and engagement have been effective in managing the partnerships.

USP's partnerships with Australia and New Zealand work well. The Vice-Chancellor's relationships with staff in the Posts and in Australia and NZ are very good. There is also a good relationship between AusAID and the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

1.1.5 Projects supported

The AusAID-funded research projects were well targeted. Some projects have already shown a positive impact but more emphasis is needed in developing international development objectives, which are critical to long-term sustainability. Generally, the projects were aligned with AusAID's regional strategy and bilateral Partnerships for Development. Project funding raises AusAID's profile, promotes its agenda and supports USP in initiatives such as the climate change project, that have the potential to make a real impact in the region.

1.1.6 Influencing factors for forward support

A number of factors will influence forward support, including USP's new Strategic Plan, AusAID's regional tertiary strategy, member country funding, and the development of national universities in some member countries. In terms of AusAID's tertiary strategy, USP could play a significant role in meeting and overcoming the challenges listed in the strategy. USP's new Strategic Plan focuses on the region, so A/NZ aid would help the campuses better serve its students around the region.

If A/NZ funding ceased, USP would have to reduce its range of offerings in terms of teaching, research and consultancy, make staff redundant and reduce its capital plans.

USP needs to ensure member governments are aware of the realities of funding, and needs to provide them with evidence of the value of increasing their contributions.

1.2 Good practice and lessons learnt from implementation of the partnerships

All aspects of the partnerships are works in progress and some require a longer time frame to become fully embedded. Educational change by its nature is long term. The University remains the best entity for capacity building and training for the Pacific region.

In the next funding period, USP will need core and incentive funding from A/NZ at a level that allows it to maintain its improved performance, its regional focus and a deep involvement with key regional organisations.

USP is at a stage of maturity where the proportion of project funding provided by AusAID might be reduced and perhaps restricted to areas where seed funding is especially useful such as developing research and consultancy. Some limited, targeted project funding in a few key areas would also help USP achieve its strategic objectives for the benefit of the region.

There is a certain incoherence in the tertiary strategies at local level. The problem with communication is on every side: USP should be keeping the local aid agency representatives and government officials informed of what they are doing for the region and vice versa.

Sustainability is a long-term issue dependent on USP reaching and maintaining international quality in all core areas. This will probably take two to three strategic plan cycles, provided that USP management capacity is maintained. Even then, there are political issues over the level of government sponsorship that are largely outside USP control.

1.3 Key recommendations

Australia and New Zealand are vital partners in USP's present success and its plans for the future. The evidence indicates that the relationships, modality, practical arrangements and focus of the funding have all worked well. The approaches of the two agencies each have their benefits and although not identical, they are highly complementary.

The key recommendation is that:

- Australia and New Zealand should continue to fund USP through their partnership agreements and maintain core and/or incentive funding at an increased level.

Incentive funding should target the following areas:

1. development of USP's human resources strategy for improving human capacity, its HRM function, policies and processes
2. reducing the inequity between the facilities at the Suva campus and the regional campuses; improving ICT connectivity and upgrading the human/technical support on these campuses
3. student support in the areas of English language and ICT skills development at all regional campuses.

A long-term partnership between A/NZ and USP, built around more demanding outcomes, will be important to assure a future where the education, regional service and research at USP reaches the levels of excellence that the South Pacific needs.

1.4 DAC and AusAID quality criteria ratings

See Annex 9 for a more detailed explanation and comments on each criteria and its rating.

Evaluation criteria	Rating * (1-6)	Explanation
Relevance	5	AusAID and NZ MFAT have been crucial partners in assisting USP achieve most of its strategic goals. The needs of the regional campuses and their students are beginning to be met and the projects and funding are considered to be appropriate. USP certainly now recognises the importance of education, environmental issues, health, inclusiveness and gender.
Effectiveness	5 4	The ANZ funding was of immense benefit to the achievement of USP's objectives. Australia's assistance has been very effective in many ways in: infrastructure, capacity building, and building strong student support services with positive outcomes. However, USP needs strengthening with senior and middle level staff if it is to be effective in the next phase of its development. The funds have not concentrated on human resources and perhaps this has been a problem in achieving some goals.
Efficiency	6 5	The partnership agreements were designed to fit with USP's strategic objectives and the reports fitted with a sensible reporting schedule. NZ MFAT and AusAID both contribute funding to USP's recurrent budget and in support of implementation of the Strategic Plan. Assistance aligned with the Strategic Plan has been an efficient way to achieve set targets and key performance indicators. The reviewers found no evidence of excessive risk or corruption. The corruption issue is well dealt with by USP with various levels of checking.
Impact	6 5	The partnerships created a positive impact in terms of the student learning environment, relationships with the region, relevance to members, quality and relevance of programs, inclusivity and graduate employability. The A/NZ assistance has changed the outlook, physical structure, growth in prospective students, and the positive perception of USP. Regional partners saw the investment in USP as a vote of confidence at a time when USP was vulnerable. But governments allowed inflation to erode USP's unit of resource. The regional nature of USP is a complex configuration but achievements have been great in the review period.
Sustainability	2	If Australian and New Zealand Government funding ceased, USP would have no choice other than to significantly reduce its offerings in terms of teaching, research and consultancy, make staff redundant and reduce its capital plans. USP could not achieve its strategic objectives from the funds from member governments and other regional partners in the next planning period. In fact, with the emergence of new national universities, this funding is more likely to reduce in real terms.
Gender equality	4	There is no real evidence of significant gender inequality in research or teaching. The partnerships have raised awareness in USP of gender issues and there is activity around these issues. USP will need systems to ensure gender equality is monitored.
Monitoring & evaluation	6 4	Evidence exists to show that objectives have been achieved. A number of mechanisms are in place for engagement with AusAID and NZ MFAT. There are features of M&E processes and systems in development at USP which will eventually allow USP to do greater analysis. USP can improve further by formalising internal M&E processes.
Analysis & learning	6	USP is very active in reviews and in implementing their recommendations. Since the partnerships are based in part on USP's strategic objectives, there is a very positive impact from reviews.

Rating scale: 6 = very high quality; 5 = good quality; 4 = adequate quality; 1 = very low quality. Below 4 is less than satisfactory.

2 Introduction

The University of the South Pacific (USP) is a leading tertiary education provider in the Pacific. It is owned by 12 member countries and has 22,000 students across 14 campuses and centres throughout the region.

As a member of the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP), the University participates in the implementation of the Pacific Plan and other regional initiatives. USP's operating budget for 2011 was F\$144 million, which was largely funded by member country contributions (33%), student fees (25%), aid (22%) and trading activities (9.6%).

Australia and New Zealand (A/NZ) supported the University's establishment in 1968. They are the only two donors who contribute to USP's recurrent budget, while other significant donors (Japan, European Union) provide funding on a project basis.

The support provided by A/NZ comes to the University in a number of ways:

- direct budget support
- incentive funding tied to USP's achievement of elements of its Strategic Plan
- project funding focused on particular initiatives
- indirectly through regional scholarships to students to enable them to attend the University.

Through its current Australia–University of the South Pacific Partnership Framework 2010–2012, AusAID has provided core funding of A\$10.5 million (F\$19.47 million)¹, funding for the Strategic Plan of \$3.15 million (F\$6.49 million) and incentive funding of \$4.7 million (F\$8.7 million). Project funding amounted to an additional \$6.8 million (F\$12.7 million). The total funding from Australia was A\$25.15 million (F\$46.89 million).

Core funding under the New Zealand–USP Strategic Partnership 2010–2012 was around NZ\$14.8 million (F\$21.78 million). The Governance and Management Enhancement and Strengthening (GMES) Project provided \$1.1 million (F\$1.6 million).

2.1 Objective of the review

This review was commissioned to report on the effectiveness of this aid in terms of the key objectives of the partnerships and USP's Strategic Plan. The scope of this review is set out in the terms of reference (ToR), shown in Annex 1. These could be summarised as an assessment of the impact of A/NZ's aid to USP on its governance, management, research, teaching and learning. The objectives of the review are to:

- a) assess the achievement of outcomes² specified under each partnership arrangement and against the USP Strategic Plan, including improved student outcomes
- b) assess and comment on governance, financial and management health at USP, and the degree to which the outcomes of the GMES project have been embedded within USP policies and practices
- c) identify good practice and lessons learnt from implementation of the partnerships
- d) make recommendations on forward support to USP.

¹ An approximate equivalent in Fijian dollars is provided for AUD and NZD for ease of comparison only. Due to fluctuations in exchange rates, the exact amount in Fijian dollars will depend on the date of payment.

² It should be noted that many of the 'outcomes' in Partnership Arrangement and against the USP Strategic Plan actually refer to inputs or processes.

The partnerships' objectives are discussed in the following section. These objectives are designed to be compatible with USP, and almost every objective is explicitly linked with a priority area of the University's Strategic Plan. The success of A/NZ's assistance should be measured through the success of USP meeting its goals in the Strategic Plan.

The scope of the review includes evaluating the effectiveness of the following areas and providing recommendations for improvements:

- partnership objectives
- modality
- level, timing and duration of funding
- management arrangements
- projects supported
- influencing factors for forward support.

The partnership objectives are addressed using evidence and analysis to discuss key targets and outcomes from the partnership frameworks, impact and lessons learned in the context of the Strategic Plan priority areas:

- governance
- institutional capacity, management and financial health
- student support
- teaching and learning
- research, graduate affairs and innovation
- regional focus.

These sections in the report also include comments on the governance, financial and management health at USP, and the degree to which the outcomes of the Governance and Management Enhancement and Strengthening (GMES) Project have been embedded within USP policies and practices.

Good practice and lessons learnt from the implementation of the partnerships are discussed throughout the report in Section 15. Recommendations on forward support are provided within the report and in Section 16.

Annex 7 is a short report on AusAID-funded projects.

Annex 8 contains USP's report of progress of the Strategic Plan targets and key performance indicators as at 20 August 2012.

Annex 9 is the AusAID criteria ratings required under the ToR, with comments upon the ratings.

2.2 Methodology

Two consultants undertook the review using a range of evaluation methods including desk review, field visits and stakeholder consultations, between September and October 2012.

The terms of reference (ToR) was unpacked and a sub-set of objectives and foci construed. These were distilled into the sets of evidence that had to be collected (see Annex 2). A detailed description of the methodology is Annex 3. In summary, it included:

- reading of background documentation and comments collected on field visits
- desk-based research, document and data analysis and review
- questions issued to relevant partners prior to the mission
- visits to USP and discussion with key stakeholders in Tonga, Fiji, Kiribati and the Solomon Islands:
 - qualitative data collection through group and individual interviews with stakeholders
 - data collection through semi-structured questionnaires to key stakeholders
- presentation of final evaluation report.

Annex 4 lists the documents analysed prior to the mission. The list of the individuals and groups interviewed before and during the mission are Annex 5. During the mission, additional material on CD-Rom and in hard copy was supplied and subsequently (Annex 6).

2.2.1 Constraints

As most of the donor funding goes directly into the budget of the University and is not linked to particular activities, it is not possible to prove direct links between funding and particular improvements but the impact of A/NZ support can be inferred from the evidence of USP's achievements of its strategic goals.

It was anticipated that the review would occur in a relatively data-poor environment and this was the case. As yet, USP does not produce comprehensive performance and other management data. For example, at the time of the review there was little baseline data for the key performance targets in the Strategic Plan nor much data on the research and consultancy productivity of staff, although this is now in development.

For this reason much of the evidence used in the report had to be qualitative. However, the quantitative data, when combined with the interview and other evidence collected, is sufficient to form the basis of conclusions. Triangulation and other methods were used to validate the qualitative data (see Annex 3: Methodology). The targets and indicators specified in the partnership frameworks and USP's Strategic Plan relate to inputs, processes and some outcomes; and evidence was collected about all three of these aspects.

All persons and groups listed in the ToR were interviewed, except for the Ministries of Finance in Kiribati and the Solomon Islands due to logistical difficulties. The meeting with Japanese donors did not take place.

Evidence on the quality of graduates and their contribution to the local economy from private employers was rather weak. Nevertheless, the design of the interview schedules and the number of individuals and groups interviewed allowed capture and triangulation of most of the evidence as intended. A disappointing number of questionnaires were returned (only 33%). However, these did include returns by members of the senior management team, Council, regional campus staff and stakeholder partners, and they provided some important and well-informed comments.

The possibility that internal USP stakeholders, as beneficiaries of Australian and New Zealand support, might have impeded their candour in providing feedback to the team was mitigated by ensuring that evidence for conclusions came from more than one source, including wherever possible external stakeholders and/or documentary evidence.

3 Context

The partnerships with AusAID and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT) are very important to USP. Both donors were involved in setting up USP and they are the only donors that contribute to core budget. The partners are closely involved in Council and the University Grants Committee, which means that they are able to dialogue with USP about the broader development of the University agenda.

A/NZ have been crucial partners in assisting USP to achieve most of its strategic goals. Their assistance has enabled changes in the University's outlook, its physical structure, growth in people seeking an education, and the positive perception of the USP.

However, as most of the funding goes directly into the budget of the University and is not attached to particular activities, it is impossible to make any direct link between funding and specific improvements. Although the USP budget indicates the amount of money for specific purposes, it is unclear the extent to which the allocation of resources is influenced by the partnerships' targets. So a statement explaining how AusAID and NZ MFAT assistance affected outputs can only be based on inference: 'this has improved (or not improved), there was funding to support the improvement'. Of course, if the overall performance of USP in terms of student experience, course relevance and research quality is not improving then one could conclude that the donor assistance is not getting USP to where it should be. Fortunately, this is not the case. It is easier to make the link with inputs and processes required under the partnership agreements, though the link is not always direct.

3.1 The USP vision and strategic plan

USP has approximately 22,000 students across 14 campuses in 12 South Pacific island countries: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The University is owned by the 12 member countries. The main campus is in Fiji. Around 40% of students are studying off-campus via distance learning.

The USP vision in the 2010–2012 Strategic Plan is:

To be proactive in recognising and meeting the higher educational needs of its member countries

To deliver quality learning and teaching, research, and enhance quality in all University services

To be highly regarded locally, regionally and internationally.

To provide relevant and sustainable solutions across the spectrum of contemporary challenges in the Pacific.

The University's mission is to advance knowledge and understanding through:

Learning and teaching that is both relevant and of high quality, and which prepares students from diverse backgrounds for the workplace and lifelong learning

To increase knowledge and understanding through high-quality research that is internationally recognised and which has applications for the Pacific region and benefits the people who occupy it

To effectively engage with stakeholders throughout the Pacific region, particularly with member countries, to enhance political, economic, social and cultural development

To work in partnership with stakeholders to ensure that the opportunities offered by the international knowledge economy and globalising world can be harnessed effectively for the benefit of all Pacific peoples.

To achieve its vision and mission, USP has developed a set of values related to: students; staff; commitment to quality and relevance; diversity; good governance and leadership; and environmental sustainability.

The 2010–2012 Strategic Plan has six priority areas, each with related goals:

1. Learning and Teaching
2. Student Support
3. Research, Graduate Affairs and Innovation
4. Regional and Community Engagement and Internationalisation
5. Human Resources
6. Governance, Management and Continuous Improvement.

Within its Strategic Plan, USP identifies key targets and performance indicators with time frames and supporting strategies. Eighty per cent of the key performance indicators have been achieved and the remaining 20% of targets are expected to be completed by the end of 2012. A/NZ funds are reported to have greatly assisted USP in the implementation of its Strategic Plan.

The success of A/NZ assistance can be measured in terms of the success of the implementation of the Strategic Plan. This requires a robust monitoring and evaluation and performance measurement system in USP; it has made considerable progress on this in recent years but continued development is needed.

The next Strategic Plan, 2013–2018, is designed to lead to the transformation of the University from 'a good to an excellent University'. This improvement includes: further strengthening of the regional focus of the University; major improvements to regional campuses; increases in the scale, relevance and impact of research; and doubling the share of postgraduate students in USP's total enrolment.

The mission, vision and values in the new Strategic Plan show considerable overlap with the previous Plan but are more sharply focused.

In 2008, USP underwent a joint audit by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit (NZUAAU) to consider and review the procedures the University has in place to monitor and achieve its objectives. The audit report made a number of recommendations. USP has fully or mostly implemented the majority of the 2008 recommendations.

3.2 Australia–USP partnership objectives

The objectives of the Australia–University of the South Pacific Partnership Framework 2010–2012 are to:

1. support student success through improved services
2. increase USP research capacity to benefit the region
3. strengthen USP administration and academic programs
4. build public awareness of the outcomes of the partnership.

The partnership aims to achieve these objectives through support to USP for implementing its Strategic Plan, with a particular focus on student support and research and graduate affairs.

USP was the first Pacific regional organisation to enter into this type of strategic arrangement with AusAID, which was modelled after Australia's Pacific Partnerships for Development.

In the document *Review of Australia's Support to the University of the South Pacific* (2008), a number of recommendations were outlined, including that core funding to USP should be increased, including for capital funding; scholarship funding for postgraduate study in a variety of locations and modes; and importantly, incentive funding linked to the achievement of negotiated key performance indicators (KPIs).

The partnership includes an implementation schedule which sets out yearly targets for performance in priority areas and for the award of incentive funding. Sub-agreements provide core funding and funding for sectoral projects.

3.3 New Zealand–USP partnership objectives

The New Zealand–USP Strategic Partnership 2010–2012 reflects a shared vision to enhance development progress and advance the well-being of Pacific people. The objective of NZ's current support to USP is to engage with, and support, a relevant, sustainable, well-governed, effective and efficient institution of higher learning from which high quality students graduate.

To achieve these objectives New Zealand has maintained a focus on enhanced teaching and learning outcomes at USP, governance of USP that enhances decision-making, accountability and membership engagement; and effective strategic planning, implementation and monitoring of results. Year-on-year increases were dependent upon USP achievement against its Strategic Plan priorities.

USP responsibilities together with performance measures cover: planning and budgeting; monitoring and reporting; governance and risk management; addressing country priorities; institutional capability and financial sustainability; regional coordination and coherence; and detailed performance measures, including with regard to Strategic Plan implementation.

While NZ has shifted to provision of core funding to USP, over 2009–2011 NZ funded a Governance and Management Enhancement and Strengthening (GMES) Project to help USP overcome its governance, financial and management challenges. The separate Grant Funding Arrangement for the Pacific Regional Education Program: Governance and Management Enhancement and Strengthening Project (GMES) outlined an action plan and detailed outputs and outcomes, which were compatible with, but not the same as the performance measures and were organised under different headings. During a monitoring review of this project, it was agreed that a final evaluation would be undertaken as a part of this overall review.

NZ's engagement with USP occurs through Wellington and Post (Post is the local office and primary relationship manager regarding regional development scholarships). When NZ moved to core funding in 2010, the process of engagement changed. It is now at a higher level, with less day-to-day interaction, and takes place formally at trilateral USP/NZ/AusAID meetings or Council meetings, along with a (generally) annual meeting in Wellington with the Vice-Chancellor.

4 Partnership objectives and outcomes: Governance

Both AusAID and NZ MFAT support USP's aim to strengthen its governance. The NZ GMES project is completed and has been evaluated externally, so the discussion focuses on the continuing impact of the project, rather than its achievement of specified outcomes.

The tables below summarise the achievement of targets from the two partnership agreements in relation to strengthening governance.

Table 1: Achievement of targets in governance (Australia–USP)

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Outcome ³
Partnership commitment: AusAID will support USP's management in their ongoing reform efforts and institutional strengthening			
Advocacy for the reform agenda at USP's Council, University Grants Committee (UGC) and other University governance mechanisms with Australian representatives	NA	Active participation by Australian representatives in USP governance mechanisms to support progress towards the priorities and objectives of the Strategic Plan	<p>Australian representation on Council is reported by USP managers and Council members as supportive of strategic objectives. Stakeholders state AusAID and its Posts have a positive influence on regional and other agendas where USP is involved.</p> <p>The Australian representative provides a separate report on each Council meeting to the AusAID Post in Suva.</p> <p>UGC representative participation is found to be useful.</p>
AusAID whole agency approach to engagement with USP is aligned with the priorities of the Strategic Plan and/or broader regional priorities	NA	Any other sector support to USP via funding agreement under the partnership is consistent with Strategic Plan priorities	AusAID's other support (for example, project funding) is reported by USP managers and Council members as consistent with strategic objectives (see also sections on other aspects of the Strategic Plan below).

³ "Outcome" here is defined as the achievement (or not) of the target or performance measure.

Table 2: Achievement of performance measures in governance (NZ–USP)

USP performance measures	Outcome
Focus area: Governance	
Maintain high standards for Council and (relevant committee meetings) by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ensuring that all papers are distributed at least 10 days prior to meetings b) ensuring information to Council enhances Council discussions and decision-making in relation to its governance role Develop and implement donor engagement strategies to ensure that donor support is consistent with core program priorities and governance mechanisms	The reviewers did not have access to sufficient Council papers to make an assessment related to these issues based on documentary data, but from interview evidence, standards of performance have improved. Donors receive reports from their representatives on Council and the Grants Committee (and have discussions with them both before and after meetings). Donors and USP engage through trilateral (6 monthly) meetings and annual high level consultations. NZ MFAT had a representative on the Governance Task Force until it completed its work. Suva Posts have frequent on-the-ground engagement with USP at a number of levels.

4.1 Discussion: Outcomes and impact in the context of the Strategic Plan

4.1.1 Governance and Management Enhancement and Strengthening (GMES) Project

The Governance and Management Enhancement and Strengthening (GMES) Project was supported by NZ\$1.1 million and undertaken between 31 March 2009 and 31 December 2010. It was subsequently evaluated and in May 2011, USP Council received a summary of the final report on the project and noted that the full report had been forwarded to and accepted by MFAT, New Zealand.

Through GMES, New Zealand has given much needed support in the areas of governance and management. NZ MFAT had representation on a Governance Task Force that governed the GMES project. Council members believe that the enhancement of Council effectiveness was good value for the investment. Members of both Council and the senior management team report that support continues to yield benefits and strengthens the Council's ongoing management and internal processes. The Council now has a clearer view of its role in setting a strategic direction and holding the Executive to account. The GMES project has resulted in improved practices and procedures for Council.

Members of Council report that the donor representatives on Council assist the Council in a variety of ways, for instance by sharing their international experience of governance issues. Therefore, the GMES project continues to have a positive effect on the governance of the institution.

In his 2011 report of the implementation of the project, Dr Kimblewhite found:

‘... the project to be highly relevant with strong USP ownership and alignment with USP's priorities. The commitment and leadership from the Pro-Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor has been commendable and has provided momentum for good progress for most of the project's workstreams...All workstreams (complete, nearly complete or ongoing) are well-embedded within USP's systems with signs of strong, ongoing ownership and commitment.’ (*University of The South Pacific Governance And Management Enhancement And Strengthening Project Monitoring Report*, February 2011, p4)

On page 19 he states:

‘Some project outcomes have started to emerge, and the right conditions appear to be in place for other outcomes to be achieved. The University has returned to financial sustainability, the new Strategic Plan is focused and will provide clearer guidance, the Annual Report has strengthened USP accountability to stakeholders, the changes to the statutes and charter have delivered the autonomy planned, university committees appear more active now that their roles and responsibilities have been clarified, the restructuring of IT has reduced unit costs by F\$400k, and the planning framework is now fully integrated and is being rolled out. The changes appear well embedded and further implementation is being carefully managed. The changes to the HR processes and procedures appear one of the biggest challenges and the success of this workstream will rely on the energy and commitment of the new unit head.’

As at the end of March 2010, the GMES project portfolio showed 10 completed activities, three in progress and one to commence. A consultant undertook a full review and mapping of the ToRs, functions and membership of Council, the Executive Committee, Senate, Finance and Investment Committee and Audit and Risk Committee and for a report on the review to be brought to the November 2011 Council for its consideration and decision. Council approved a review of the Charter and Statutes with reference to the conferring of degrees. The Executive Committee took over the responsibility for monitoring the implementation of outstanding recommendations from the GMES Project. The implementation schedule of all outstanding action and matters under the GMES Project was placed in one document and provided to the Executive Committee for ready tracking.

4.1.2 2008 audit review

The 2008 audit by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit (NZUAAU) made recommendations for USP in relation to governance and management, including:

- review terms of reference, membership and committee structure of the Senate and a system of periodic review of the performance of the Senate and its subcommittees
- fill vacant senior management positions and redefine the lines of reporting
- establish key priorities in the Strategic Plan, time frames, targets and key performance indicators to monitor progress towards strategic goals
- strengthen policy development, planning and risk assessment
- improve the management of the regional campuses and involve the Industry Advisory Groups.

These recommendations have been, or are in the process of being, actioned. Professor Quin, who undertook the quality audit, did a post-audit visit in July 2010. Her report states:

‘The University Council by all reports is highly engaged, prepared to ask the difficult questions and deeply committed to the advancement of USP. Its charter and statutes have been reviewed and membership reduced from 45 to a more responsive number of 33. In 2008 the Audit Panel was concerned that Council was insufficiently engaged with some of the pressing issues facing USP. This is not the case in 2010.

‘However, the need for Council to be quite so engaged in operational matters has probably passed given that USP is no longer operating at a deficit, the senior management team is functioning effectively, student numbers are improving, staff morale is much better, stakeholder faith has been restored and robust quality improvement processes are embedded in USP operations.’

4.1.3 Management of Council’s business

In the last three years, the University’s Council has been through a time of transition. There have been major changes, for instance in financial sustainability, as well as improvements in the governance of the institution. Funding supplied by the aid agencies has supported members of Council with workshops on: strategic planning; the role of Council; the risk register; performance assessment of the Vice-Chancellor and his key performance

indicators; reading financial statements; and the information that the Vice-Chancellor should report to Council.

Access to many relevant Council papers was not provided, but on the evidence of the minutes that were made available and reports from interviewees from Council, it appears that the support has helped to target the functions of the Council so it does not interfere in management to the previous extent, but works at a more strategic level. There is now a matrix with timelines of what needs to be done and also for the monitoring and evaluation of the Strategic Plan.

At a political level there are frequent changes in the membership of the Council. The aid has been supportive in trying to limit the instability caused by these changes. There is now a concerted effort to induct new members through an orientation program.

The Executive Committee of the Council deals with more operational issues. Funds have supported Council in becoming more focused on its task and being more demanding in holding the Executive to account. For example, the minutes of the May 2012 meeting of Council state:

The University provides post secondary and tertiary education but really should be looking to where the weighting should shift from pre-degree/foundation, undergraduate to postgraduate and research, given the developments in the sector within the region. That would be the answer to the question: *What is our core business?*

Monitoring and reporting has improved over the last two years – it is a work in progress but it is on the agenda and followed up by periodic actions. For example, minutes from the same meeting state that the Executive:

...presented a first draft forecasting the funds that would be required to finance the new initiatives. The members of Council were divided into eight groups to respond to the following five questions:

1. Do the proposed seven priorities meet your national needs?
2. Do the seven priorities meet the needs of the region?
3. What are the gaps?
4. Any duplication with other national / international institutions in the region?
5. What would be your top three priorities for the University of the South Pacific?

Members of Council reported that in the Finance Committee, there have been improvements in both reporting and the data that informs its decisions. The reviewers requested that they see Council papers before and during the review, but in the end, although they received minutes of meetings, a lack of access to the full papers meant this could not be verified.

4.1.4 Funding and risk management

USP's annual reports show the University's finances have continued to improve from 2009 to 2011. The University Grants Committee commented in mid-2011 on the significant turnaround in USP's financial position with USP showing operating surpluses in each of 2009, 2010 and 2011:

'The University has progressed from its deficit position in 2007 (of F\$0.2m) to operating surplus of F\$5.4m in 2008, F\$15.9m in 2009, F\$4.8m in 2010 and F\$6.2m in 2011...The University is targeting a Council approved surplus of F\$5.6m in 2012, with expected increase in cash and cash equivalents of F\$0.5m, after expected USP-funded CAPEX of F\$6.0m. This is better than the projected surplus of F\$1.7m and the projected net decrease in cash of F\$2.2m in the 2012 financial plan that was submitted to and approved by Council in June 2009.' (*UGC Triennial Submission 2013–2015*, pp29-30)

USP has been able to secure an Asian Development Bank loan to fund some of its regional major capital works.

The shift from project to core funding by the A/NZ partners was found by internal stakeholders and Council members to have been helpful in implementing the Strategic Plan

as it provided flexibility to focus resources and reporting on the achievement of strategic priorities. Council now receives reports about the Plan on a regular basis. Members report that there are some areas where USP projects or plans have not been implemented on time (sometimes for reasons not always under USP control, such as difficulty in recruiting personnel). Information in the project reports supplied confirmed this to be the case. Interviewees stated that, when a delay in a project occurs, Council is made aware of it through the review process.

There has been some impact from the project on planning. Council members report that the Strategic Total Academic Review (STAR) Program was successful. USP identified a number of programs that were not viable and these were phased out. The process continues, but Council and the Executive Committee are concerned that it has slowed down. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) responsible is on sick leave; the VC has now taken the work on, which makes progress even slower.

USP services 12 countries and each is represented on Council. This means individual countries can put pressure on the University and make it difficult to reject a program requested by one or two countries. Countries do not match their demands to the resources they are willing to supply. The perception of ownership of USP by members is affected by their competing priorities, including in some cases the development/expansion of local tertiary systems, so the outlook for a better match between demands and funding will require USP to continue to engage with the members on an analysis of costs and benefits of various models of provision.

Council would prefer that the Executive insist that STAR must systematically judge each program and the real cost of delivery regardless of the political context. Council members believe they could more easily say no to governments' demands than the Executive, but there is a question as to whether this is a governance or management issue.

Risk management has improved: there is now a risk management register that identifies 59 risks at the University-wide level. While not all risks can be totally mitigated, it was recognised that some risks would be better mitigated by outsourcing and that there was a need to seriously consider the cost of mitigation against the seriousness of the risk. The University's Audit and Risk Committee is responsible for identifying and rating new risks. There is also an operational register, which covers systems and a financial risk register. Managers report what needs to be done and reports are tabled at Council meetings.

Council held an interactive session on the University's Risk Management System during which members were updated on the Risk Register and mitigation taken by risk owners with respect to the risks in their portfolios.

There is an annual risk management plan that suggests active involvement of the University. The 2012–13 Plan includes: updating the risk management policy; strategies for raising risk management awareness; external review; and reporting and software development.

Council considers strategic risks and the analysis of the impact on USP, for example, the potential risks from the development of national universities. Risk management has also made USP more focused on marketing and improving teaching and its programs. This is reported to have made USP more focused and competitive.

The problem of access to Council papers referred to above, meant that the Risk Register was not seen by the reviewers so comments on whether the risks identified need to be further explicated cannot be provided. However, Professor Quin's Post Audit Report suggests that in 2010 there was evidence of good governance and monitoring but there was further work to be done on risk management:

'It is imperative that Council continue to provide good governance: monitor the implementation of its SP, the performance of the VC against the stated KPIs and sharpen its focus on risk.'

5 Partnership objectives and outcomes: Institutional capacity, management and financial health

The tables below summarise the achievement of targets from the two partnership agreements in relation to institutional capacity, management and financial health.

Table 3: Achievement of targets in institutional capacity, management and financial health (Australia–USP)

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Outcome
Partnership commitment: AusAID will provide support to USP which affords USP management greater flexibility to meet recurrent expenses and recognises USP's ability and commitment to achieve good outcomes			
Increase to AusAID's core funding each year	A\$2.75m (approx F\$5.71m) (2009)	Up to A\$4m (approx F\$7.4m) by 2012	This was achieved.
AusAID's funding available on demonstrated achievement of agreed targets by USP	Incentive funding introduced with AusAID support from 2009	Incentive funding available each year and increased on achievement of previous year's targets	Incentive funding increased each year and targets were monitored and (generally) achieved.
Partnership commitment: USP will implement the strategies of the Strategic Plan resulting in increased capacity of USP to meet the tertiary education needs of member countries and provide services to the region			
Student enrolment numbers	2009 EFTS 10 214	2010 2% increase 2011 2% increase 2012 2% increase	USP's triennial submission 2012-2013 reports that student enrolment has increased 12% in the review period (2010-12).
Student pass rates	2009: +8% – pre degree -2% decrease sub degree +1-2% UG +1-2% PG	Pass rates each year and each level 2010 +2% 2011 +2% 2012 +2%	Pass rates have not generally improved since 2009. However, student numbers have increased and so have the absolute numbers qualifying with a degree.

Table 4: Achievement of targets related to audit review and HR strategy (Australia–USP 2010)

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Outcome
Partnership commitment: Undertake a formal review of progress against the Institutional External Quality Audit 2008			
Formal implementation of Institutional External Quality Audit on track	NA	Review of Quality Audit process completed	A progress report by AUQA Auditor Prof. Quin was made to Council in November 2010. Affirmations and recommendations arising from the Quin Report have been actioned. They are still monitored to ensure no slippage occurs.
Partnership commitment: Develop a Human Resources Strategy and Plan			
Human Resources Strategy and Plan final	NA	Human Resources Strategy and Plan approved by SMT	This is now complete, presented to the Senior Management Team and being piloted in 2012.

Table 5: Achievement of performance measures in institutional capacity, management and financial health (NZ–USP)

USP performance measures	Outcomes
Focus area: Quality	
Regular, independent quality audits and annual reporting to Council covering institutional health, capability and organisational development plans	A quality audit was completed. A progress report by the AUQA Auditor Prof. Quin was made to Council in November 2010. Affirmations and recommendations arising from the Quin Report are now closed although they are still monitored to ensure no slippage occurs. There is an annual report to Council that covers institutional health, capability and organisational development plans.
Focus area: Institutional capability and financial sustainability	
Viable enrolment levels maintained	Student enrolment has increased in each year and is now viable.
Focus area: Risk management	
Risk management completed and approved by 2010 and a Risk Register maintained on an ongoing basis	A Risk and Insurance Unit was created in February 2009. USP has developed its Risk Mitigation Plan and Risk Management Policy approved by the Council in 2010. USP now has a Risk Register where 59 risks have been identified, including the top 11 risks. Assessment of risk is continuously monitored by the Risk and Insurance Unit which is responsible for administering risk management and insurance program in compliance with USP's policies, procedures and countries' legislation (campuses).

Focus area: Planning and budgeting	
<p>Council approved planning and budgeting framework (for member endorsement and regular review) comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a multi-year overarching Strategic Plan, that sets out the organisation's mandate, core business, direction and focus b) annual plans and annual balanced budgets that outline specific deliverables and associated costs related to the Strategic Plan <p>Planning systems and processes that are consistent with 'good' university practice</p>	<p>There is now a Council approved planning and budgeting framework.</p> <p>The Planning and Quality Office has created a Strategic Plan Online Monitoring System (SPOMS) with traffic light indicators that is now "live" online. This may allow some linkages between budgetary expenditure and outcomes so that the impacts of aid may be assessed more directly in the next review period.</p> <p>Budgets are now balanced and USP operates a surplus.</p> <p>Planning systems and processes have been improved, but more work is needed to improve some aspects. See sections below for more detail.</p>
Focus area: Monitoring and reporting	
<p>6-monthly reporting to Council against Strategic Plan KPIs</p> <p>Baseline information available for all Strategic Plan Institutional KPIs by end of 2010</p>	<p>Council receives 6-monthly reports against Strategic Plan KPIs.</p> <p>The reviewers were not supplied with baseline information for all Strategic Plan Institutional KPIs.</p>

5.1 Discussion: Outcomes and impact in the context of the Strategic Plan

Up to 2007–08, USP was not performing well particularly with respect to financial management and governance. In addition student enrolments had been falling. The commencement of the A/NZ partnerships enabled the University to implement its 2010–2012 Strategic Plan. USP has turned around its performance and is now doing better in terms of finance and governance. The triennial submission 2012–2013 reports that student enrolment has increased 12% in the review period (2010–12), with a further increase of 13% expected this year.

The A/NZ funding in the early stages of the current Strategic Plan sent a message of confidence to USP and its partners when it was having financial and general problems. A/NZ also provided flexibility for USP to make its own decisions by providing core funding that could be rolled into the recurrent budget. This helped with the sustainability of USP.

AusAID has particularly funded two components of the Strategic Plan: research and student services. By aligning funding to the Strategic Plan, it supported improvements and rewarded performance. It also moved to a more progressive reporting structure that allowed high level reporting to occur twice a year.

There has been less visibility for NZ funding because it is core only and AusAID has upscaled its support. However, NZ funding has provided opportunities for improvements in the quality of core functions and facilities, but generally cause and effect cannot be proved in any particular case.

5.1.1 Finances, aid funds and financial sustainability

The funding to USP from AusAID over the period 2010–2012 was A\$18.35 million (F\$34 million), and the project funding was an additional \$6.8 million (F\$12.7 million). AusAID also provides additional funds for The Pacific Islands Centre for Public Administration (PICPA) and scholarships, but those are separate initiatives not included under the partnership framework. Other Australian Government agencies such as Australian Federal Police and Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research also provide some funds, but these are not included in this review.

Core funding from NZ over the same period was around NZ\$14.8 million (F\$21.78 million).

All of NZ MFAT funds and a large portion of AusAID's funds go to USP's recurrent budget. A proportion of AusAID's funds (A\$4.7 million / F\$8.7 million) goes to incentive funding. They are the only two donors who fund directly to USP's recurrent budget.

The core funding to the recurrent budget is significant to USP. The A/NZ commitment has been longstanding and USP has come to rely upon it. Without this funding, the University would be unable to maintain its quality or fulfil its Strategic Plans.

The incentive funding provided by AusAID is working well as a mechanism to ensure that progress is made and is monitored by the University as AusAID focuses on the key performance indicators (KPIs) in the Strategic Plan. Of these KPIs, 80% of have been met, so this appears to be a successful approach.

The unit of funding from Pacific Island governments has not increased in real terms. This has meant that the fees from students are particularly important. Enrolments had been falling before the period covered by the Strategic Plan. Since then, there has been a substantial increase and this has led to a healthy balance sheet for the University, as demonstrated in the tables below.

Table 6: USP student enrolments 2009–2011

	2009	2010	2011
Awards (or completions)	2505	2399	2664
Student enrolments	18 694	20 056	21 602
Enrolment EFTS	10 254	10 721	11 572

USP is developing a wider base of partners and donors. It is also trying to develop the services of the University to generate more income in order to become sustainable. Partnerships are longer term now. The VC is hoping that the next set of funding agreements will be for five years, so as to provide a longer horizon for future planning. It is not possible to assess how feasible this would be.

Further discussion of the possible types of funding arrangements for the partnerships (Scope 3.2 of the ToR) is covered in Section 10: Modality.

5.1.2 Planning and budgeting

The financial position has improved during the period of the Strategic Plan as is evidenced in the following table.

Table 7: Financial performance of USP 2009–2012

	2009		2010		2011		2012	
(All figure in millions F\$)	Revised forecast	Actual	Financial Plan	Actual	Financial Plan	Actual	Financial Plan	Actual
Operating surplus	4.5	15.9	1.9	4.8	2.1	6.2	1.7	5.6
CAPEX (USP funded)	5.0	4.3	5.0	7.0	5.0	13.6	5.0	6.0
Total CAPEX	5.0	4.3	48.0	50.2	23.0	35	5.0	6.0
Cash and bank balance	25.5	44.7	21.5	54.2	19.3	57.5	17.1	57.0
Unencumbered Cash	12.4	20.0	11.2	16.2	10.0	15.7	8.6	16.2

CAPEX: capital expenditure

USP's funding is split approximately 33% from countries, 25% from fees, 22% from aid and the remaining from other sources. It is not clear what USP would do without A/NZ funding, although USP is now looking for more funds to implement the new Strategic Plan.

The planning function has improved during the period under review. There is an ambitious 2013–2018 Strategic Plan that is clear, contains well-defined targets and KPIs and a timeline for implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The Strategic Plan may not sufficiently focus resources. The VC and senior management team have been undertaking extensive consultation and engaging with all stakeholders throughout the region. There has been considerable consultation with AusAID and NZ MFAT to ensure that their strategies and the new USP Strategic Plan are aligned. USP is an active member in many regional fora and this informs the strategic plan development.

The Planning Office assists in gathering data on students and other areas. The Office has developed links between other functions such as finance and it has systems in place to collect relevant data on performance, as well as for monitoring the current Strategic Plan. In areas other than finance (for example, student evaluation, research and HRM), the data for the period under review are not robust, and the extraction methodology and interpretation of the data are still being refined. USP now has a more robust data system using its *Dashboard Intelligent Business System*, which is capable of more refined analysis of student numbers and performance.

The Development Office provides an interface between the internal and external stakeholders and strengthens and manages communication, liaison and negotiation with partners. It has established processes and procedures to improve coordination.

In 2012, the University assessed its performance in achieving its priority area goals in the existing Strategic Plan as between 94% and 73%. It is therefore to be commended for taking forward the priority areas from the previous Plan, albeit expressed a little differently, providing a continuity of focus that is likely to bring more success. It has identified a set of themes that also provide some continuity.

The 2012 Triennial Submission to the UGC 2013–2015 provides additional evidence that the University continues to make progress in areas of interest to AusAID and NZ MFAT,

including in governance and management, academic review, improvements to regional campuses, improved disabled facilities planning, quality and monitoring systems. USP is now embarking on obtaining international quality accreditation for some of its programs.

In the next triennium, USP will focus on improving its management of staff, research and expansion of its undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment, continued improvement of the regional campuses, and broadening distance and flexible learning, especially online.

5.1.3 Project funding

USP's ability to report on finance and budgets in relation to projects has improved. However, planning has areas of weakness, for example, USP occasionally has large surpluses on projects and is sometimes required to return money to AusAID.

NZ MFAT funded the GMES Project, which is discussed in the governance section of this report. Discussion on whether the projects supported were aligned with AusAID's objectives (Scope 3.5 of the ToR) is covered in Section 13: Projects supported.

USP generally discusses a proposal with AusAID before it screens proposals itself at faculty and institutional levels in light of the Strategic Plan, and so some proposals are never put forward. Dialogue occurs in the University if a proposal is seen as worthwhile in principle but defective in any way. If it does not fit the strategy, a proposal will get rejected by faculties or SMT. It is seldom that a project is rejected by USP after discussion and improvement. AusAID appears to fund virtually all USP project proposals.

Project applications do not go to Senate as the authority for final approval rests with the Vice-Chancellor. A business case must be made covering staff needs and resourcing. For the future, analysis needs to be focused on human resources and time management as much as the fit with the Strategic Plan to stop projects slipping. However, the Strategic Plan has developed good practices in terms of monitoring progress (SPOMS).

AusAID mainly relies on USP's own processes for monitoring projects. During the review period, reports supplied did not necessarily allow AusAID to catch and deal with delays and obstacles to implementation quickly, even though reports were made on funds utilised and in balance. USP has established an Audit and Risk Committee that requires reports each month from project leaders to ensure that requirements of the funding are being met. If any projects slip, implementers are expected to catch up. However, the projects generally have good relations with AusAID and where leaders feel they have problems, they will discuss them with AusAID and they report that they find these discussions helpful.

In general, the project funding appears to have had a positive impact on the University and (in some cases) its partners, for example, the Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute provides a useful resource for the University and regional partners. Other projects have yet to provide clear data about their impact on stakeholders. Project funding raises AusAID's profile in the University and the region (a target in the partnership agreement), promotes its agenda and supports USP in important initiatives such as the climate change project, that have the potential to make a real impact in the region.

However, project funding can restrict institutional autonomy in making decisions about the differential allocation of resources in response to a changing context. Project funding also tends to have higher transaction costs than direct budget support. As USP matures, it is able to exercise autonomy responsibly over a larger proportion of its funding and decide what to fund directly from its budget. On the other hand, in areas where it is not yet highly proficient, project funding can stimulate development and provide good opportunities for the University to access outside expertise. Thus, there are specific, time-limited developments (for example seed-corn funding for priority research and consultancy activities and a funded management capacity development program) that may be best stimulated through project funding.

5.1.4 Recommendations 1 and 2: Project funding

Recommendation: Some project funding should continue, but at a reduced level.

USP and AusAID should develop a more critical stance to project planning, especially to the feasibility of the activities given the timelines ascribed to them.

5.2 Management of risks

An issue for USP is the risk from the development of national universities. Fiji and Samoa have national universities and other countries are also considering developing their own universities. USP is looking at how it can go into partnership with these new entities rather than seeing them as a risk or threat. The strategy of trying to work in partnership and collaboration and find where they can complement each other is a sensible one, but it does not eliminate the risk of competition over national funding, or for funded student places.

USP has an advantage over the new national universities. It has a further reach and resources. It has the opportunity to sell itself as a real Pacific university to the rest of the world and to increase its international student intake from outside of the South Pacific.

USP is likely to continue to offer services that are valued by the region because of the lack of capacity within other countries. It is much cheaper to get a degree at USP than going to Australia or New Zealand. Thus USP can provide much more affordable quality higher education programs that are relevant to the region. The University is sometimes criticised by stakeholders in the countries for insufficiently contextualising their programs at national level. A more flexible pedagogic approach may allow highly contextualised elements within the programs (for example, through research-based assignments), while still allowing the economies of scale that a regionally delivered program offers.

In the future, in addition to its present funding streams, USP may be competing for funds with other providers, competing for student places, and developing funding streams based on the provision of a range of services contracted on a commercial or semi commercial basis from donors and governments. This is likely to add risks and uncertainties.

For further discussion on factors influencing A/NZ future support (Scope 3.6 of the ToR), see Section 14.

5.3 Monitoring and reporting

With respect to formal written reporting, NZ took a decision to rely on USP's own reporting to Council. NZ finds this formal reporting appropriate for its purposes. USP has a detailed Strategic Plan monitoring system. NZ looks at financial papers to assess USP's corporate health, triangulates impressions through attendance at Council meetings and discussions at the bi-annual high-level meetings and with representatives and Suva Post.

The reporting process to AusAID works smoothly for USP. It reports every six months for bi-annual high-level meetings. It finds the mechanism useful to keep a check on its performance. The timetable and form of reports is compatible with USP's reports on the Strategic Plan and to the University Grants Committee and Council.

The partnership with AusAID appears to have improved monitoring and reporting data collection systems. With AusAID's assistance, USP has been able to put the right people in critical areas such as the PVC (Planning) Office. As a result, the reports on the Strategic Plan, finance and management issues are compiled and presented regularly. However, there is much work still to do on collecting data and analysing it at a deeper level, especially student data: the draft new Strategic Plan still does not contain baseline data for targets.

For projects, USP has had to report to AusAID and NZ MFAT on the requirements and timetables spelt out in the individual agreements. Projects also submit annual reports,

including financial reports for receipt of funds. Most projects are also reported on bi-annually at the high-level consultation meetings.

The NZ MFAT funding timeline also suits USP, as the report to NZ is the same as that submitted to Council. The requirement of reporting in February to AusAID and NZ MFAT fits into the Australian financial year. A triennium budget supports forward planning as well as being compatible with other funding streams and should be compatible with the mid and final points of the USP new Strategic Planning cycle.

5.3.1 Recommendation 3: Reporting

Recommendations: Wherever possible:

- **AusAID and NZ MFAT should continue to use a common reporting format, which is compatible with the annual cycle for activity planning and budgeting at USP and the triennial cycle of strategic planning and funding from other sources.**
- **Funds supplied and activities supported, whether on a competitive, commercial or incentive/core funding or project basis should be reported according to a common timetable, compatible with USP's own planning and reporting cycle.**
- **The flow of funds from competitive, commercial or incentive/core funding should form part of one overarching partnership and reporting agreement.**

5.4 Human resource management

Although USP is well managed at present, it is reliant on a few skilled and expert managers and visionary leadership. Replacement managers for any senior staff leaving are thin on the ground. Continued progress and success is too reliant on the Vice-Chancellor. There needs more succession planning and longer-term contracts for able middle managers and research active staff so they can be trained up to become the next generation of leaders for the University and for the research groups. Sustainability of the success of the University depends upon this.

USP has a three-year contract policy, which is impacting on keeping the best staff. Modifying this policy will be a matter for the University to determine, however, it is likely to involve:

- a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of various contractual arrangements, probably involving Council
- developing systems and criteria to identify the key strategic posts that should be covered by different contractual arrangements
- deciding whether all occupants of such posts should be moved onto a new contract
- and, if not, a system to determine (for example) the high competence of the occupant of such a post, and the criteria for making such a judgment.

The human resource management (HRM) function is a significant issue. This area is poorly administered and too many of the most able staff are on short-term contracts. This becomes an even greater problem because HRM's renewal of the contracts is very slow for the staff that USP wants to retain. Similarly, recruitment processes are slow and inefficient. This creates challenges in the retention and replacement of the best people, as those who have other employment options are less likely to wait to receive a contract and those that are finally recruited are more likely to find other employment well before their contract comes to an end, especially the most marketable staff, including professors. This risks leaving mainly those staff at USP who are less employable elsewhere. This is reported to have a detrimental effect on research, teaching and learning, as well as management.

In the past, A/NZ aid helped USP to address its HR issues by providing money for staff to undertake Masters and PhDs, but this ceased. To address the issue of attracting suitable,

qualified staff, USP has a plan to train its own graduates and increase PhD enrolments. In this way, these PhD students can become the future staff of USP.

The new Strategic Plan requires better staff at senior and Head of School levels. The HR Strategy includes staff development for this category. It would be useful for the senior management team to have more coaching and mentors, and there is a need for cohorts of middle managers to undertake leadership programs. In this way, USP could identify future potential Heads of Schools and senior managers and nurture them into these positions.

Part of USP's HR strategy is to attract more staff with a PhD. A report to the high-level consultation in September 2012 shows recent progress: academic staff with PhDs had increased by 1% between the fourth quarter of 2011 and the first quarter of 2012, and a further 6.64% at the end of the second quarter of 2012, though this increase was uneven across faculties.

To address the issue of attracting suitably qualified staff to USP, there is now a HR strategy that focuses on key work-streams, succession planning and the training and development of regional staff in some key areas and for academic positions. The draft Strategic Plan includes improved HR management and human capacity. This will require donor funding whether through projects, core funding or incentive funding related to the new Strategic Plan.

HR development can be a useful focus for project funding: for example the development of a leadership and management project involving training, coaching and mentoring for lower, middle and upper management staff and key academics (such as potential research cluster leaders) to prepare them for their roles and for promotion.

5.4.1 Recommendation 4: Human resource development

Recommendation: Incentive funding in the new USP/donor partnerships and some project funding in the next period should be targeted on the development of USP's human resources strategy for improving human capacity (particularly managers and key academics) and on improving its HRM function, policies and processes.

6 Partnership objectives and outcomes: Student support

Student services is a major focus of the Australia–USP Partnership Framework and incentive funding.

Table 8: Achievement of targets in student support (Australia–USP)

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Outcome
Partnership commitment: AusAID will support USP's implementation of Priority Area 2 of USP's Strategic Plan - Enhanced Student Success			
USP's achievement of its Strategic Plan targets related to Priority Area 2 (implied indicator)	NA	F\$1,680,00 March 2010 F\$646,000 Feb 2011 F\$630,000	Funds were provided as per the target.
Student satisfaction with student support services and activities	79% overall student satisfaction	2011 2% increase 2012 2% increase	Overall level of satisfied and strongly satisfied students is 83% for 2011 ⁴ . The figure for 2012 was not available.
Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) into employment and further study	70% employed either part-time or full-time 24% in further study	Graduate destination survey operational 2011 2% increase 2012 2% increase	The GDS was reinstituted in 2010. As of 31 March 2011, 23% were in f/t study; 18% were in p/t study; 57% were not in study – i.e. 41% were in some kind of further study. 24% were unemployed and seeking work; those unemployed 3 to 4 months after completion of studies increased slightly by 1% on the figure reported in 2010 (23%). Data on part-time employment was not supplied. As of 31 March 2011, 57% were in f/t employment - a 2% increase from 55% reported in 2010.

⁴ It should be noted that the survey was administered in 2011 online in such a way that it achieved only 8% response rate.

Table 9: Achievement of targets in relation to students with special needs (Australia–USP, 2010)

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Outcome
Partnership commitment: Review and improve facilities and services for students with special needs			
Completion of the detailed accessibility study referenced in the Laucala Campus Plan	NA	Findings from the accessibility study integrated into Phase 1 development of the Laucala Campus Master Plan	Improvements have made the Laucala campus more accessible to students and staff with disabilities: the installation of an elevator in FSTE; construction of accessible toilets and shower blocks; new accessible study bures; improvements to pathways, adaptation of a Married Quarter house to accommodate a wheelchair bound student; and the purchase of some assistive technology devices, for the hearing and visually impaired.

Table 10: Achievement of targets in ICT and gender equity (Australia–USP, 2011)

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Outcome
Partnership commitment: Improve support for students in using ICT			
Student satisfaction with information services	7 labs at Laucala are open 24 hours, seven days per week. 70% of academic and student residential areas have wireless access at Laucala 54% of Semester 2, 2010 ITS Survey respondents rate service as good or excellent	10 computer labs at Laucala open 24 hours a day 85% of academic and student residential areas to have wireless access at Laucala. Increased wireless access at Emalus and Kiribati, and at Alafua in student residential area. 60% of students rate service as good or excellent	The target for 85% access at Laucala was achieved before the 10 th Hall was opened. It is now 77%. There are not yet 10 labs that are open 24/7. However, ICT access has improved: USP successfully migrated from the Gilat System to i-DIRECT system, which made the USPNet work 300% more efficiently at all campuses. USP also increased the total bandwidth from 7.5Mhz to 11Mhz. Construction of a KU-Band Hub Antenna was completed which will allow for the cost-effective deployment of USPNet to remote sub-campuses and rural communities through satellite. 5 KU-Band VSATs are installed at 5 USP sub-campuses: Tonga (Va'vau and Haapai), Vanuatu (Malampa), Fiji (Vanuabalavu), Solomon Islands. Installation of equipment for the 5 remaining sub-campuses is planned. Delays with KU-Band roll-out, Pacific Carrier Multiple Access (PCMA) technology implementation have affected the timetable. The target for 60% of students rating IT service as good or excellent is not yet achieved.

Partnership commitment: Strengthen gender equity			
Strong and effective HRM policies	<p>Female Academic: 37%</p> <p>Female Non-Academic: 46%</p> <p>Male Academic: 63%</p> <p>Male Non-Academic: 54%</p>	Develop and implement Gender Equity Plan, aligned to USP Gender Equity Policy, and equal opportunities initiatives	<p>The Gender Equity Plan has been developed aligned to USP Gender Equity Policy, and equal opportunities initiatives have been developed and initiated.</p> <p>In 2011, 38.5% of academic staff were female and 45.5% non-academic female staff.</p> <p>At the senior staff level in 2012: for Associate Professor and Professor level the percentage of female staff was 18.75% in 2011 and senior non-academic female staff (Band 5 & 6) was 42.8%.</p>

Table 11: Achievement of targets in ICT and students with special needs (Australia–USP, 2012)

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Outcome
Partnership commitment: Improve support for students in using ICT			
Student satisfaction with information services	<p>20% of academic and student residential areas have wireless access at Kiribati.</p> <p>65% for Samoa & Vanuatu. 58% of Semester 2, 2011 ITS Survey respondents rated ITS as good or excellent.</p>	<p>Increased wireless access by 100% in Kiribati.</p> <p>80% in Samoa and Vanuatu.</p> <p>62% of students rate ITS as good or excellent</p>	<p>Increased wireless access at Emalus, Alafua and Kiribati campuses have not been achieved to the required level. The reviewers do not have data on the exact levels achieved.</p> <p>Students rated the following as good or excellent:</p> <p>52% computer facilities</p> <p>75% internet accessibility</p>
Partnership commitment: Review and improve facilities and services for students with special needs			
Improved/increased teaching and learning services for students with special needs	<p>No coordinated provision/support for student disabilities. No toilets and pathways on regional campuses made accessible for students and staff with special needs. 2 pieces of equipment and learning facilities for students with special needs.</p> <p>One elevator in a faculty building at Laucala.</p> <p>Moodle is enabled</p>	<p>An office to support students with disabilities, staffed by a Disability Services coordinator and designated trained point of contact personnel on each campus.</p> <p>Disabled access toilets and pathway cutaways on at least 2 campuses.</p> <p>6 pieces of equipment (amplifying speakers, and microphones) for hearing impaired students.</p> <p>A new elevator in the FALE building at</p>	<p>The office is scheduled to be set up by 31 December 2012. The position description of the Disability Services Coordinator/ Inclusive Manager has been completed and a temporary appointment will be offered by end of November 2012.</p> <p>The equipment has not been purchased.</p> <p>A new elevator in the FALE building at Laucala is planned but not installed.</p> <p>Funds have been committed for 2nd Hall modification and the Properties and Facilities department will start modification by early December, 2012.</p> <p>This is to ensure students are not distracted during exams and for construction work to be carried out</p>

	for use by students with disabilities but USP has no equipment or software to convert text to speech. No modified single accommodation for students with disabilities. No purposeful training of staff in making USP campuses welcoming and accessible to staff and students with special needs.	Laucala. Create and fit out a new specialist laboratory with software and equipment to support students with visual and hearing impairment. Convert the ground floor of 2nd Hall to create living space for 3 single male and 3 single female students with physical disabilities. 20% of academic and support staff have completed disability awareness training.	during the holiday period. The facility is expected to be completed by late January 2013. No disability awareness training achieved yet, awaiting appointment of temporary Disability Services Coordinator/Inclusive Manager. Improvement in wireless access meets the target of 100% in Kiribati and 80% in Samoa and Vanuatu. Disability ramps and toilets installed at the USP Cook Islands Campus.
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6.1 Discussion: Outcomes and impact in the context of the Strategic Plan

Services and facilities for students have undoubtedly improved during the review period (2010–12). Although some targets remain, progress is planned. An office to support and advise students with disabilities is in the process of being established. Equipment for hearing impaired students has not been purchased. However, USP has purchased “Read and Write Gold Software” to allow struggling students to access any curriculum and complete reading, writing, and research assignments, as well as to take tests independently. The software can be used to support students with reading and writing difficulties, and learning disabilities such as dyslexia and English as a second language. This software will be accessible to all students and staff of USP across all regional campuses.

Teachers, stakeholders and students consistently reported that the writing and oral and English communication of USP students and graduates is not of a satisfactory standard. Similarly, some students are unable to take full advantage of the learning opportunities offered by USP because of their poor skills in information and communication technology (ICT). The University has introduced 100 level modules in English for Academic Purposes and an ICT module, and this is a step in the right direction. However, this kind of general help is restricted to undergraduate students and is not enough to rectify the more extreme educational disadvantage experienced by some students and the lack of English language skills of some postgraduate students.

6.1.1 Recommendation 5: Support for English language and ICT skills development

Recommendation: Incentive funding should target student support in the areas of English language and ICT skills development and support at all regional campuses.

AusAID’s focus on ICT in the incentive funding seems to be impacting on student access to services. IT Services has opened 10 labs that operate 24 hours a day during the semester. Prior to opening the 10th Hall, wireless coverage had increased initially to 85%, but this then lowered to 77%. Students and staff report that there has been significant improvement in wireless coverage at some campuses. The ratio of the number of students to a computer has improved from 1 computer per 6 EFTS to 1 per 5 EFTS. Despite these improvements, student satisfaction with the University’s Information Technology Services remains rather low at 58% (assessed from paper-based, helpdesk and online surveys).

It is evident that the core funding provided by AusAID and NZ MFAT has had a major impact on the quality and range of facilities and equipment for learning, both in Suva and at the regional campuses. Staff and students interviewed report that this has improved the quality of student learning and the time students take to complete their studies. Documentary evidence of these assertions was not provided. USP has plans for further upgrading of resources for learning. However, in some of the regional campuses the numbers of students in some classes are still far too great for the resources. This is in part the result of USP's success in recruiting local students, so that the improvement in facilities enabled by the aid has not always kept up with the increases in the number of students.

There appears to have been a slight positive change in student retention over the review period. The years covering the review period had the best student retention rate over the last 10-year period, at 77% and 78%. Pass rates have not improved. The diversity of students and the many challenges they face is likely to impact on pass rates and retention performance at USP.

Table 12: USP retention rates of higher education student enrolments

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Retention rate	75%	77%	78%	78%
Pass rate	77%	78%	77%	NA

Note that non-award enrolments are excluded.

In 2010, USP undertook a benchmarking exercise with some of the universities in Australia that it considered had some equivalence with USP's mission. The benchmark retention average of the Australian universities was 75%. Thus, USP exceeded its chosen benchmark. Although a direct link with A/NZ funding cannot be objectively demonstrated, it is likely to have had a positive effect.

A student evaluation form of courses and teaching was designed by committee and is generic for all undergraduate courses. Some areas also administer a questionnaire of their own. Systematic evaluation has not been instituted for postgraduate programs. The way evaluations of teaching are generated and used is problematic. USP reported to the high-level consultation meeting in February 2012 that student satisfaction was 83% in 2011, up 4% from the 2010 survey. The survey was administered in 2011 online in such a way that only an 8% response rate was achieved, which meant the results were not really useable. When the data collection was moved to a manual system, a 30% response rate was achieved, but the results have not been made available to this review. The results of evaluation have not been fed back systematically to staff or Heads of Schools. There is no policy about feedback to students on the effects of evaluation. Evaluations are supposed to be discussed as part of performance management of staff, but this does not consistently happen.

6.1.2 Equity issues

In terms of equity, New Zealand's cross-cutting focus areas of gender, and human rights (particularly equity of access for disabled students and greater equity of service for students in regional areas) and AusAID's strategic goal of promoting opportunities for all are particularly relevant. Among the challenges facing higher education in the region, *The Draft Pacific Tertiary Education Strategy (2012)* lists barriers to access for marginalised populations, especially females and those with a disability.

Despite its limitations and early stage of development with respect to inclusivity, USP is very positive to cross-cutting issues such as disability and gender, and is willing to be active in promoting them throughout the region. It has also now introduced gender studies courses.

Gender

With respect to gender, USP has an inclusive management style with widespread consultation on policy and plans and it appears to have no structural barriers to women achieving at the top level.

However, more complex issues related to gender are not understood. An emerging question is the underperformance of boys in many countries. This needs to be tracked and addressed on a holistic basis. Most USP staff see the issue in terms of female students, so other gender issues, such as inequality of power relations are not recognised and do not receive attention.

There is still disparity between the sexes in terms of staffing, but the situation of female staff and the male/female balance is improving, as can be seen from the table below.

Table 13: Male/female balance in USP staff

Senior academic staff	Male	Female	Total	% of Females
2009	234	117	351	33%
2010	234	132	366	36%
2011	335	205	540	38%
Total academic staff				
2009	326	188	514	36.5%
2010	328	206	534	38.5%
2011	339	220	559	38.4%
Comparable staff (staff with academic titles not in an academic faculty)				
2009	92	71	163	43%
2010	94	74	168	44%
2011	4	15	29	51%

At student level, the gender balance has moved more in favor of females, leading to concerns about the aspirations and underperformance of males.

Table 14: USP student gender balance

	Female	%	Male	%	Total students
2009	9869	53%	8746	47%	18 615
2010	10 794	54%	9193	46%	19 987
2011	11 706	54.2%	9882	45.8%	21 588

Gender is stated to be a priority at USP but it is an area that competes for funding. With AusAID's focus now in this area, USP has developed a gender plan and is committed to a strategy for recruitment of staff and students that encompasses gender balance.

6.1.3 Disability and learning disadvantage

AusAID's Disability Reference Group provided USP with advice on its inclusive strategy. This group consists of international representatives, people with a disability and experts in the field. One question the advisory group raised was accessibility in the classroom. USP has now been working on this issue. Another question was on the training of teachers to work with students with learning disabilities. USP recognises the need in teacher training. USP is also planning to address the issue of students with learning disabilities: it is looking at a

coordinator to take up an advocacy role for students with a disability. This is an important initiative that was included in AusAID's incentive targets for 2012.

USP needs to develop a framework to ensure staff development focuses on disabled students and raises the understanding of different learning disabilities. The funds made available by aid agencies for disability in 2012 have been allocated according to requests made by all campuses. The allocation has been mainly used for improving physical access and classroom spaces, as well as for equipment for disabled students.

USP has made progress with respect to students with special needs: for example, its 2010 report on incentive funding targets notes that systems are in place with respect to teaching, examinations and graduation. Halls of residence have been renovated with the needs of students with mobility issues in mind. However, some areas of the University are still less accessible than others.

All the campuses visited have been adapted for mobility impaired students but none are recruiting students in wheelchairs in any number, if at all. This means that the investment is effectively wasted. This lack of recruitment is due to complex factors: most disabled students are not getting through school so are ineligible to enter USP in the first place, and there is a lack of marketing to tell students of the availability of special help. In Tonga, provision was made for two severely disabled students by providing teaching in the hospital where they were being treated. This was at the initiative of the Campus Director, and unrelated to the improvements for physical access at the campuses.

USP is just touching the surface of disability issues and still has a long way to go. So far it has not looked deeply at learning disabilities and its impact on equity. There is no specialist support in the regions to help students with learning disabilities.

This underlines the importance of the human factor in inclusive education. So far funding has gone into facilities. More could be achieved with the same investment if teachers were helped to adapt their attitudes and teaching to the needs of (say) partially sighted or hearing-impaired students, than through more investment in special facilities. More still could be achieved if investment was made in the most common learning disabilities such as dyslexia and dysphasia and more help for students with mental health issues (there is a Counselling Centre that provides some services but students and staff report this help is insufficient for the needs of regional students); and more still if provision was made for the inclusive education of disadvantaged students at the regional campuses, many of whom come from outlying islands and have poor study skills, inadequate English and/or no computer skills at all. The University's 100 level modules in English Language for Academic Purposes and ICT are a step in the right direction but it is not enough to rectify the more extreme educational disadvantage experienced by some students. Some students need intensive support in these areas; others have emotional or mental health issues that require access to counselling if they are to benefit from their studies.

USP has recognised that the major need for student support is in counselling. USP has filled three student counsellor positions in the last month, but all in Suva. It needs to improve this area across the whole University.

6.1.4 Ethnicity

There is no monitoring of students by ethnic background or English as a second language at USP. It is politically difficult to monitor groups. However, monitoring is done informally by staff recognising particular student group needs.

6.1.5 Recommendations 6 and 7: Support for students with learning disabilities and disadvantages

Recommendation: Incentive funding should focus on student support services at the local campuses and promoting teaching methodologies and student services that

meet the needs of students with mental health issues, intellectual learning problems and disadvantages.

These services should be available to more students, including postgraduate students, so they may then go on to successful further study.

7 Partnership objectives and outcomes: Teaching and learning

USP's achievement of targets from the Australia–USP Partnership Framework related to teaching and learning are set out in the tables below.

Table 15: Achievement of targets in Teaching and Learning Policy and Plan (Australia–USP, 2010)

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Outcome
Partnership commitment: Implement the Teaching and Learning Policy and Plan			
Teaching and Learning Policy and Plan approved by Senate	NA	Teaching and Learning Policy and Plan finalised for implementation by 2011	The Learning and Teaching Policy which was approved by the Senate at its 29 September 2010 meeting is now available online. The Learning and Teaching Plan is complete and was approved by Senate in 2012.

Table 16: Achievement of targets in assessment activities (Australia–USP, 2011)

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Outcome
Partnership commitment: Establishing a culture of assessment			
Number of in-house USP academic staff trained in writing curriculum that includes clear learning outcomes, rubrics and assessment activities	NA	At least 2 university-wide workshops on assessment At least 240 Academic and Comparable staff will be trained	There have been two University-wide workshops on assessment with 368 academic and comparable staff attending .

Table 17: Achievement of targets in work placements and distance learning (Australia–USP, 2012)

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Outcome
Partnership commitment: Increase student work placements, attachments and internships.			
Increased number of students in work placements attachments and internships	FALE: In 2011, 600 students were placed in work placements attachments and internship. FBE: 1 student placed in work placements attachments	FALE: 5% increase in students on work placements attachments and internships. FBE: Recruitment of Admin Assistant to coordinate placements and attachments. 2% increase for STHM, SAFT. At least 5 students to	The Social Work program requires students to go on internships, placements and field visits. All Tourism students who take TS 216 in the new B.Com in Hotel Management are required to do work placements, attachments or internships. FALE: As of Sem. 2, 2012, 584 students or 93% of the target were enrolled in courses that have work placement component.

	and internships	be placed on attachment in other schools.	FBE – As at 31 August 2012, STHM has placed 24 students on work attachments and SLMD has placed 18 students.
Partnership commitment: Convert additional full programs at both UG and PG level into a flexible distance learning format			
Percentage increase of full programs at UG and PG level available by distance and flexible learning.	7.4% undergraduate full programs are available by DFL. 0.56% PG full programs are available by DFL.	14.8% undergraduate full programs are available by DFL. 1.12% postgraduate full programs are available by DFL.	At the end of 2011, 482 of 570 courses utilised Moodle, (85% of all courses). As of June 2012 the Moodle statistics by faculties is as follows: FALE – 67% FBE – 92% FSTE – 90% Overall: 81% The above statistics are only for the UG and PG courses and excludes CFS and the 600, 700, 800, 900 courses.

Key: FALE: Faculty of Arts, Law and Education; FBE: Faculty of Business and Economics; FSTE: Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment; SAFT: School of Agriculture and Food Technology; SLMD: School of Land Management and Development; STHM: School of Tourism and Hospitality Management.

7.1 Discussion: Outcomes and impact in the context of the Strategic Plan

7.1.1 Graduate employability

One key measure of success is the employment prospects of students. The results over the period under review show a mixed picture. USP reported to the high-level consultation meeting in February 2012 that 68% of graduates are in some form of part-time or full-time work (down 2% from 2010) but 41% are engaged in further study (up 17% from the 2010 baseline). Of course, many universities in developed nations are also experiencing a downturn in graduate employment because of the global financial crisis.

One of the key objectives in priority 2 of the current Strategic Plan was to appoint a Careers Advisor. It has taken three years to fill this position with an appointment being made in September 2012. The Careers Advisory Service has now been established and may assist with students' employment prospects.

AusAID's incentive funding included targets related to work placement for students. The table above shows that more students now have this opportunity. The Employers' Federation, Fiji, reports that interpersonal and oral skills are lacking in too many graduates, although their writing skills are good. The graduates struggle in business settings to communicate using English. The Federation reports that postgraduate students' research skills are good.

More programs now include work experience: students generally find it themselves but USP uses its Employers' Federation links to help them. The Federation reported that many end up being employed full-time afterwards, so such experience is very important for their employment prospects. No figures were provided to back up this assertion, but it seems likely to have validity as the Federation is well informed about USP's work experience program. The Federation would like UPS to have more consultation with the private sector about improving vocational courses that are too theoretical and the need to manage students' expectation as to their starting levels. They stress the need to continually liaise with the private sector on content and methodology of courses.

7.1.2 Program quality

Quality remains an active concern for the USP. It has had 22 program reviews in the last two years with two major reviews still to be completed under the current Strategic Plan. Reviews

make recommendations that are then actioned according to a timeline. Accreditation of programs by international agencies is a priority. In the new Plan, there is an accreditation plan for the next five years. In some areas, there is evidence of an increase in the quality of programs offered, for example:

- The School of Tourism and Hospitality Management offers more and varied attachments and internships and has introduced online assessments
- the Social Work program offers more placements, appropriately designed assessment (100% coursework) that is better suited to the competencies developed
- the generic course UU100: Communications and Information Literacy has a 100% coursework assessment approach, which appropriately evaluates the competencies and skills under development.

The emphasis on work placements in the Australia–USP partnership targets is likely to have influenced these improvements in work placements and internships.

USP has started on a process of international accreditation for a number of its programs: the region wants to know its students are receiving a quality education and that they will gain jobs on graduation. USP also wants its students to have quality degrees that are portable internationally.

There is a problem with some students' readiness to begin higher education, especially from the more remote islands, and USP is addressing this. USP caters for students coming into the University with different abilities and learning experiences by offering foundation programs to prepare them for university study. It is taking a major role in creating pathways to university education and linking with TVET.

The number of USP's pre-degree (open school, foundation and preliminary programs) has increased in the period under review. It was reported that these programs are preferred by parents because students get better marks than from courses with other providers, but it was not possible to ascertain whether this is because the standards and quality control is lower with USP programs, especially when the teachers monitor exams, or whether the programs actually offer a better education than the alternatives. In any case, there is overlap with what is generally seen as the remit of secondary and other tertiary sections of the education system. This may be inconsistent with USP's vision of moving to the top of the qualifications pyramid and allowing more space at the bottom for other tertiary providers.

Assessment is being reviewed so that it differentiates appropriately between levels of study that correspond to Bloom's Taxonomy⁵. There have been two university-wide workshops on assessment with 368 academic and comparable staff attending. USP has met its target in this respect. However, a more consolidated approach to assessment across USP is needed, particularly with regional students.

The regional campuses rely on local tutors who are of variable quality and commitment. In two of the regional campuses, Tonga and Solomon, students spoke of in-country tutors who often did not turn up for scheduled tutorials. Many students complained that they do not receive the materials from Suva on time. Assignments are sent to Fiji for marking and can take too long to return to students. Students report that sometimes they only receive a mark and no other feedback on their assignments and therefore do not know how to improve their performance. Some feedback on assignments is not received until after the final exam making the feedback useless to the students' learning. USP is planning action to place quality tutors and regional assistants in the regions and to improve monitoring of tutor attendance and examination marking by Campus Directors.

⁵ Bloom, B. S., Engelhart, M. D., Furst, E. J., Hill, W. H., & Krathwohl, D. R. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: the classification of educational goals; Handbook I: Cognitive Domain*, New York, Longmans, Green, 1956.

A data warehouse is being developed that will allow factor analysis next year. It contains 43 years of data. Staff will be able to identify students at risk and address drop-out in real time with the early warning system in the data warehouse. Staff can also identify specific areas which will help USP focus its resource where they are needed.

The member countries would like to see USP provide more practical components to their programs, for example, in early childhood teacher training. Local stakeholders have expressed concerns that teachers graduating from the courses lack practical skills and relevant experiences, especially within-country contexts. USP has been alerted to the suggestion that there should be a lot more Pacific content in its courses.

USP has a program to train its staff in pedagogy through certificated courses. NZ is supportive of this initiative, as well as management training for staff. This is a target for the partnership.

7.1.3 Scholarships

Although scholarships are not part of the partnerships under review, they have an affect on USP's sustainability and performance and therefore they are of relevance to this review. Both NZ and AusAID award scholarships to students from the regions, some of which go to support students at USP. From the employers' perspective, the overall impression is that scholarships target the key skills areas that are needed and AusAID and NZ MFAT processes allow for checks and balances as to who is chosen.

The scholarship scheme addresses some equity issues in the selection of students. NZ offers leadership scholarships that have good governance and social rights as intended outcomes.

The HR Development Plan of the various countries and what the donor identifies as priorities drive scholarship offerings. This means students' choice of discipline studies is driven by scholarship offerings rather than what they really want to study. This potentially leads to drop-outs and failures and the question of 'How good is the HR Development Plan?'

Interviewees suggested that scholarships to study at USP seem to benefit students who are disadvantaged, especially from the outer islands. International scholarships are more likely to benefit a few who are highly academic and likely to cope with study in a strange environment far from home. It therefore seems that scholarships to USP represent good value for money and should be continued.

Table 18: Success of students on Australian Regional Development Scholarships at USP

Year	Semester	Total no. of ARDS students at USP	No. of students expected to complete studies (% of total)		No. actually completed (% of total ARDS students)		No. extended (% of total ARDS students)		No. unsuccessful (% of total ARDS students)	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2010	1	246	18	7.3	12	4.9	6	2.4	8	3.3
2010	2	206	41	19.9	32	15.5	9	4.4	3	1.5
2011	1	243	27	11.1	21	8.6	6	2.5	5	2.1
2011	2	227	57	25.1	53	23.3	4	1.8	9	4.0

7.1.4 Recommendation 8: Scholarship offerings

Recommendation: Study at USP at various levels up to postgraduate level should be part of the scholarship offerings by AusAID and NZ MFAT in the next funding period.

7.1.5 Distance and flexible learning and eLearning

NZ aid impacts on distance and flexible learning (DFL) and ICT, but is not specifically focused on it. The aid supports implementation of the whole of the Strategic Plan, monitored through reporting to Council. AusAID has been more directly involved through its incentive funding, project funding and the upgrading of facilities.

USP has undertaken many initiatives using A/NZ funding to provide more opportunities for study to remote areas and local campus students. Eighty five per cent of all courses are now on Moodle (an open-source, community-based tool for learning). USP has changed its delivery of teaching, using modern ICT tools, including M-Learning. The M-Learning project was started using AusAID incentive funding and USP has continued to grow it from there. AusAID funds have contributed to improved student support through better connectivity using AARNET, upgrades to the USPNet, and support for M-Learning programs.

While usage figures were not provided, interviews with staff and students indicate that the facilities are intensively utilised. In 2011, 49% of students were 'external' (that is not studying at the Laucala, Alafua and Emalus campuses). A further 30% were multimodal and studying by face-to-face and online. Thus only 21% were studying entirely on campus. This is a possible indication of usage online and of the need for these services.

While some DFL services (e.g. REACT) have improved on the campuses, resources and connectivity remain concerns. Too many students complain about interruption to connectivity that has considerable impact on their learning. The new Strategic Plan emphasises expansion based on eLearning platforms, but the IT services and support for the regions are not yet good enough and they need considerable investment. In addition, local campus libraries do not generally make sufficient use of online resources nor adequately support students to access them. This is in part because of the problems of connectivity and the equipment in the libraries, as well as a lack of human capacity to support these activities.

7.1.6 Recommendation 9: Improved ICT for eLearning on regional campuses

Recommendation: There should be continued support from AusAID and NZ MFAT through project funding and/or core/incentive funding to improve ICT connectivity and to upgrade the human/technical support for students' learning in regional campuses so that they can take advantage of e-resources and learning opportunities.

8 Partnership objectives and outcomes: Research, graduate affairs and innovation

Research, graduate affairs and innovation are a major focus of the Australia–USP Partnership Framework.

Table 19: Achievement of targets in research, graduate affairs and innovation (Australia–USP)

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Outcome
Partnership commitment: USP will implement strategies under Priority Area 3 of USP's Strategic Plan - Research, Graduate Affairs and Innovation			
The number of chairs, full-time research staff and post-doctoral fellows	Professors -19 Research staff – 28 (estimate)	Professors – increase by 2 – 3 Research staff - increase by 4 – 5	There are now 28 Professors in the University. There are also 4 Directors of Professorial rank and several adjunct professors. There are also two Professors in the VC's Office. Estimated to be 28 staff employed solely to do research. These are chiefly in the Institute of Applied Sciences. Records of staff wholly devoted to full time research are not currently available.
The number of regional partnerships	17	Increase number of regional partnerships to approx 19 in 2011 and 22 in 2012	The number of regional and international research partnerships for 2011 is 57, of these 11 are regional and 46 are international.

8.1 Discussion: Outcomes and impact in the context of the Strategic Plan

AusAID has invested in USP's research funding and in facilities. USP is planning a major transformation of the School of Education. USP aspires to be a major player in the region in terms of the way its research outputs are used to help develop the new AusAID Tertiary Strategy.

The aid USP has received has contributed to setting up USP's research platform for further development. However, interviewees suggested there remains 'lethargy' in some parts of the University with a limited number of staff being research active. USP intends to develop a new culture of robust and continuing interrogative research particularly into 'things Pacific' such as sustainable agricultural practices and oral traditions in the digital/electronic age.

Within respect to the new Strategic Plan, USP's research has not yet reached 'good' as categorised in the Western world. However, some of its research impacts on areas relevant to the Pacific: academics are involved in country policy development and local management and development activities that stem from research. USP has not been active in publishing in top international journals, mainly because of its stage of development as far as research is concerned.

8.1.1 Research activity over the review period

Six research clusters have been implemented over the partnership period, all of which are based on interdisciplinary themes with a cluster theme leader who is an expert in the field.

The University provides seed funding to promote interdisciplinary projects: 15 grants of approximately \$30,000–\$50,000 each to promote interdisciplinary team work. The aim is to promote interaction on research across subject disciplines and schools within the University.

USP recognises that research outputs have not been well disseminated. However, AusAID funding has provided for the development of an electronic research repository that contains all research active staff outputs of the University.

AusAID funding has allowed for an increase in research students from 147 reported to UCG in 2009 to 300 Masters and 80 PhD students. A key problem with student completion and supervision is staff leaving because of three-year contracts. There is a need to keep finding new supervisors. USP is introducing a new regulation for a team of supervisors rather than a single supervisor (initially for PhD and subsequently for research Masters students).

Regional partners, such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), report that there are areas that could be strengthened, especially USP's capacity to provide member countries with local knowledge based on research, as the countries themselves do not have strong research capacity to guide their own national developments.

8.1.2 Research and consultancy at regional campuses

The quality of research and consultancy at the regional campuses appears to be variable; much of this is due to the research capacity of the individual Campus Director or local academics.

The quality of research and innovation is reported to have greatly improved at the Institute of Education in the last three or four years. Research has been conducted on police, education, health, culture, community and other areas paired with other universities. Students are studying for Masters of Arts or doing Masters of Education coursework. Five academics act as supervisors with assistance from colleagues in Suva. In partnership with the police support program, the Institute conducted the national consultation to support the police's first Strategic Plan. The fees paid for more student support. The A/NZ aid is reported to have impacted on the quality of teaching, especially for the postgraduate students.

In the Solomon Islands, the campus has had difficulty in undertaking research. The staff are all new and none able to conduct research independently. They report that there is no-one to mentor them. Nevertheless, some have been undertaking consultancies in-country. There was a small consultancy on remuneration for a local college and the campus provides professional training for the Ministry of Education. The Director has been involved with a senior lecturer from Fiji working with ANU Enterprises (a wholly owned company of The Australian National University) to carry out a survey in the Solomon Islands.

The Public Service Office in Kiribati reports that USP research studies are not used in policymaking. The Government of Kiribati does its own research but this is not rigorous and is barely adequate for policy purposes. The Office would like USP to undertake research to meet government needs to be funded by aid agencies.

In Tonga, the Campus Director is active in encouraging research. She reports that the Climate Change Project has had a local impact as the campus ran a two-week 'train the trainer' workshop for local communities and from the sub-region. Tonga now has an in-country climate change project facilitated by a co-coordinator funded through donor agencies. A two-day workshop on renewable energy was the initiative of the Tonga science and engineering staff and was reported to be successful for the local community. It also provided the staff with access to the content of the Tonga Energy Roadmap.

The number of regional and international research partnerships at USP increased from 17 in 2010 to 57 in 2011.

8.1.3 Research students

During the review period, there has been a growing emphasis on postgraduate research. Even so, for a 44-year old institution, the 11% enrolment in PG programs is low. USP intends to move to 20% of enrolments at PG level and this signals a focus on research and graduate

studies. There is work still to be done on policies and supervision. USP needs to build a critical mass of supervisors across the University. Without this, it is difficult to improve research outputs. There is a need to resource the research portfolio, not just infrastructure but also to build human capacity to deliver the research.

The number of research students is increasing at USP, but few are yet completing as they are in the early stages of their studies. Faculties manage student progression. Each faculty meets twice a year to look at progress. USP will need to address the issue of teaching the large number of its research students who have English as their second language.

8.1.4 HR issues in research

There have been improvements in the number of senior research staff appointed during the review period. In 2010, USP had 19 professors, which increased to 28 professors in 2012. There are also four Directors of professorial rank, several adjunct professors and two professors in the Vice-Chancellor's Office.

One of the issues impacting on developing research capacity is HR policy – the three-year contracts make it difficult to attract good staff. Current staff have heavy teaching loads and there are very few research-only staff.

The focus on research is a recent phenomenon. There is no tradition of moving to research leadership: just PhD and individuals undertaking research. USP needs teams working on research, so in the future, the focus has to be on research leadership. A Research Skills Development (RSD) framework is now being embedded at all levels across the University.

In the current environment, there is a strong emphasis on learning and teaching and USP will need help from the aid agencies to focus on research relevant to the region's needs. USP has a long way to go before its research could be considered 'excellent'. Project funding can be a useful means of developing expertise in research and useful research outcomes. USP research clusters could be offered the opportunity to develop proposals for research with regional stakeholders (including the relevant ministry officials) to underpin policymaking and/or social and economic development. The University could then work the most promising of these into one or more project proposals that would develop research capacity in USP and meet an important information need in the region.

8.1.5 Recommendation 10: Project funding for regional research needs

Recommendation: AusAID should focus some of its project funding on research relevant to the region's needs.

9 Partnership objectives and outcomes: Regional focus

The achievements related to regional focus under the A/NZ partnership agreements are shown in the tables below.

Table 20: Achievement of targets in regional focus (Australia–USP)

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Outcome
Partnership commitment: Parties will identify and capitalise on opportunities for building public awareness and understanding of partnership outcomes			
Co-branding of all joint AusAID/USP work	NA	Logos appear on all materials generated by the partnership	This is standard practice. Logos are inserted once documents are finalised and ready for publication.
Media coverage of significant activities of the partnership	NA	Events organised for partnership include representatives of the media	This is the practice.
Partnership commitment: AusAID support for activities led by USP will receive substantive recognition			
All associated documents and publications generated by USP, both in hard copy and electronic, acknowledge contribution by AusAID	NA	AusAID logo appears on all materials generated by USP with partnership support	This is a standard requirement and checks are normally done by the Development Office in terms of logos.

Table 21: Achievement of performance measures in regional focus (NZ–USP)

USP performance measures	Outcomes
Focus area: Addressing country priorities	
Evidence that USP is engaging with countries to deliver academic programs that address their priorities.	There is such engagement. (See below and Section 12.1.1 for more discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of this engagement.)
Focus area: Regional coordination and coherence	
Annual reporting to Council on the achievements of relevant CROP Working Groups. Reporting to Council on USP's implementation of CROP gender strategies.	Twice annual reports are provided to Council every year with updates on CROP meetings attended and also participation in various CROP working groups. The University reports to Council on the gender strategies and work under the area of gender.

9.1 Discussion: Outcomes and impact in the context of the Strategic Plan

USP is perceived by most of the regional partners interviewed as well managed and increasingly responsive to the needs of the countries. USP is one of nine regional organisations that are part of the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP). It is the only CROP organisation providing higher education for capacity building and training. Aid has assisted USP in this.

9.2 Regional campuses

The regional campuses are generally competently run, but staffing is thin and they are too reliant on having a very capable director. Their efficiency and effectiveness is adversely affected by poor HRM.

A major weakness is the inequity in staffing, facilities and resources between the main campus and regional campuses. Although the reviewers did not have access to the changes in staffing levels for each campus, staff and students consistently reported that there had been considerable improvement over the review period. However, there is a need for continuing investment to reduce the remaining inequity, especially in physical resources and student support services. There will be a need for USP to invest in more intensive support for students with learning and other disabilities, intensive English language skill development for some students, better orientation into the possibilities and usage of the Moodle and other ICT systems for all students, and consideration of developing research skills and management skills of relevant staff in the regions. Local tutors will need to be appraised and managed better if they are to offer an equivalent service to students.

A major impact of AusAID funding has been on access for remote students: the speed of the Internet, more computers and access to academic support for students. There has been a major improvement in the number of courses offered online in the outpost centres. The reception is slowly improving for teleconferencing and courses through Moodle. Staff and students report this has resulted in improvement in the time students take to graduate, as students can complete faster with more courses being available.

Nearly all the campuses report that AusAID funding has enabled improvement in the ICT, bandwidth and facilities. Teaching and learning spaces for students have improved: some now have teleconferencing and PowerPoint installed. However, resources that are online are often difficult for regional students to access. Further investment in improved connectivity could have a major impact on student outcomes.

Student numbers have been increasing and facilities need to keep pace. Typically, campuses still need more and bigger classroom space, a bigger library and more IT and science laboratories. Many campuses have set up additional study spaces in huts, under eaves and elsewhere for informal learning. On some campuses, students can go on campus 24/7 to study and use Internet services. Campus security has had to be improved in many cases, as students studying during the night need to feel secure.

The lack of data supplied at campus level means that the impact of aid on the learning outcomes is hard to assess other than through interviews. In any case, pass rates can be a function of marking practices rather than the effects of teaching.

Students are organised as far as possible into viable teaching groups to justify the cost of bringing in external teachers: the elimination of very small classes may have had a negative affect on pass rates and student satisfaction at the margin and so be disguising an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning on more viable programs.

USP has plans to upgrade the regional campuses and so reduce the inequity of student experience with the main campus in Suva. USP is planning to build new campuses in Kiribati and the Solomon Islands under a soft loan from ADB. Recently, USP expanded the campus in the Cook Islands using AusAID funds.

The Campus Directors report that they are involved in USP decision-making. They attend an annual face-to-face forum to keep them informed of what is happening on the main campus. There are also monthly meetings via videoconference to keep them connected with other regional directors. Otherwise, communication is maintained mainly through emails: the VC provides regular policy discussion documents, reports and updates by email. Campus staff have also been involved in the strategic planning process, usually through a workshop led by the VC or a member of the senior management team.

Most campuses report that they have a Campus Advisory Committee that looks at aligning what the governments need and what USP wants to achieve. The committee is made up of stakeholders from the USP, government, telecom, media, electricity and professional people.

9.2.1 Recommendation 11: Invest in regional campuses

Recommendation: AusAID and NZ MFAT should continue to invest, through core and/or incentive funding, in reducing the inequity between the facilities at the Suva campus and the regional campuses, including investment in increased human resources, teaching space, more ICT equipment and bigger and better stocked science laboratories and libraries.

9.3 USP relationships with regional stakeholders

USP has to try and meet the (possibly conflicting) objectives of several different governments. The donor bodies could help facilitate the stakeholders, USP and its local campuses to frame a coherent overarching narrative about what the broad aims and objectives should be for tertiary education in the region and particular countries.

The Secretariat for the Pacific Board of Educational Assessment (SPBEA) is an important partner in the region. Its mandate is focused on assessment. It has started to move from national to international levels. It has longstanding regional qualifications for Years 12 and 13 and this overlaps the foundation and preliminary programs offered by many USP campuses. It also assists in training teachers and upskilling them in assessment. USP is involved in upskilling teachers, and so there is some overlap here too. It is important that the two organisations work in partnership on regional issues related to assessment and qualifications. As local secondary and tertiary education improves, USP may need to consider whether its main focus in the future should shift more towards degree levels.

USP's role as a voice of the region has been growing significantly. For example, USP has put in place a disaster risk management program and is now working with other regional organisations on similar programs.

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) works closely with the University. PIFS has developed a regional strategy on education, which focuses on three strategic goals: improving access; quality; and efficiency and effectiveness. PIFS reports that USP has made available resources for the work the forum undertakes in education. It has been supportive in carrying out the decisions of Forum Education Ministers in the region, including programs that target social issues that countries face, such as school drop-outs and unemployment.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community reports that it has been working closely with USP on the Regional Framework for ICT in Education and the regional framework on TVET. Both frameworks were approved by the Forum Education Ministers at their meeting in May 2012 in Vanuatu.

The Team Leader of the TVET in Pacific Secondary Schools: New Visions, New Pathways initiative at Kiribati has good interaction with USP. He has discussed possible cooperation after USP ran a successful TVET symposium.

The University's Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PACE-CD) is important in relation to climate change impacts, water shortage and coastal erosion. There is

interest at USP in expanding this kind of work to other centres and regions. USP will need more resources both to undertake its core remit and to contribute to other areas of benefit to the region.

USP makes a significant contribution to a variety of organisations and government bodies across the region. This regional focus is not cheap to achieve and the University will need to see its funding maintained or increased if it is to continue to move beyond a narrow focus on teaching and research towards one that embraces community engagement, using its considerable expertise for the benefits of the region and the countries within it.

There is a problem with communication in the region. Local supportive discussion is generally not happening between USP and the local aid representatives. This is aggravated by the fact that the ministries in some countries do not know what each other is doing in the tertiary education sector, and not always within the same ministry. They are occasionally not networking well either with the local aid agencies or the tertiary providers. This leads to the possibility of incoherence of policy and wastage of funds. It creates a particularly risky context for funding decisions that may be on the horizon with the development of national universities, as any national or other redistribution of funds could have unintended impacts on what USP can offer.

See Section 12.1.1 for further discussion of USP's relationship and engagement with AusAID and NZ MFAT within the region.

See Section 14 for discussion of regional developments which may influence factors for the way forward in funding USP.

10 Modality of aid to USP

Previously, A/NZ support to USP was through memoranda of understanding. The move to partnership arrangements based on USP's strategic objectives seems to have had an almost entirely positive impact.

The A/NZ partnerships provide flexibility to USP in how it uses the core funding. The link to partnership agreements is an effective mechanism to ensure that the major priorities of each donor and USP's own commitment to quality teaching, learning, research and regional service are addressed. USP is very active in its consideration of targets within the partnership agreements and in implementing their recommendations. Since the partnerships are based in part on USP's strategic objectives, there is a very positive impact.

The reviewers did not see evidence to comment on how AusAID had taken previous reviews into account in their partnership agreements, but it is probable, since they work effectively, that such evidence must have influenced them, and particularly AusAID's move to incentive funding, which has been successful.

NZ MFAT decided that program and project funding was diverting USP from its core business and creating transaction costs on both sides. It decided that there were benefits from having a more strategic engagement with USP. This was part of an overarching development of NZ MFAT's philosophy regarding its aid strategy. It wanted to align its aid program to bigger, fewer, longer and deeper activities. This also has been an effective modality.

See also Section 12.1.1: USP engagement with NZ MFAT and AusAID, which discusses the effects of the current management arrangements.

Given that one of the purposes of core funding is to reduce transaction costs for both parties, it is important to find an appropriate balance regarding information requirements and engagement. This has implications for the proportion of funds provided to projects versus the proportion provided via core or incentive funding. USP is at a stage of maturity where the proportion of project funding provided by AusAID might be reduced and perhaps restricted to

areas where seed funding is especially useful, such as developing research and consultancy. It would be useful if incentive fund assistance could cover more expert human resources, especially in some key areas where the University faces recruitment challenges and on providing more student support in the regional campuses.

Any move to competitive funding for service provision needs to be considered in the light of transaction costs to both parties versus the benefits of a simpler system.

10.1 Alternative aid modalities

A variety of alternative aid modalities are possible and were considered by the reviewers. For example, the agencies might make a proportion of the budget support contingent on specified education outcomes, or on financial accountability measures (for example, increasing the proportion of funds spent on academic rather than administrative support). They might link future funding tranches to performance in key delivery areas. They could contract services (education, research, consultancy) from the University, which would then get paid based on how many people or organisations benefit from the services etc.

However, there are problems with such performance-centred approaches. They can distort activity and lead to (apparent) compliance. They assume that the aid agencies are in a better position to judge what the University's focus should be than the University itself, and they are likely to result in insufficient upfront resources for implementation as USP has limited funds. USP is an ambitious university. Such approaches can lead to the avoidance of risky or challenging projects, where results are harder to achieve. Most importantly, they would weaken university/country ownership where donors impose targets. The evidence to date on these approaches show that they do not deliver sustained improvements:

'the accumulated evidence that ex-ante conditionality (we will disburse funds if ...) is a blunt instrument for achieving development objectives. In particular, it is recognised that this approach is not effective in bringing about sustained policy change and effecting complex reforms that change institutions.'⁶

AusAID and NZ MFAT have made limited use of performance-based approaches to date, with the focus around results currently on the University's own agenda. The approach has been rewarding and not punitive. AusAID deals with more serious concerns around performance, by making a limited proportion of budget support contingent on the University achieving a reasonable (but not perfect) performance on key areas. Both aid agencies adequately monitor that their funding is leading to improvement through a variety of means that are described in this report. AusAID's approach has the advantage that it achieves a higher profile for its funding and it can actively support progress towards strategic goals through the reports of the incentive funding. NZ MFAT can also target the achievement of the USP Strategic Plan and manage its direct budgetary support through a relatively smaller staff establishment.

Other funding modalities are possible, but they have disadvantages over the present system. For example, development aid can come through the provision of soft loans. This approach has advantages where the entity receiving funds has a good prospect of returning a profit from which the loan may be repaid, and where reinvesting the profit in the entity is not the better option. This is not the case with USP.

Other modalities tie the aid to activities that further the donor's agenda, whether political or social. An example of this is the EU funding for staff and student exchanges and the Alliance Francais program of cultural events in developing countries. Since AusAID and NZ MFAT are more interested in USP achieving its agenda, rather than their own interests, this modality would not be appropriate.

⁶ Advisory Board for Irish Aid, *Good Governance, Aid Modalities and Poverty Reduction* from Better Theory to Better Practice, February 2008.

10.2 Per student funding approach

In the future, as regional countries develop their own universities, and the aid agencies develop their own strategies in response, the aid agencies and governments may 'buy' so many students at so much per head. The governments will ask for a costing for all the disciplines to decide what it is willing to pay for, so USP must have an accurate method of estimating costs of programs, so they will be able to influence the agencies and governments in setting the unit of funding in each subject. Where USP's costing are out of line with the unit of funding per student in any discipline area, USP will have the financial data to make decisions about cutting costs or restructuring its discipline/program portfolio. It has instigated a system of course costing that is being further developed in 2013.

Moving from core funding to a system based on per EFT or per student as proposed by the AusAID Pacific Tertiary Education Strategy will require a set of regulations to be drawn up by the donor to determine units of funding varied by mode of study, discipline area and level; a system of accounting for student numbers recruited, retained and/or graduating by the universities so funded in each category; a funding and verification timetable that fits the university annual planning and reporting cycles; and a system to audit the data that are returned.

10.3 Program-based approach

Program-based approaches are a response to growing evidence on the shortcomings of stand-alone aid projects. Rather than using dedicated management structures to channel aid funds into specified investments, these are more flexible. The assistance is provided through existing systems to support an agreed program of improvements, for example through general budget support. NZ MFAT's support for USP is an example of a program-based approach that supports local leadership of planning, budgeting and implementation of activities. Support for projects are possible within a program framework, provided that they support the general direction of the program. The GMES project is an example of this.

Program-based approaches have various advantages such as leadership by the local organisation. They allow a single comprehensive program and budget framework and a harmonisation of procedures for reporting, budgeting and financial management. They can promote local systems for design and implementation, financial management, monitoring and evaluation. These advantages are evident in the present modalities for NZ MFAT's and AusAID's support.

Program-based approaches allow the integration of the effort of more than one donor contribution, and match good change management principles. The approach is generally seen to represent good practice⁷. They are more successful in an environment where corruption is controlled and management is sound. AusAID's and NZ MFAT's approach to funding USP fits this model. This review does not, therefore, suggest major changes in modality in the next review period.

It is not recommended that AusAID move to the NZ model as its present modality meets relevant aspects of its objectives. Nor is it recommended that NZ move to AusAID's model as this would not fit its philosophy.

See Section 15: Conclusions for discussion of Recommendation 13.

Recommendation 13: NZ MFAT and AusAID should continue to fund USP through the partnership agreements and maintain core and/or incentive funding at an increased level.

⁷ See for example, <http://www.aideffectiveness.org/Tools-Aid-modalities-PBAs-SWAPs.html>

10.4 Setting performance targets

In assessing impact, core funding in particular precludes any drawing of cause/effect inferences. This is a problem in assessing whether such aid has caused beneficial impact on outcomes, though it has been easier to assess the effects of inputs and processes. At present, USP receives just under a quarter (22%) of its funding from the aid agencies. No university could lose such a substantial part of its funding without severe impacts on what it is able to offer in the way of programs and facilities. This is especially true of a university that has not much spare capacity.

This makes the performance targets associated with such aid particularly important. At USP's stage of development, it is appropriate to retain some input and process targets since inputs (such as resources) and processes (such as systems) still represent barriers to student learning, regional service and research outcomes. However, the situation has improved over the review period and so it may be time for AusAID and NZ MFAT to move the balance between input and process targets and indicators (though not completely) toward outcomes and outputs.

Such outcomes will need to be carefully formulated and aligned to the USP Strategic Plan if they are not to lead to unintended consequences. For example, a target of improved student pass rates may lead to a lowering of standards and grade inflation. Other targets, such as improved student satisfaction, employment outcomes, recruitment of students with disabilities and research publication of staff may be negotiated which support and reward the University's goals in its Strategic Plan.

10.4.1 Recommendation 12: Move towards outcomes and outputs

Recommendation: In the next funding period, AusAID and NZ MFAT should negotiate with USP a framework that moves the balance between input and process targets and indicators somewhat towards outcomes and outputs.

11 Level, timing and duration of funding

The levels of funding provided under each of the partnerships were appropriate. At a time when governments were unable to increase their units of funding to USP in real terms, and when USP was developing its teaching and learning facilities, student support systems and research, it was important that USP received sufficient funding to support its strategic goals.

The timing of contributions to USP under the partnerships worked well. The volume of funds was known well in advance so planning was facilitated. The funds came in at periods that suited the financial and planning cycle. The three-year period covered by the partnerships was aligned with the USP Strategic Plan and this duration of funding was appropriate.

A triennium budget supports forward planning as well as being compatible with other funding streams and should be compatible with the mid and final points of the USP new Strategic Planning cycle.

See also Section 5.3: Monitoring and Reporting, where the following recommendations have already been discussed.

Recommendation 3: Wherever possible:

- **AusAID and NZ MFAT should continue to use a common reporting format, which is compatible with the annual cycle for activity planning and budgeting at USP and the triennial cycle of strategic planning and funding from other sources.**

- **Funds supplied and activities supported, whether on a competitive, commercial or incentive/core funding or project basis should be reported according to a common timetable, compatible with USP's own planning and reporting cycle.**
- **The flow of funds from competitive, commercial or incentive/core funding should form part of one overarching partnership and reporting agreement.**

12 Management arrangements between A/NZ and USP

The partnership agreements were designed to fit with USP's strategic objectives and the reports fitted with a sensible reporting schedule and so there was not a wasteful accountability burden. NZ MFAT and AusAID both contribute funding to USP's recurrent budget and in support of implementation of the Strategic Plan. This is an effective way to provide support as it allows USP the flexibility to apply the funding to areas of greatest priority as determined by the University and its members. It also reduces transaction costs. Assistance aligned with the Strategic Plan has been an efficient way to achieve set targets and key performance indicators.

NZ MFAT's approach reduces the accountability burden on USP and its own administrative burden, and works well as long as the partner organisation does not suffer adverse changes and the environment remains relatively constant. The approach certainly provides the space for the University to achieve strategic goals while the donor has confidence in the University. NZ MFAT can draw on other evidence that such confidence is warranted: for example, the Governance and Management Enhancement and Strengthening Project and the follow up to the 2008 Quality Audit.

The accountability burden can be reduced to a manageable level if monitoring and evaluation demands of the donors continue to be aligned with each other, with the various funding streams and with USP's own planning and reporting periods.

NZ MFAT reported that it analyses the reports to Council (including review/quality audit reports, annual plans, Finance and Investment, Audit and Risk, Strategic Plan reporting etc) and both aid organisations have representatives who attend Council meetings. In addition A/NZ monitor through trilateral high-level consultation (six monthly) meetings. NZ MFAT had representation on the Governance Task Force until it completed its work; and commissioned the GMES monitoring report, which provided good information on progress related to governance and management strengthening part way through the life of the partnership arrangement.

The AusAID and NZ MFAT Suva Posts have frequent on-the-ground engagement with USP at a number of levels (from VC to faculty, including in regard to the performance of scholarship students) and they also hear from other Posts.

Council and SMT members interviewed stated that Australia and New Zealand's participation in Council and the University Grants Committee supported the objectives of the partnerships. Where there was regular attendance of the donor representatives and representatives had a constructive attitude (as was generally the case), they seem to have added great value to the quality of Council deliberations.

12.1.1 A/NZ engagement with USP and regionally

Staff and Council members at USP report that the partnership with AusAID works very well and they are keen to meet AusAID's expectations. The VC reports that his relationship with the AusAID staff in Suva, as well as in Australia is good. He also reports that the relationships with NZ MFAT, and between AusAID and NZ MFAT have been very good.

NZ engages with regional tertiary education issues in general and USP in particular through three main mechanisms: membership of USP Council, annual high level talks, and Pacific

Islands Forum meetings on education strategy at ministerial levels. It also has representation on the Institute of Education's Advisory Group that meets once a year.

NZ has chosen to engage with USP through direct subsidy to its recurrent budget. It buys into the USP Strategic Plan as a whole, rather than funding particular aspects of it. This approach fits with NZ MFAT's philosophy and reduces transaction costs. There may be potential risks with this approach: with core funding there can be less accountability (and a lower accountability burden), NZ may be less able to influence the local tertiary agenda and the aid may not receive the attention that a more interventionist approach would attract.

NZ MFAT assesses the evident benefits of this approach to USP's ability to offer quality education and services as outweighing any theoretical risks. In addition, NZ MFAT has a range of measures in place to mitigate any such potential risks. The NZ/USP contract has sufficient conditionality should it be required. It does not ask for specific detailed outputs reporting just for its own purposes and accepts the papers provided to Council as the formal written reporting. These papers, for example, provide detailed information on Strategic Plan information, trend data in terms of enrolments, student outcomes, financial health etc. NZ MFAT considers this an appropriate balance to achieve a high level of accountability but with reduced transaction costs. When combined with all other forms of monitoring, there is a high degree of engagement and of accountability, since NZ is concerned about USP's overall performance, rather than specific project performance.

This approach has an unintended consequence that staff in the NZ Posts visited in Kiribati, Tonga and the Solomon Islands rarely communicate with USP about what it is doing to support key objectives and themes. Because of this lack of local knowledge and communication, they may not be able to advise the NZ MFAT at the centre about how the local tertiary strategy is operating, its coherence, potential risks and benefits as countries develop their own national universities: issues that raise difficult questions for funding priorities.

On the other hand, NZ MFAT states that this is not the typical situation across Posts. For example, in Rarotonga, the New Zealand aid program is currently funding the development of a Tertiary and Continuing Education Strategy and so it claims its Posts are in a good position to advise Wellington on Cook Islands tertiary education strategy and where it might be best placed to focus efforts.

USP is doing a great deal locally on the study of the environment, climate change and others of NZ MFAT's themes, but this seems to be from their own initiative rather than in response to NZ's agenda. NZ MFAT uses some local information to inform its bilateral and regional funding across its programs. It is possible that the development of local channels of communication about USP's place in the whole education strategy in more of its Posts would enable NZ MFAT to contribute to a more coherent educational strategy and to the promotion of its objectives and themes at local level without compromising its devolved approach to funding overall. The suggestion relates to local communication, not formal reporting and accountability systems.

AusAID collects a certain amount of local information about USP's strengths, weaknesses and how it is meeting the partnership and other objectives, especially in Suva, where it influences the form and coherence of the narrative around tertiary education for the benefit of all partners. However, AusAID's local office is not fully aware of matters in the regional campuses. It may need to be better informed on the quality and range of what is offered locally by USP if it is to give the centre the best advice about the distribution of resources and influence partners at the local level towards coherent and cost-effective tertiary strategies.

AusAID is asking itself some fundamental questions and needs local communication to assess the consequences of each possible answer to these questions.

- What sort of partner should AusAID be looking for?
- What are the institutions that AusAID needs to strengthen?
- Should AusAID be doing more for those who do not have strength for priority setting and strategic planning?
- Should AusAID partner with those organisations that already possess this capacity?

The problem with communication is on every side: USP should be keeping the local aid agency representatives in touch with what it is doing for the region. However, that local supportive discussion is generally not happening. The problem is aggravated by the fact that the ministries in some countries do not know what each other is doing in the tertiary education sector, and not always within the same ministry. They are occasionally not networking well either with the local aid agencies or the tertiary providers. This leads to the possibility of incoherence of policy and wastage of funds. It creates a particularly risky context for funding decisions that may be on the horizon with the development of national universities, as any national or other redistribution of funds could have unintended impacts on what USP can offer.

13 Projects supported

AusAID provides project funds amounting to A\$6,866,656 (F\$12.7 million). The general impression of project management from within USP is that it is effective and provides a powerful means of communication and networking with AusAID.

The projects are well targeted. Some projects have already shown a positive impact but more emphasis is needed in developing international development objectives, which are critical to long-term sustainability. A number of projects have provided seed-corn money and/or expert assistance that continue to yield benefits. GMES is an example of this.

More scrutiny of the timing of projects at the planning stage would be of great assistance to USP in its implementation schedules as sometimes it is difficult for staff to start projects on time due to other work issues.

Generally, the projects supported were aligned with AusAID's regional strategy and bilateral Partnerships for Development. The Climate Change Project has great potential for the future in terms of such partnerships. The individual projects are explained in Annex 7.

Project funding and implementation is discussed in detail in Section 5.1.3. The recommendations for project funding are covered in that section. USP is now more mature in many areas, which means project support can be at a reduced level.

Recommendation 1: Some project funding should continue, but at a reduced level.

Recommendation 2: USP and AusAID should develop a more critical stance to project planning, especially to the feasibility of the activities given the timelines ascribed to them.

Section 8 discusses USP's research capability, which ties into the success and focus of research projects. See this section for further discussion regarding Recommendation 10.

Recommendation 10: AusAID should focus some of its project funding on research relevant to the region's needs.

14 Influencing factors for the way forward

A wide range of factors influence the way forward for A/NZ support for USP. One of these factors is USP's 2013–2018 Strategic Plan. The plan focuses on the region rather than just Suva, and so aid will be able to assist the regional campuses to better serve the increasing number of students who study there.

The overall priorities of the aid organisations influence USP funding. One of AusAID's strategic goals is promoting opportunities for all, and particularly females. The aim is to enable development and so help people overcome poverty through improving equity, health, governance and sustainable development and empowering women. AusAID intends to base its investments in education on what works, is effective aid and achieves results. This report aims to assist them in doing so.

AusAID's higher education support is focused on national development priorities; supporting quality improvement in university teaching, so that USP can produce skilled professionals needed in strategic industries and services; and supporting public-private partnerships where appropriate.

Another important influencing factor is AusAID's regional tertiary strategy. The Pacific Tertiary Education Strategy lists the challenges facing higher education in the region as:

- limited capability to respond flexibly to changes in labour market demand or to deliver innovative training solutions
- low level of industry involvement
- recruitment and retention of suitably qualified teaching staff
- low academic standards of many students at entry
- pressure to increase enrolments irrespective of capacity or quality
- barriers to access of marginalised populations, especially females and those with a disability
- inadequate internal quality assurance mechanisms and almost no external quality assurance or benchmarking
- governance, management and administrative weaknesses
- poor physical facilities including inadequate information technology, libraries, and equipment
- poor student services /amenities
- safety and security issues affecting both staff and students, especially females.

USP must play its part in meeting and overcoming these challenges.

Under AusAID's new tertiary education strategy, there are a number of funding flows, including a competitive funding flow, which would require USP to compete for funded local student places in the open marketplace with the Fiji National University, other higher education institutes, and technical and vocational education and training providers, including institutes of technology. There is a risk that this will put a further administrative burden on USP through the costs of developing proposal papers and bids, some of which will not be successful, and in the monitoring and reporting on multiple funding streams, which is more complex than a simpler system.

AusAID is supporting a Pacific Research and Education Network across the region. Some of the tertiary institutions in the region have very limited or no Internet connections and there are pedagogical and administrative benefits for connectivity for these islands. USP may move into a contractual arrangement with AusAID to help to meet the agenda in the region. The relationship is likely to move beyond a general partnership into a business contract arrangement, similar to that already in place for scholarship student services, to provide this network, based on USP's own network (USPNet). This may create another flow of funds that USP would need to manage and report upon. It represents both an opportunity, as well as a

risk to its funding base if the service level agreement is not well costed by USP and/or the contract is relatively short-term.

With the new agenda, there will also be funding for foundation and bridging programs. These may or may not be competitive.

Thus, in the future, in addition to its present funding streams, USP may be competing for funds with other providers, competing for student places, and developing funding streams based on the provision of a range of services contracted on a commercial or semi-commercial basis from donors and governments. This is likely to add risks and uncertainties. They will add considerably to transaction costs and the accountability burden and will need to be managed carefully. Thus, it may be time to look at an integrated approach to how AusAID and NZ MFAT will work with USP. If there are to be multiple funding streams, for example based on a variety of service delivery contracts and competitive funding streams as well as project funding and incentive funds, the timing of the bidding/decision process will need to integrate with USP's financial planning calendar and the reporting system fit with the University's monitoring and reporting timetable and formats.

The overarching aims of New Zealand's aid program are outlined in its International Development Policy Statement: Supporting sustainable development (2010): 'The mission of the New Zealand Aid Program is to support sustainable development in developing countries, in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable, and prosperous world'. The document particularly emphasises the sustainable development and gender, environmental and human rights implications of interventions.

NZ MFAT does not target particular themes directly through its funding, but rather targets the USP Strategic Plan priorities which it sees as consistent with its own. NZ MFAT also funds a range of development scholarship schemes open to students from the Pacific. It is about to consolidate and reorganise some of its existing schemes and introduce new scholarships matched to the human resource development needs of partner countries. NZ intends to fund training schemes for academics and leaders.

Another influencing factor is the developing priorities of the member countries (for example, for data on which to base policy decisions) and USP's ability to respond to these. See Section 8 on research and consultancies.

Member country funding for USP is an important factor also discussed in this report (see Section 4.1.4). Member countries make demands on USP and do not match their funding to the resources they are willing to supply. The perception of ownership of USP by members is affected by their competing priorities, including in some cases the development/expansion of local tertiary systems, so the outlook for a better match between demands and funding will require USP to continue to engage with the members on an analysis of costs and benefits of various models of provision. USP needs to ensure member governments are aware of the realities of funding, and needs to provide them with evidence of the value of increasing their contributions.

Sustainability is a long-term issue dependent on reaching and maintaining international quality in all core areas (teaching and learning and research). This will probably take two to three Strategic Plan cycles, provided that the management capacity of USP is maintained during these cycles. Even then, there are still political issues over the level of government sponsorship that are largely outside of USP control.

15 Conclusions: Good practice and lessons learnt from implementation of the partnerships

15.1 Governance, management and financial health

There was no evidence that USP is wasting money nor that there is any corruption, even though it is operating in some countries where corruption is endemic. It appears that it is spending the aid it receives on the intended purposes. Although it was not possible to undertake a detailed analysis of USP's finances, from the number of people interviewed and their openness, any significant abuse in this respect would have been revealed.

USP's 2011 Annual Report provides evidence that financial systems and USP's financial performance are both improving and that there is a healthy surplus. The University's STAR project is leading to greater efficiency.

The main risks are a lack of management capacity and HR problems. Management remains thin and HRM is a relatively weak area within the University. Three-year contracts are often reviewed right at the end of the contract leaving staff in a difficult situation where they are virtually forced to apply for other jobs in case they are not renewed. USP may consider changing to a different system, at least for some key posts; for example, rolling three-year contracts renewed annually, so that staff always have two years remaining on their contract. This would have relatively little budgetary implication but may lead to a reduction in key staff turnover and management disruption.

USP is reliant on the core donor aid to achieve its Strategic Plan and maintain its quality and services. It is likely that the funding it gets from governments will continue to be eroded by inflation, or may even suffer more drastic cuts as some countries seek the funds to invest in their new national universities. The University is committed to seeking more funds from commercial activities and consultancies, but it is not anticipated that USP will be able to fund the gap in the medium term, given the low level of wealth available locally to pay for services.

15.1.1 Recommendation 13: Continue to fund through partnership agreements

Recommendation: NZ MFAT and AusAID should continue to fund USP through the partnership agreements and maintain core and/or incentive funding at an increased level.

15.2 The role of the partnerships in achieving the Strategic Plan

Incentive funding provided by AusAID is tied to the achievement of particular aspects of the Strategic Plan and this is clearly laid out in the funding agreements between AusAID and USP.

USP has systems in place to implement the Strategic Plan. It is not clear whether they would have been as systematic without the requirement to report to the aid agencies, but it is likely that reporting would have happened in any case, but it may not have been as targeted.

Eighty per cent of the key performance indicators have been achieved and USP is hopeful that the remaining 20% will be accomplished by the end of 2012. It is apparent that aid funds received under A/NZ partnerships have greatly assisted USP in the implementation of its Strategic Plan. The partnerships provide flexibility to USP in how it uses the core funding supplied by the aid agencies.

USP is keen to know in a reasonable time frame about the support it will receive from AusAID and NZ MFAT as it moves into its new Strategic Plan.

A/NZ have been crucial partners in assisting USP to achieve most of its strategic goals. There appears to have been a positive impact from the partnerships in terms of:

- learning environment for students
- relationships with the region
- relevance to members
- quality and relevance of programs
- inclusivity, especially of students in the region who are able to benefit from improved distance and flexible learning facilities and programs
- some improvement in the ability of students to graduate with a better range of relevant skills and experiences.

The assistance provided has enabled changes in the outlook, the physical structure, the growth in numbers of people seeking an education, and the positive perception of the USP and AusAID. Campus Directors report that the investment and projects have greatly impacted on student learning.

Impact is not just a factor of a particular aid but a combination of several factors, including the intentions and capacity of the beneficiaries themselves. The regional nature of the University is by definition a complex configuration but achievements have been great in the review period.

Research projects were well-targeted, but perhaps more emphasis is needed in developing international development objectives, which are critical to long-term sustainability, for example, strengthening the role of regional campuses in hosting international students.

The partnerships have raised awareness in USP of gender issues and there is a certain amount of activity around these issues: for example, the introduction of gender studies in the teaching program. However, there remains work to do at a deeper level. USP will need systems to ensure gender equality is meaningfully tracked and reported to Council, for example, the types of courses taken, the time to completion for men/women, employability /destinations, the student experience, regional variations in all of these issues etc.

There is no real evidence of significant gender inequality either in research or teaching, although males seem to underachieve on some islands. There is data on the achievement of the two sexes, but analysis could be taken further and lead to action; for example on the need to support the study skills of those of one or other gender on particular campuses.

A high proportion of women are participating and achieving across activities. However, it is not clear that this is due to any significant affirmative action agenda. In some of the regions, such as the Solomon Islands, there has been a large increase in women coming to study at the campus over the review period.

With respect to disability, the partnerships have enabled facilities to improve, particularly as far as mobility access is concerned, but there is more work to do in the recruitment and retention of disabled students and staff, meeting the needs of people with physical disabilities and mental health issues and, very importantly, students with other learning difficulties.

The needs of the regional campuses and their students are beginning to be met with the support of the partnerships, and the projects and funding are considered to be appropriate. However, there are disparities between the provision of staff and facilities at different campuses so all students do not yet have an equal opportunity to succeed at their studies.

There are features of monitoring and evaluation processes and systems at USP in development that will eventually allow more analysis of, for example, student outcomes and student evaluations. USP provides information on Strategic Plan implementation through its SPOMS system, which can track outputs. USP also collects and analyses data relating to outcomes (e.g. times to completion, retention rates etc). It has also developed surveys to obtain information on graduate outcomes through the destination survey/employability survey.

USP can improve further by formalising internal monitoring and evaluation processes. Mechanisms are in place for implementation/engagement with AusAID and NZ MFAT: six-monthly meetings, Council meetings, annual meeting in Wellington/Canberra with the Vice-Chancellor, indirectly through A/NZ's representatives to USP Council and UGC and ad hoc but relatively frequent engagements by Suva Posts. Monitoring and evaluation has been inbuilt in the high-level consultation process. In addition, it occurs through involvement in high-level regional bodies such as PIF. This review itself is one form of monitoring and evaluation.

The long-term partnership between A/NZ and USP, built around more demanding outcomes, will be important to assure a future where the education, regional service and research at USP reaches the levels of excellence that the South Pacific needs.

AusAID and NZ MFAT should continue to support the USP through the new Strategic Plan 2013–2018. The Plan focuses on the region rather than just Suva, and so aid will be able to assist the regional campuses to better serve their increasing number of students.

15.3 Reflections on other impacts of funding

If A/NZ funding ceased, USP would have no choice other than to reduce its range of offerings in terms of teaching, research and consultancy, make staff redundant and reduce its capital plans. In the next planning period, USP could not achieve its strategic objectives from fees and the funds from member governments and other regional partners. In fact, with the emergence of new national universities, this funding is more likely to reduce in real terms than increase. The core activity of the University could be sustained with a reduction in aid, but at a reduced level. Its contribution to the region could be reduced and plans to reduce the inequality of student experience between campuses could be put on hold.

USP has some further work to do in ensuring member governments are aware of the realities of funding and that contributions will need to rise at some stage. The University needs to work on providing governments with evidence of the value of increasing their contributions.

USP will need to develop more capacity in its human resources and its management if improvements achieved in its operation are to be sustained and built upon.

All aspects of the partnerships are works in progress and some of the accomplishments require a longer time frame to become fully embedded. Educational change by its nature is long term. The University remains the best entity for the capacity building and training that the Pacific region needs.

16 Recommendations for the next partnership funding cycle

The approaches of the two agencies each have their benefits and although not identical, they are highly complementary. The combination of the two approaches creates synergies and so the recommendations do not suggest a radical shift from the status quo.

The recommendations from this review are as follows:

1. Some project funding should continue, but at a reduced level.
2. USP and AusAID should develop a more critical stance to project planning, especially to the feasibility of the activities given the timelines ascribed to them.
3. Wherever possible:
 - AusAID and NZ MFAT should continue to use a common reporting format, which is compatible with the annual cycle for activity planning and budgeting at USP and the triennial cycle of strategic planning and funding from other sources.
 - Funds supplied and activities supported, whether on a competitive, commercial or incentive/core funding or project basis should be reported according to a common timetable, compatible with USP's own planning and reporting cycle.
 - The flow of funds from competitive, commercial or incentive/core funding should form part of one overarching partnership and reporting agreement.
4. Incentive funding in the new USP/donor partnerships and some project funding in the next period should be targeted on the development of USP's human resources strategy for improving human capacity (particularly managers and key academics) and on improving its HRM function, policies and processes.
5. Incentive funding should target student support in the areas of English language and ICT skills development and support at all regional campuses.
6. Incentive funding should focus on student support services at the local campuses and promoting teaching methodologies and student services that meet the needs of students with mental health issues and intellectual learning problems and disadvantages.
7. These services should be available to more students, including postgraduate students, so they may then go on to successful further study.
8. Study at USP at various levels up to postgraduate level should be part of the scholarship offerings by AusAID and NZ MFAT in the next funding period.
9. There should be continued support from AusAID and NZ MFAT through project funding and/or core/incentive funding to improve ICT connectivity and to upgrade the human/technical support for students' learning in regional campuses so that they can take advantage of e-resources and learning opportunities.
10. AusAID should focus some of its project funding on research relevant to the region's needs.
11. AusAID and NZ MFAT should continue to invest, through core and/or incentive funding, in reducing the inequity between the facilities at the Suva campus and the regional campuses, including investment in increased human resources, teaching space, more ICT equipment and bigger and better stocked science laboratories and libraries.
12. In the next funding period, AusAID and NZ MFAT should negotiate with USP a framework that moves the balance between input and process targets and indicators somewhat towards outcomes and outputs

13. NZ MFAT and AusAID should continue to fund USP through the partnership agreements and maintain core and/or incentive funding at an increased level.

All of the recommendations above are considered important, but the recommendations related to HRM, improving services at the regional campuses, support for students' English language and ICT skills and increasing the level of core and/or incentive funding are absolutely critical to USP achieving its strategic ambition of moving from a 'good' university to an 'excellent' one.

17 Concluding remarks

The reviewers were impressed by the professionalism and cooperation they received from all the internal and external stakeholders of the University. There was a feeling of openness and willingness to offer honest and constructive opinion. The admirable organisation of the logistics by AusAID, Suva Post and USP meant that the reviewers were able to interview a very wide range of staff, students and key regional partners in each of the islands visited and so they have confidence in the validity of the findings.

The reviewers congratulate USP on its achievements over the period under review. While A/NZ's aid and support have played a vital role in the development of USP's work, much of that improvement is due to the effort and commitment of USP staff and students and might have happened in any case.

Australia and New Zealand are vital partners in USP's present success and its plans for the future. The evidence indicates that the relationships, modality, practical arrangements and focus of the funding have all worked well. For this reason, the suggestion is not for major changes, but rather that AusAID and NZ MFAT continue their relationship and funding along similar lines, but with some nuanced adjustments as outlined in the recommendations. The reviewers hope that USP will also be allocated some targeted project funding in a few key areas where seed-corn funding will enable it to develop capacity for the benefit of the region.

If USP continues to develop at its present rate, it should be a realistic objective for it to become not just a 'good' university but 'excellent' in many of its activities. It should be able to be a more significant contributor to the development of the Pacific region and its emergence into a globalised, knowledge-based world. USP needs time to embed the reforms that have been started in the review period and it would be a very different and much diminished institution without substantial aid from AusAID and NZ MFAT.

Through sufficient core and incentive funding from AusAID and NZ MFAT, USP can further improve performance in management, leadership, teaching and learning and its regional focus and also develop a deeper involvement with key regional organisations.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

1. BACKGROUND

The University of the South Pacific (USP) is a key contributor to the development of South Pacific nations and a primary source of higher education graduates in the region. Founded in 1968, USP serves the regional needs of its 12 member Countries⁸. One of the major and leading tertiary education providers in the Pacific, USP offers education and training, research and consultancy services, and technical expertise to its members. This steady supply of graduates has contributed to meeting the human resource development needs of the region for 44 years. The University, owned by 12 member countries,⁹ has a total of 14 campuses and centers throughout the region. USP's 22,000 students study both face-to-face and through distance and flexible learning modes.

Through its membership in the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) USP participates in the implementation of the Pacific Plan and other regional initiatives where it has comparative advantage. USP's operating budget for 2011 was \$FJ144 million, which was largely funded by member country contributions (33%), student fees (25%), aid (22%) and trading activities (9.6%). Australia and New Zealand are the only two donors who contribute to USP's recurrent budget, while other significant donors (Japan, European Union) provide funding on a project basis.

1.1 The USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012

The USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012 guides USP's activities for the period. The Plan was developed through a consultative process with the aim of transitioning the University from a period of governance, financial and management challenges to ensure the quality, relevance and sustainability of the University in the long term. USP identifies six priority areas¹⁰ in the Plan which each have specified targets and key performance indicators associated with them. A set of institutional KPIs is also established. The Plan was fully costed (A\$5.9 million) and USP management committed to meeting the cost of implementing the plan from internal resources. Implementation and embedding of the Plan within the regular planning, budgeting and monitoring processes at all levels of the University was a priority for management following adoption of the plan by the USP Council in November 2009.

1.2 The Australia – USP Partnership 2010-2012

Australia has supported the University of the South Pacific (USP) since its establishment in 1968. Recently the Australia – University of the South Pacific Partnership Framework 2010-2012 has guided the engagement. USP was the first Pacific regional organisation to enter into this type of strategic arrangement with AusAID, which was modeled after Australia's Pacific Partnerships for Development. The Partnership includes an implementation schedule which sets out yearly targets for performance in priority areas and for the award of incentive funding. Sub-agreements provide core funding and funding for sectoral projects. Support for USP under the Partnership totals A\$24 million.

⁸ Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu

⁹ Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

¹⁰ Learning and Teaching; Student Support; Research, Graduate Affairs and Internationalisation; Regional and Community Engagement; Human Resources; and Governance, Management and Continuous Improvement.

Objectives of the Partnership are to:

1. support student success through improved services;
2. increase USP research capacity to benefit the region;
3. strengthen USP administration and academic programs; and
4. build public awareness of the outcomes of the partnership.

The Partnership aims to achieve these objectives through Australian support to USP for implementing its Strategic Plan 2010-2012, with a particular focus on *Student Support* and *Research and Graduate Affairs*.

1.3 The New Zealand – USP Partnership 2010-2012

New Zealand has also supported USP since its establishment in 1968. The New Zealand – USP Strategic Partnership 2010-2012 reflects a shared vision to enhance development progress and advance the well-being of Pacific people. The objective of New Zealand's current support to USP is to engage with and support a relevant, sustainable, well-governed, effective and efficient institution of higher learning from which high quality students graduate.

To achieve these objectives New Zealand has maintained a focus on enhanced teaching and learning outcomes at USP, governance of USP that enhances decision-making, accountability and membership engagement; and effective strategic planning, implementation and monitoring of results. Support under this Partnership Arrangement amounts to NZ\$13.85m over the three years. Year on year increases were dependent upon USP achievement against its strategic plan priorities.

While New Zealand has shifted to provision of core funding to USP, over 2009 – 2011 New Zealand funded a Governance and Management Enhancement and Strengthening (GMES) Project to assist USP overcome its governance, financial and management challenges. The purpose of this project was to strengthen governance and management, enhance financial capability and sustainability and strengthen planning and resource management at USP. During a monitoring review of this project it was agreed that a final evaluation would be undertaken as a part of the review of the 2010-2012 partnership arrangement.

2. OBJECTIVES

The Australian and New Zealand Partnerships with USP both have provision¹¹ for an independent review of the Partnership at the end of the period covered. These provisions state that Australia and New Zealand may undertake the review jointly. The New Zealand Aid Program and AusAID have agreed to do this under a delegated cooperation agreement, where AusAID will lead. AusAID and the New Zealand Aid Program seek to engage a team to review their assistance to USP provided under the Partnerships.

The review will look back at the Partnerships to date to evaluate the impact and outcomes of ANZ support. A key objective of the review will also be to utilise this information to provide advice and recommendations to inform the development of any new support to USP. In this respect, consideration of the current state of play, including the new USP strategic plan, relevant Australia and New Zealand policies, and the development of the tertiary sector in the region will be important.

AusAID requires an independent review during the life of an initiative. The DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability) and AusAID's additional criteria (gender

¹¹ See *Partnership Framework between Commonwealth of Australia and the University of the South Pacific 2010-2012* clause 6.3, and *Partnership Funding Arrangement between the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the University of the South Pacific* 1 January 2010-31 December 2012 clause 8.6

equality, monitoring and evaluation and analysis and learning) are considered in regular quality reporting. This review will focus on particular issues highlighted in section 3, which could have implications for future support.

The review report will provide AusAID and New Zealand Aid Program management with an evidence-base to inform decision-making as they consider modalities, funding levels, and objectives of any forward support for the University in consultation with USP management.

The objectives of the review are to:

- a) Assess the achievement of outcomes specified under each Partnership Arrangement and against the USP Strategic Plan, including improved student outcomes;
- b) Assess and comment on governance, financial and management health at USP, and the degree to which the outcomes of the GMES project have been embedded within USP policies and practices.
- c) Identify good practice and lessons learnt from implementation of the Partnerships;
- d) Make recommendations on forward support to USP.

3. SCOPE

The review will examine the assistance provided to USP by Australia and New Zealand under their partnership arrangements and under the GMES project, considering the following in its evaluation and recommendations:

3.1 Partnership objectives

- Were the objectives of the partnerships clear and achievable?
- To what extent did activities under the partnership contribute to achievement of objectives?
- To what extent were objectives of the partnership achieved?
- If the objectives were not achieved, why were they not achieved?
- To what extent did Partnership support contribute to USP's ability to provide quality services to students and member governments

3.2 Modality

- Previous to the Partnerships, ANZ support to USP was provided via memoranda of understanding. Has the move to partnership with USP had any impact on the nature of the engagements between USP and Australia and New Zealand?
- Over 2010-2012 New Zealand provided its assistance to USP primarily through core funding, while Australia provided various types of funding (core, targeted, incentive, project) in its partnership with USP. What were the advantages/disadvantages of each of these approaches?
- Is alignment to the USP Strategic Plan the most effective approach?

3.3 Level, Timing and Duration of funding

- Were the levels of funding provided under each of the Partnerships appropriate?
- Was the timing of contributions to USP under the partnerships optimal?
- The three year period covered by the Partnerships was aligned with the USP strategic plan. Was this duration of funding appropriate?

3.4 Management arrangements

- Were the specified mechanisms for implementing the partnerships (consultations, officials' engagement, reporting, etc) appropriate?

- Were these mechanisms for implementation used by USP, Australia and New Zealand to best advantage?
- Did the flow of information between USP and Australia and New Zealand provide adequate information on the progress of the partnership?
- Did Australia and New Zealand's participation in Council and the University Grants Committee support the objectives of the partnerships?

3.5 Projects Supported

- Were projects supported under the Australian-USP partnership aligned with objectives of the partnership?
- To what extent were objectives of project support achieved (including NZ-funded GMES project)?
- To what extent were projects supported aligned with AusAID's regional strategy and bilateral Partnerships for Development?

3.6 Influencing factors for forward support

As Australia and New Zealand look to develop next phases of funding to USP (subject to funding availability) there are many influencing factors. Emerging issues to be considered in any recommendations on future support include the following:

- USP
 - USP's draft Strategic Plan 2013-2018
 - Perception of regional ownership of USP:
 - Emerging national universities
 - Decreasing member contributions (as percentage of USP income)
 - Potential for increasing donor support
 - Any significant and / or emerging risks to USP
- Australia
 - AusAID's developing Tertiary Education Strategy
 - Australia's support to USP provided outside of the Partnership, such as scholarships and the Pacific Islands Centre for Public Administration (PICPA)
 - Australia's scale-up of ODA and USP's absorptive capacity
 - AusAID portfolio restructuring
- New Zealand
 - International Development Policy Statement – Supporting Sustainable Development
 - Policy Framework for New Zealand Aid Program Scholarships Program
 - More TK from NZ

4. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team leader will be responsible for the development of a draft evaluation plan, to be submitted to AusAID and the New Zealand Aid Program for approval at least two weeks prior to the in-country mission. The evaluation plan will include the main evaluation questions, the evaluation design and the report structure. The evaluation will be undertaken according to the approved evaluation plan.

The evaluation approach will include a desk review, field visits and stakeholder consultations. A non-exhaustive list of reference documents is provided at Annex B.

4.1 Desk Review

- Briefing on review scope
- Develop Review methodology
- Document review
- Consult stakeholders in New Zealand including:
 - New Zealand Aid Program
 - Sustainable Economic Development and Thematic - Human Development Program
 - Scholarships
 - Partnerships, Humanitarian and Multilateral - Pacific Regional
 - New Zealand current and previous representatives to USP Council and Grants Committee
- Consult stakeholders in Australia including:
 - AusAID PAC Division Human Development Section
 - AusAID Education Thematic Group
 - AusAID Pacific Regional Team
 - AusAID Portfolio Restructuring Project Team
 - Australian Representative to the University Grants Committee
 - Former Australian Representatives to USP Council

4.2 Field Visits

- Fiji
- Solomon Islands
- Tonga
- Kiribati

Consultations

- USP (including management, academic staff, students and Council members)
- USP member governments
 - Diplomatic Missions in Suva
 - Ministries/Agencies responsible for:
 - Education
 - TVET
 - Higher Education
 - Qualifications/Accreditation
 - Finance
- New Zealand Aid Program
 - Relevant Posts

- AusAID
 - Relevant officers at Posts
- Other USP Donors, including:
 - Japan
 - European Union
 - ADB
- Regional Development partners
 - SPC
 - SPC/SPBEA
 - PIFS

5. TEAM COMPOSITION

The review will be conducted by a team of two independent consultants. The consultants must have substantive knowledge and demonstrated experience relevant to the review. At least one of the team members will have each of the following skills and knowledge:

- Expertise in donor program evaluation
- Expertise in management in the tertiary sector
- Experience in development in the Pacific

The **Team Leader** will have experience as an aid program evaluation team leader. Responsibilities will include:

- Liaising with AusAID counterpart
- Participation in field visits and consultations
- Drafting of outputs
- Presentation of Aide Memoire
- Participation in Peer Review of draft report

The **Team Member** responsibilities will include:

- Participation in field visits and consultations
- Assist Team Leader in drafting outputs
- Participation at presentation of Aide Memoire

6. OUTPUTS

The following outputs are required:

- a) Evaluation Plan / Draft Methodology - for agreement with AusAID and New Zealand Aid Program prior to mission;
- b) Aide Memoire presentation to AusAID and New Zealand Aid Program, on completion of in-country mission to Fiji and prior to departure from Fiji;

- c) Draft Review Report – to be provided to New Zealand Aid Program and AusAID Suva. Feedback from AusAID, New Zealand Aid Program, USP and other stakeholders will be provided within two weeks of receiving the draft report, following peer review.
- d) Final Review Report – to be provided to New Zealand Aid Program and AusAID Suva within two weeks of peer review, incorporating any advice. The report will be no more than 30 pages (plus annexes). The report will include an executive summary of up to 2 pages, key findings and lessons learned, conclusions, and recommendations. Annexes should include these terms of reference, the final evaluation plan, consultations undertaken, documents reviewed and any other information the consultants deem relevant and useful.

All reports will be in Microsoft Word format.

7. MILESTONES AND TIMEFRAMES

Task	Input Days	Approximate Dates
Desk review	4	Must be completed by COB 21 st August
Consultation with AusAID and NZMFAT (by phone)	2	Must be completed by 23 rd August 2012
Draft Evaluation Plan/Methodology	2	Must be completed by 27 th August 2012
Field Visits		
• Fiji	4	24 th September 2012
• Tonga	4	28 th September 2012
• Kiribati	4	4 th October 2012
• Solomon Islands	3	9 th October 2012
Aide Memoire preparation and presentation	2	Must be submitted by COB 16 th October 2012
Analysis/Draft Review Report	4	Must be submitted to the ERF by COB 26 th October 2012
Incorporation of ERF feedback/comments	1	Must be completed by 2 nd November 2012
Analysis/Draft Review Report	0	Must be submitted to AusAID by COB 5 th November 2012
Peer Review of Draft	0	Will be back to you by COB 19 th November 2012
Final Review report	2	Must be submitted by COB 23 rd November 2012
Travel Days (Professor Kate Ashcroft)	8	
Travel Days (Professor Joan Cooper)	4	
TOTAL PROFESSOR ASHCROFT	40	
TOTAL PROFESSOR COOPER	36	

Annex A: Questions for Consideration in the Review Report

Criteria below should be rated according to the scale: 6 = very high quality; 1 = very low quality. Below 4 is less than satisfactory.

Relevance

Were the objectives relevant to Australian and New Zealand Government and partner government priorities?

Were the objectives relevant to the context/needs of USP, member countries and students?

If not, what changes should have been made to the activity or its objectives to ensure continued relevance?

Effectiveness

Were the objectives achieved? If not, why?

To what extent did the Partnerships contribute to achievement of objectives?

Efficiency

Did the implementation of the partnerships make effective use of time and resources to achieve the outcomes?

Sub-questions:

- Were the partnerships designed for optimal value for money?
- Have there been any financial variations to the Partnerships? If so, was value for money considered in making these amendments?
- Has management of the Partnerships been responsive to changing needs?
- Did the Partnerships suffer from delays in implementation? If so, why and what was done about it?
- Did the Partnership have sufficient and appropriate staffing resources?

Was a risk management approach applied to management of the Partnerships (including anti-corruption)?

What were the risks to achievement of objectives? Were the risks managed appropriately?

Impact (Rate if feasible)

Did the Partnerships produce intended or unintended changes in the lives of beneficiaries and their environment, directly or indirectly?

Were there positive or negative impacts from external factors?

Sustainability

Do beneficiaries and/or member government stakeholders have sufficient ownership, capacity and resources to maintain the Partnership outcomes after Australian and New Zealand Government funding has ceased? To what degree can this be expected from core funding to the recurrent budget?

Are there any areas of the Partnerships that are clearly not sustainable? What lessons can be learned from this?

Gender Equality

What were the outcomes of the Partnerships for women and men, boys and girls?

Did the activity promote equal participation and benefits for women and men, boys and girls?

Sub-questions:

Did the Partnerships promote more equal access by women and men to the benefits of the Partnerships, and more broadly to resources, services and skills?

Did the Partnerships promote equality of decision-making between women and men?

Did the Partnerships help to promote women's rights?

Did the Partnerships help to develop capacity (donors, partner government, civil society, etc) to understand and promote gender equality?

Monitoring and Evaluation

Does evidence exist to show that objectives have been achieved?

Were there features of the M&E system that represented good practice and improved the quality of the evidence available?

Was data gender-disaggregated to measure the outcomes of the Partnerships on men, women, boys and girls?

Did the M&E system collect useful information on cross-cutting issues?

Analysis & Learning

To what extent were the Partnership designs based on previous learning and analysis?

To what extent was learning from implementation and previous reviews (self-assessment and independent) integrated into the Partnerships?

Lessons (No rating required)

What lessons from the Partnerships can be applied to designing future activities?

ANNEX B: Reference Documents for the Desk Review

Partnerships

Australia – University of the South Pacific Partnership Framework 2010-2012

Partnership Funding Arrangement between New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the University of the South Pacific 2010-2012

University of the South Pacific

USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012

http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/academic/pdo/USP_Strategic_Plan_2010_-_2012.pdf

USP Annual Report 2010

https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/public_relations/2011_pubs/USP_2010_AR_web.pdf

USP Annual Report 2011

USP Annual Plan 2012

University Grants Committee Mid-Term Report 2011

USP Progress Report to the University Grants Committee 2011 Mid-term Review

University Grants Committee Report 2010-2012 Triennium

http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/academic/pdo/Planning/2009_USP_UGC_8.pdf AUQA & NZUAAU Report of an Audit of the University of the South Pacific 2008

http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/academic/pdo/quality/docs/31REPORT_USP_FINAL_22-5-08.pdf

Quin Report on post Audit visit of University of the South Pacific

http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/academic/pdo/USP_Post-Audit_Visit_Report_July_2010.pdf

Governance and Management Enhancement and Strengthening Project Documents

USP Strategic Plan 2013-2018 (Draft)

Australia

Pacific Tertiary Education Strategy

Pacific Education and Skills Development Agenda

http://www.ausaid.gov.au/Publications/Pages/2651_8620_8141_6991_5567.aspx

Promoting Opportunities for all: Education

http://www.ausaid.gov.au/Publications/Pages/8927_9441_6928_8706_9689.aspx

An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a real difference—Delivering real results

http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/Pages/5621_9774_1073_3040_2380.aspx

2008 Review of Australian Support to USP

New Zealand

New Zealand International Development Policy Statement – Supporting Sustainable Development

Governance and Management Enhancement and Strengthening Project Monitoring Report

Policy Framework for Scholarships Program

New Zealand Aid Program Education Policy

Annex 2: Matrix of the foci contained in the terms of reference

Focus	USP	Aus AID	NZ Aid	Joint Aus/NZ
Planning and budgeting, institutional capability and financial sustainability e.g. Mechanisms for assessing the demand for proposed new courses Means for the phasing out of unviable courses Financial surplus as a % of budget Cash margin, debt borrowing ratio Government contribution share of total income	X	X	X	X
Monitoring and reporting e.g. .USP statutes Review selected academic and support systems processes (ITS, HR and electronic records management)			X	
Quality Teaching (e.g. University-level plans for teaching and learning) Regular, periodic external reviews of academic programs Mechanisms for comparing the pass, progression, retention and completion rates of its students across all campuses and all modes Student retention, student pass rates and time to completion rate Student satisfaction Establishing a culture of assessment Increase student work-placements, attachments and internship	X	X	X	X
Student Support Student charter Student governance Student leadership schemes Student orientation Improve facilities for students Enhance student counseling Improve student accommodation International student support Enhance career services	X	X		
Quality Research, and Innovation (e.g. University-level plans for research, and policies for intellectual property and ethics) Policies around postgraduate research Handbook, orientation programs and transition processes for postgraduate students. Research income Expenditure on research Postgraduate degree enrolments and completions Number of chairs, full-time research staff and post-doctoral fellows	X	X	X	x
Risk management e.g. Completed risk management plan approved by Council by end-2010 Risk register maintained thereafter Develop a disaster recovery plan and security policy			X	X
Regional focus/internationalism e.g. Addressing country priorities Regional campuses e.g. Review the management needs Support their resource requirements Equitable student experiences across all campuses Number and quality of international and regional partnerships regional policy engagements Number and percentage of international student enrolments		X	X	

Strengthen equity , e.g. gender Review and improve facilities and services for students with special needs		X		
Human Resources Strategy and Plan e.g. Average length of service of academic and comparable staff % of academic staff at lecturer level and above with a PhD Level of commendation by external reviewers every three years		X		
ICT e.g. Improve support for students in using ICT e.g. Develop priorities for media services Improve student satisfaction with the service Improve support for students in using ICT		X		
Data management e.g. Reliable data management system Use data, information and knowledge to support decision making at all levels of the enterprise		X		
DFL e.g. Convert additional full programs at both undergraduate and postgraduate level into a flexible distance learning format Strengthen USPNet broadband Upgrade campus-based facilities Develop additional courses in DFL mode (DFL) policies and practices		X	X	
Governance e.g. Information to support USP Council and its governance roles e.g. Council information lines/communication responsibilities defined and articulated Council handbook Revised USP annual report Strengthening financial governance Review of senior management and academic salaries Review of member countries contributions Council contribution to Strategic Plan e.g. Outcomes for 2010, 2011 and 2012 agreed to by Council during 2009 after the adoption of the Revised Strategic Plan by Council Establish systems and procedures to strengthen asset planning and management Revision of USP plan for buildings and grounds Analysis of economic, demographic, employment and social trends across USP member countries Adviser to Council on USP planning systems and processes appointed Review of Senate, SP, management	X	X	X	X
ToR Foci				
Partnership objectives Modality Level, timing and duration of funding Management arrangements Projects supported				X
ToR ratings on the funded projects Relevance Effectiveness Efficiency Impact Sustainability Gender Equality Monitoring and Evaluation Analysis & Learning Lessons				X

Annex 3: Methodology

Objectives

The documents provided to the consultants so far indicate that the overall Australia – University of the South Pacific (USP) Partnership Framework 2010-2012 involves four priorities, to:

- Support student success through improved services;
- Increase USP research capacity to benefit the region;
- Strengthen USP administration and academic programs; and
- Build public awareness of the outcomes of the partnership.

The objective of New Zealand's current support to USP is:

- To engage with and support a relevant, sustainable, well-governed, effective and efficient institution of higher learning from which high quality students graduate.

The Australian and New Zealand Partnerships with USP both have provision for an independent review of the Partnership at the end of the period covered. The New Zealand Aid Program and AusAID have agreed to undertake the review jointly.

The objectives of the review are to:

- Assess the achievement of outcomes specified under each Partnership Arrangement and against the USP Strategic Plan, including improved student outcomes;
- Assess and comment on governance, financial and management health at USP, and the degree to which the outcomes of the GMES project have been embedded within USP policies and practices.
- Identify good practice and lessons learnt from implementation of the Partnerships;
- Make recommendations on forward support to USP.

These objectives inform all aspects of the methodology proposed in the sections below. They have been 'unpacked' and reordered to provide an overall list of major foci and specific aspects that the consultants will investigate (see Annex 1).

Approach to the evaluation

The consultants will consult with relevant people within the USP, AusAID and the New Zealand Aid Program at every stage of the project from planning, implementation and reporting. In order to achieve this they will be supplied with, and add to, a database of names, roles and contact details of key people in the various organisations. The lead consultant will provide field reports, early drafts of documents and/or interim position papers at various stages.

Background

The USP at its various campuses has gone (and continues to go) through rapid reforms and changes to academic structures to prepare for a more flexible and responsive higher education system. At the same time it has suffered from severe financial constraints and adverse media coverage and has had to undergo a long-term process of financial restructuring. The Vice-Chancellor has been implementing an agenda for change, including:

- Provision of a stronger vision and direction for the University;
- Rationalisation of the number of faculties from four to three, with significant savings;

- Elimination of about 90 undersubscribed courses;
- Disestablishment of the Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance (PIAS-DG) and the distribution of its constituent units to a new School of Governance and Development Studies (SGDS) and the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture (OCAC);
- Rationalisation of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CELT), the Media Centre, and the Centre for Educational Development and Technology (CEDT) into the Centre for Flexible and Distance Learning (CFDL), resulting in greater synergies of common activities and a sharper focus on flexible and distance learning and teaching;
- A new management structure that streamlines management roles and is more cost-effective;
- Filling the position of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and the advertising of a new post of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Quality), with the aim of sharpening planning instruments and enhancing focus on quality in all the University's operations;
- Preparation of a Strategic Plan; and
- Introduction of an innovative, more output-based budget model with a provisional operational surplus.¹²

The Vice-Chancellor has established a clear vision for USP as follows:

- to be proactive in recognising and meeting the higher educational needs of its member countries;
- to deliver quality learning and teaching, research, and enhance quality in all University services;
- to be highly regarded locally, regionally and internationally; and
- to provide relevant and sustainable solutions across the spectrum of contemporary challenges in the Pacific.

The mission of the University of the South Pacific is to advance knowledge and understanding through:

- learning and teaching that is both relevant and of high quality, and which prepares students from diverse backgrounds for the workplace and lifelong learning;
- to increase knowledge and understanding through high-quality research that is internationally recognised and which has applications for the Pacific region and benefits the people who occupy it;
- to effectively engage with stakeholders throughout the Pacific region, particularly with our Member Countries, to enhance political, economic, social and cultural development; and
- to work in partnership with stakeholders to ensure that the opportunities offered by the international knowledge economy and globalising world can be harnessed effectively for the benefit of all Pacific peoples.

¹² From the USP UGC submission

To achieve its Vision and Mission, USP has developed a set of values related to:

- Students
- Staff
- Commitment to quality and relevance
- Diversity
- Good governance and leadership
- Environmental sustainability

The USP Strategic Plan for 2010-12 has six priority areas and strategic goals for the planning period 2010-2012 as follows.

Priority Area 1 - Learning and Teaching

Strategic Goal: The University will deliver relevant and high-quality programs leading to improved levels of student success and graduates who are well-grounded in Pacific issues and who are

- knowledgeable and well-informed,
- creative and critical thinkers,
- superior problem-solvers,
- effective communicators and team players,
- competent leaders,
- innovative and entrepreneurial,
- ICT and information literate,
- socially and culturally responsive, and
- self motivated and independent learners.

Priority Area 2 - Student Support

Strategic Goal: The University will enhance the success of its students by improving learning environments and support, on-campus living and facilities, and will enrich campus life through a greater variety of cross cultural experiences, thereby strengthening pan-Pacific consciousness across all campuses.

Priority Area 3 - Research, Graduate Affairs and Innovation

Strategic Goal The University will increase the quality, quantity, focus, equity and dissemination of its research, leading to greater access, applications and benefit for the Pacific region.

Priority Area 4 - Regional and Community Engagement and Internationalisation

Strategic Goal: The University will exercise leadership and engage proactively with the region, its communities and internationally on major development issues.

Priority Area 5 - Human Resources

Strategic Goal: The University of the South Pacific will continue to be the employer of first choice in higher education in the Pacific Region.

Priority Area 6 - Governance, Management and Continuous Improvement

Strategic Goal: The University is committed to delivering institutional effectiveness through the highest standards of governance, management and continuous improvement

The USP has identified 21 (mostly measurable or observable) objectives for the achievement of each of these strategic goals.

It has also identified four key targets and 16 key performance indicators and a number of supporting policies, plans and strategies to enable achievement of the Strategic Plan. It has developed a simple time frame for the completion of the major elements of the Plan.

The USP underwent a joint audit to consider and review the procedures the University has in place to monitor and achieve its objectives by Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit (NZUAAU) in 2008. The audit report made various recommendations for USP to action. The consultants will look at how these have been supported through the aid it has received.

AusAID has its own priorities such as promoting opportunities for all, and particularly females. With respect to higher education in the Pacific, AusAID's work is focused on national development priorities; supporting quality improvement in university teaching, so that it can produce skilled professionals needed in strategic industries and services; and supporting public-private partnerships where appropriate.

International Development Policy Statement: Supporting sustainable development states that 'The mission of the New Zealand Aid Program is to support sustainable development in developing countries, in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable, and prosperous world'

The document particularly emphasises sustainable development and gender, environmental and human rights implications of interventions. It lists four priority themes that should guide its programs:

- investing in economic development
- promoting human development
- improving resilience and responding to disaster
- building safe and secure communities.

Its support for the USP particularly relates to the second of these priorities. In the partnership agreement with USP MFAT states that the intention of the aid is to enhance teaching and learning outcomes, more effective governance and a better strategic planning process.

The consultants will familiarise themselves with this context and will collect and analyse related documentation during field visits.

They will draw on their experience and what they learn from discussion and research to ensure that the evaluation supports the objectives outlined in the ToR and USP, AusAID and New Zealand MFAT's strategic priorities.

Philosophy Behind the Methodology

In order to provide advice to the AusAID and the New Zealand Aid Program on policy issues associated with the evaluation, the consultants will draw on the insights developed from working with the USP and other stakeholders, so that the advice will reflect the real-life context of the University.

The support of the AusAID and the New Zealand Aid Program to the USP has the potential to create greater access, focus, efficiency and effectiveness to meet the needs of students, the society and the economy. It is an important part of the philosophy that the evaluation plan should be responsive to the context the partners work within and should take account of their needs. The consultants' role will be to help them individually and collectively to define successes (intended and unintended) and failures with respect to the support the USP has received, analyse the issues that underpin achievements and disappointments and suggest appropriate and effective solutions to problems, strategies, guidance and advice.

The focus will be on practical, interactive and problem-oriented discussions and the analysis of relevant documents and data. The approach will provide the opportunity for partners to suggest practical frameworks for future action that can be reflected in the final reports, guidance and recommendations.

In the USP, change is taking place in a system that is managing multiple challenges and initiatives. The system will have several supporting policies, processes, and structures each making particular demands. The reports resulting from the evaluation will take account of these and any recommendations will be compatible with other development projects and core and support structures and processes already in train. The aim of any recommendations will be to achieve near perfect alignment to maximise impact, with resources combined as much as possible to avoid any unnecessary inefficiency or adding to the burden of the sector.

The proposed methodology is based on the following characteristics:

- It is centred on the University's, students and donor perspectives, whilst taking account of the interests of other stakeholders
- It takes as an important part of its content the objectives of the USP, AusAID and the New Zealand Aid Program and their various plans
- It is located in the real human, material and cultural context: it does not assume 'an ideal world', but addresses real dilemmas and the strategic decisions these require.

Methodology

It is clear that the philosophy outlined above requires in-depth discussion and exploration with partners. The process requires a range of approaches and iterations to ensure validity and that all problems, perspectives and insights are evaluated, and where appropriate, incorporated. It is proposed that a cycle of activities will include:

- Reading and familiarisation with the USP higher education context and AusAID and the New Zealand Aid Program priorities and policies
- Orientation and discussion of the proposed framework for the project
- Collecting information, data and documentation in relation to the context for development from each USP campus during field visits
- Analysing such data
- Research into the key questions outlined in section 3 of the ToR
- Reporting and validation of research results and initial conclusions
- Iteration and consultation
- Desk-based review of key documents.

Methods used to achieve these activities will include:

- Reading of background documentation and comments collected on field visits
- Desk-based research, document and data analysis and review
- Questions issued to various partners prior to mission
- Visits to USP in and discussion with key stakeholders in each of Tonga, Fiji, Kiribati and the Solomon Islands:
 - Discussion of relevant key questions with stakeholders: government officials, university managers, Council members and staff, students, and donors, regional development offices and other stakeholders
 - Qualitative data collection through group and individual interviews with stakeholders
 - Data collection through semi-structured questionnaires to key stakeholders
- Presentation of final evaluation report.

The issues that will be explored by the consultants include:

- Planning and budgeting, Institutional capability and financial sustainability
- Monitoring and reporting
- Quality Teaching
- Quality Research, and Innovation
- Risk management
- Regional focus/internationalism
- Strengthen equity
- Human Resources Strategy and Plan
- ICT
- Data management
- DFL
- Governance
- Foci specifically listed in the ToR
- Ratings on the funded projects specifically listed in the ToR.

The groups that will be interviewed include:

- *Group 1* USP top management from each campus
- *Group 2* USP academic staff, including staff from Centre for Flexible and Distance Learning (CFDL) and USP DVC Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching & Student Services), Pro Vice- Chancellor Research & International (or person responsible for academic programs and research at each campus)
- *Group 3* Administrative Staff including Pro Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Quality), Executive Director Human Resources
- *Group 4* USP undergraduate and postgraduate students and recent graduates
- *Group 5* USP member government representatives of Ministries/Agencies responsible for, Education, TVET, Higher Education, Qualifications/Accreditation and Finance
- *Group 6* New Zealand Aid Program and AusAID Relevant officers at Posts and other
Group 7 USP Donors, including: Japan, European Union, ADB
- *Group 8* Regional Development partners, SPC, SPC/SPBEA, PIFS and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration & Regional Campuses), and USP member governments Diplomatic Missions in Suva
- *Group 9* Employers of recent graduates
- *Group 10* Representatives of Council

Questionnaires will be issued to the following groups:

- *Group 1* USP top management from each campus
- *Group 2* USP academic staff, including staff from Centre for Flexible and Distance Learning (CFDL) and USP DVC Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching & Student Services), Pro Vice- Chancellor Research & International (or person responsible for academic programs and research at each campus)
- *Group 3* Administrative Staff including Pro Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Quality), Executive Director Human Resources
- *Group 6* New Zealand Aid Program and AusAID Relevant officers at Posts and other
Group 7 USP Donors, including: Japan, European Union, ADB
- *Group 10* Representatives of Council

Because the number of both stakeholders and evaluation questions are both relatively large, not every question will be asked of every group in every campus location. We will however ensure that, wherever possible each issue is explored with at least two groups in every campus location, often using more than one method.

In addition, wherever possible interviews will be conducted in small groups (although the consultants recognise that logistics and political sensitivities mean that this may not always be possible and there may need to be more individual interviews). Where practical, we suggest interviews of between 1 and 2 hours (depending on the size and composition of the group) with stakeholders.

Each interview will start with introductions to the people and to the purposes of the meeting. Member of each group will be invited to give their overall impressions of the partnership and the effectiveness of the aid program. Each interview will finish with an invitation to make any additional comments the participants feel appropriate.

The DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability) and AusAID's additional criteria (gender equality, monitoring and evaluation and analysis and learning) will be cross cutting themes to be explored in each interview in the course of discussion of the main issues.

The main issues for be explored with each group are to be found in Annex 2 which sets out the methods to be used for investigating each focus issue with various groups.

This list may be modified at the margin when the consultants have finished designing all the questionnaires and interview schedules and read all the remaining documents requested from partners.

Validation of Evaluation Outcomes and Conclusion

The evaluation methods we will use will be essentially qualitative. This means that the consultants must take ensure to ensure the validity of their results and the likelihood they can be applied also to campus locations elsewhere.

The consultants will ensure the validity of their observation and conclusions through:

- Triangulation with partners and others;
- Using a variety of data collection methods (document review, group and individual interviews, questionnaire, data analysis);
- Using a variety of documentary sources;
- Reporting through to USP officials and other key stakeholders at each campus at each stage on preliminary conclusions;
- Emailing the notes from each meeting within a few days to each participant (or to a representative, if that is what the group prefers), for comment and correction;
- Both consultants attending every interview (where logistics allow) and taking notes of the responses;
- Consultants meeting and writing a reflective diary each evening to formulate and compare impressions and conclusions.

Expectations as to support for the consultants by the AusAID/USP Partnership

The consultants' time will be at a premium if all that is planned is to be achieved. It is therefore dependent on the AusAID/USP Partnership providing the following:

- A schedule of visits and interviews organised for each campus location with details of place, time, and people
- A complete list of names, positions, titles, email addresses and addresses of all those who will be interviewed
- A list of hotel bookings and details of transport arrangements
- While in country undertaking the stakeholder interviews, at least two to three short breaks scheduled between the interview sessions each day to allow the consultants to

regroup; reconsider their questions; identify new questions to validate something that comes up unexpectedly and compare their thoughts on how things are going.

- Relevant additional documentation for reading and data analysis before the mission starts as requested
- Relevant data sets and documentation to be available for perusal from the USP and/or each campus location on issues relevant to the evaluation (e.g., staffing, etc.) for instance:
 - Data on applications and offers for period 2010-2012 total and by disciplines
 - Data on student numbers including international students (2010-2012) total and by discipline
 - Data on student progression, completion and employment (2010-2012 total and by disciplines
 - Data on staffing levels and qualification (trends over 2010-2012)
 - Average length of service of staff – turnover rate
 - Data on research outputs of academic staff, publications, research funds (2010-2012)
 - Research income (2010-2012)
 - Research expenditure
 - HDR enrolments and completions
 - Results of student satisfaction surveys on teaching and learning and student support services (2012-2012)
 - Data on International and regional partnerships
 - Financial data – surplus etc

Outcomes

The outcomes will include the following

- a) Evaluation Plan / Draft Methodology - for agreement with AusAID and New Zealand Aid Program prior to mission
- b) Aide Memoire presentation to AusAID and New Zealand Aid Program
- c) Draft Review Report – to be provided to New Zealand Aid Program and AusAID Suva. Feedback from AusAID, New Zealand Aid Program, USP and other stakeholders will be provided within two weeks of receiving the draft report, following peer review.
- d) Final Review Report – to be provided to New Zealand Aid Program and AusAID Suva that will include reference to and analysis of:
 - The current state of play, including the new USP strategic plan, relevant Australia and New Zealand policies, and the development of the tertiary sector in the region;
 - The DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability);
 - AusAID's additional criteria (gender equality, monitoring and evaluation and analysis and learning);
 - Focus on particular issues highlighted in section 3, which could have implications for future support; and
 - Questions for consideration in the Review Report outlined in Annex A of the ToR.

Methods for Investigating Each Focus with Each Group

Methods DDA: Data and Document analysis
 QPM: Questions prior to mission
 SSQ: Semi Structured questionnaire
 INT: Interview

Groups

Group 1 USP top management from each campus

Group 2 USP academic staff, including staff from Centre for Flexible and Distance Learning (CFDL) and USP DVC Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching & Student Services), Pro Vice-Chancellor Research & International (or person responsible for academic programs and research at each campus)

Group 3 Administrative Staff including Pro Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Quality), Executive Director Human Resources

Group 4 USP undergraduate and postgraduate students and recent graduates

Group 5 USP member government representatives of Ministries/Agencies responsible for, Education, TVET, Higher Education, Qualifications/Accreditation and Finance

Group 6 New Zealand Aid Program and AusAID Relevant officers at Posts and other *Group 7* USP Donors, including: Japan, European Union, ADB

Group 8 Regional Development partners, SPC, SPC/SPBEA, PIFS and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration & Regional Campuses), and USP member governments Diplomatic Missions in Suva

Group 9 Employers of recent graduates

Group 10 Representatives of Council

Focus	DDA	QPM	SSQ	INT	Groups
Planning and budgeting, Institutional capability and financial sustainability				X	1/5/6/8
Mechanisms for assessing the demand for proposed new courses	X			X	1
Means for the phasing out of unviable courses				X	1/3
Financial surplus as a % of budget	X			X	3
Cash margin, debt borrowing ratio	X			X	3
Government contribution share of total income	X			X	3
Monitoring and reporting					
USP statutes	X			X	1/2/5/6/8
Review selected academic and support systems processes (ITS, HR and electronic records management)		X		X	1/3
Periodic reports and review		X			1/3
Quality Teaching					
University-level plans for teaching and learning	X	X		X	1/5/6/8/9
Regular, periodic external reviews of academic programs				X	1/2/4
Mechanisms for comparing the pass, progression, retention and completion rates of its students across all campuses and all modes		X		X	2
Student retention, student pass rates and	X	X		X	3
					3/4

time to completion rate	X	X		X	2/4
Student satisfaction				X	2/4
Establishing a culture of assessment				X	2/4
Increase student work-placements, attachments and internship				X	2/4
Quality Research, and Innovation				X	1/5/6/8/9
University-level plans for research, and policies for intellectual property and ethics				X	2/3
Policies around postgraduate research Handbook, orientation programs and transition processes for postgraduate students.				X	2
Research income and expenditure on research	X			X	2/3
Postgraduate degree enrolments and completions	X			X	2
Number of chairs, full-time research staff and post-doctoral fellows				X	2/3
Risk management					1/5/6/8
Completed risk management plan approved by Council by end-2010		X		X	3
Risk register maintained thereafter				X	3
Develop a disaster recovery plan and security policy				X	3
Regional focus/internationalism				X	1/5/6/7/8/9
Addressing country priorities				X	1/7
Regional campuses e.g. Review the management needs				X	1/3/5/8
Support their resource requirements to achieve equitable student experiences across all campuses				X	2/3/7
Number and quality of international and regional partnerships regional policy engagements	X			X	2/3/5/7
Number and percentage of international student enrolments	X				2/3
	X				1/3
Strengthen equity,				X	1/4/5/6/8
Gender		X	X	X	2/4
Review and improve facilities and services for students with special needs				X	2/4
Human Resources Strategy and Plan		X		X	1/3/5/6
Average length of service of academic and comparable staff				X	3
% of academic staff at Lecturer level and above with a PhD	X				3
Level of commendation by external reviewers every three years	X			X	2/3
ICT				X	1/6
Improve support for students in using ICT				X	2/4
Develop priorities for media services				X	2/3
Improve student satisfaction with the service	X			X	2/4
Data management				X	1/3/6
Reliable data management system				X	3
Use data, information and knowledge to support decision making at all levels of the enterprise				X	3

DFL Convert additional full programs at both undergraduate and postgraduate level into a flexible distance learning format Strengthen USPNet broadband Upgrade campus-based facilities Develop additional courses in DFL mode Develop policies and practices				X X X X X	1/2/5/7/9 2 2/3 2/3 2 2/3
Governance . Information to support USP Council and its governance roles e.g. Council information lines/communication responsibilities defined and articulated Council handbook Revised USP annual report Strengthening financial governance Review of senior management and academic salaries Review of member countries contributions Council contribution to Strategic Plan e.g. Outcomes for 2010, 2011 and 2012 agreed to by Council during 2009 after the adoption of the Revised Strategic Plan by Council Establish systems and procedures to strengthen asset planning and management Revision of USP plan for buildings and grounds Analysis of economic, demographic, employment and social trends across USP member countries Adviser to Council on USP planning systems and processes appointed Review of Senate, SP, management		X		X X X X X X X X X X X X	1/5/6/10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10
ToR Foci Partnership objectives Modality Level, Timing and Duration of funding Management arrangements Projects Supported			X X X X X	X X X X X	10/6/1 10/3/1 10/3 10/1 10/1
ToR ratings on the funded projects Relevance Effectiveness Efficiency Impact Sustainability Gender Equality Monitoring and Evaluation Analysis & Learning Lessons			X X X X X X X X X	X X X X X X X X X	1/2/3/5/6 1/2/3/5/6 1/2/3/5/6 1/2/3/5/6 1/2/3/5/6 1/2/3/5/6 1/2/3/5/6 1/2/3/6 1/2/3/5/6

Annex 4: Documents analysed prior to the mission

AusAID (2011) *Implementation Schedule to the Partnership Framework between Australia and the University of the South Pacific 2010-2012 – 2012 Incentive Funding Targets*

AusAID (2010) *Implementation Schedule to the Partnership Framework between Australia and the University of the South Pacific 2010-2012 – 2011 Incentive Funding Targets*

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University of the South Pacific, *Risk Management Action Plan: 2012-2013*

University of the South Pacific (2012) Policy 6.50.01, *Risk Management Policy*

- University of the South Pacific, *Gender Equity Plan 2011-2012*
- University of the South Pacific, *Learning and Teaching Plan 2012-2014*
- University of the South Pacific, (2012) *Report on 2011 Incentive Funding Targets*
- University of the South Pacific, (2011) *2011 Mid-Term Review: Progress Report to the UGC*
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- University of the South Pacific, (2012) *Draft Strategic Plan 2013-2018, Towards Excellence in Learning and Knowledge Creation, to Better Serve the Pacific Region: Consultative Document*
- University of the South Pacific Council, *Minutes of the Meetings of the Council, 12-13 May 2010, 2-3 November 2010, and 16-17 May 2012.*
- University of the South Pacific Council, *Decisions from the Meetings of the Council, 12-13 May 2011, 3-4 November 2011 and 16-17 May 2012.*
- University of the South Pacific, (2012) *Annual Plan*
- University of the South Pacific, Academic Honesty: Policy & Procedures (For USP Students) <http://www.usp.ac.fj/index.php?id=10486>, accessed 19 August 2012
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- Worral, G. (2012) *An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a real difference—Delivering real results*, AusAID, June

Annex 5: Individuals and groups interviewed before and during the mission

Before the mission

Teleconference 20 September 2012

Adeola Capel, Quality Assurance Manager, AusAID Education Resource Facility
Helen Leslie, New Zealand Aid Program Coordinator, Suva
Lori Banks, Dutta, Senior Program Manager, Regional Education, AusAID, Suva

Teleconference 25 September 2012

Ali Carlin, NZ Aid Program Manager, Wellington

Fiji

AusAID

Lori Banks, Dutta, Senior Program Manager, Regional Education
Simon Flores, A/g Counsellor Regional

USP Top Management

Dr Anjeela Jokhan, Dean, Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment
Koinio Boila, Acting Dir Finance
John Blythell, Prof. and PVC Research and International
Michael Gregory, PVC Planning and Quality
Esther Williams, Deputy VC
Mohit Prasad, Associate Dean Research and Graduate Affairs
Jaindra K. Karan, Director Development, Marketing and Communication

USP Council Members

Fay Yee, Chair Finance and Investments Committee
Ikbai Jannif, Pro-Chancellor and Chair of USP Council

USP AusAID Funded Project Coordinators

Elizabeth Holland, Prof. Climate Change
Laite Waseiyrio, ARDS
Viliame Rabici, Pacific Training Provider
Dominique Fisher, Pacific Land Program Scholarships
Michael Gregory, Tertiary Education Conference
Dean Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment, Acting Director PACE
Eric Colvin, Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute (by telecom)
Seu'ula Johnsson, IOE Literacy and Numeracy Project (by telecom)

USP Regional Campus Directors (by telecom)

Samuela Bogitini, Lambasa Campus Director
Premila Devi, Lautoka Campus Director
Irene Taafaki, Niue Campus Director
Tessa Kirifi, Tokelau Campus Director
Rod Dixon, Cook Islands Campus Director
David Manuella, Tuvalu Campus Director
Ruby Va'a, Samoa Campus Director
Eric Colvin, Vanuatu Campus Director
Ana Koloto, Tonga Campus Director

USP Planning and Quality

Michael Gregory, PVC Planning and Quality

USP Research and International

John Blythell, PVC Research and International

Jito Vanualailai, Director of Research

Elizabeth Holland, Prof. Climate Change

Biman C. Prasad, Prof. of Economics

Karen Stevenson, Acting Director, Oceana Centre for Arts and Pacific Studies

Mohit Prasad, Associate Dean Research and Graduate Affairs

USP Center for Flexible and Distance Learning

Theresa Koroivulaono, Acting Director

Dhiraj Bhatu, Manager Learning Systems

Rokosiga Morrison, Acting Senior Instructional Designer

USP Suva Students

A group of 9 undergraduate and postgraduate students

USP Staff Association

Robin Havea, Staff Association VP USP

USP Vice-Chancellor and President

Rajesh Chandra, Vice-Chancellor and President

Stakeholder Partners

Fekita 'Utoikamanu, Deputy Director General SPC and Deputy Chair USP Council

Anaseini Raivoice, Director SPBEA

Filipe Jitoko, Social Policy Advisor, PIFS

Parmesh Chand, Permanent Secretary for Public Service

Nesbitt Hazleman, Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation

Tonga

USP Institute of Education

Dr Seu'ula Johansson-Fua, Acting Director, IoE

USP Tonga Campus Coordinator

Dr 'Ana Koloto, Director

USP Tonga Campus staff

Lisiate Nuku, Tutor/Coordinator

Heti Veikune, Assistant Lecturer Language and Literature

Sela K. Havea, Manager Community and Continuing Education

USP Tonga Campus Students

A group of 40 undergraduate students

Tongan Stakeholder Partner

Dr 'Ana Maui Taufe'lungaki, Minister of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture

NZ High Commission

Peter Shackleton, Deputy High Commissioner

Mary Nau, Development Program Coordinator

Kiribati

AusAID

Mark Sayers, Development Program Specialist

Sai Rokovucago, Education

NZ High Commission

Michael Upton, First Secretary, MFAT

Lydia Bezeruk, First Secretary, Development Cooperation, AusAID,

Stakeholder Partners at MLHRD

Elaine Iuta Bwebwe, Senior Assistant Secretary, MLHRD

Antoine Bernaart, TVETSSP Team Leader

Stakeholder Partners at Public Service Office

Tererei Abete-Reema, Secretary

Stakeholder Partners at MoE

Lucy Kum-On, Principal Kiribati Teachers College

Tawaria Komwenga, Kiribati Teachers College

Iaou Kanimako, MoE Scholarship Officer

Stakeholder Partner ADB/WB

Teea Tira, Coordinator ADB/WB Joint Program

Kiribati Campus Director

Ueantabo Neemia-Macenzie, Campus Director

USP Kiribati Campus Staff

Pelenise Alofa, Climate Change Coordinator

Tereao Teingiia, CCEd Manager

Karakeman Koori, Accountant

Selaphina Ioakim, CIF Language Tutor/Coordinator

Bauro Tewareka, Teaching Assistant, IT

USP Kiribati Campus Students

A group of 17 preliminary, foundation and undergraduate students

Solomon Islands

AusAID

Shalom Akao, Senior Program Manager

Alice Fakarii, Program Manager

NZ High Commission

Cyrilla Galo, Development Program Administrator

Solomon Islands College of HE

Donald Malasa, Director

Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development

Timothy Ngele, Under-Secretary

USP Campus Director

John Usuramo

USP Campus Staff

Joseph Samani, Accountant

Jack Maebuta, Lecturer in Education

Vincent Nomaë, Assistant Lecturer in Economics

Tony Dadalo, Librarian

Irene Anigafutu, Manager Continuing Education

Campus Students

A group of 8 students from foundation and undergraduate programs

After the mission

Teleconference

Ali Carlin Development Manager, Pacific Regional, New Zealand Aid Program

Anna Pasikale Education Advisor, New Zealand Aid Program

Annex 6: Additional material supplied during and after the mission

AusAID, *The Pacific Education and Skills Development Agenda: Guidance on education and skills development across the Pacific*, June 2011

AusAID, Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF), 2009-2015, Annex A

University of the South Pacific (2011) *Analysis of the Year Two Student Survey 2010/11*

Kimblewhite, A. (2011), *University of The South Pacific Governance and Management Enhancement and Strengthening Project Monitoring Report*, February

University of the South Pacific (2012) *Two Year Study and Trend Analysis for Graduate Destination and Program Experience Survey 2010-2012*, February

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University of the South Pacific (2010) *Graduate First Destination Survey at USP 2009 and 2010, Final Report 23 Dec 2010*

University of the South Pacific (2012) *Longitudinal Study and Trend Analysis for Graduate Destination and Program Experience Survey 2010-2012*

University of the South Pacific (2010) *Pilot Survey of Second Year Students, 2010*

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University of the South Pacific, Kiribati Camps (2012) *Academic Plan 2012 – 2018*

University of the South Pacific, Kiribati Camps (2012) *Annual Plan 2013*

University of the South Pacific, Kiribati Camps (2010) *Strategic Plan 2010–2012: Ready the Canoe*

Annex 7: Progress with AusAID-funded projects

AusAID provides project funds amounting to A\$6,866,656 (F\$12.7 million). The projects supported have variable outcomes, in part because of the variable quality of the planning that went into them. A brief description of the main projects and outcomes are outlined below. The general impression of project management from within USP is that it is effective and provides a powerful means of communication and networking with AusAID. However, there are areas where planning could and should be tightened up, particularly to ensure that timelines are realistic and the various sub-steps to successful implementation are in place and could be achieved in time and on budget.

Association of Heads of Tertiary Education for the Pacific Islands

AusAID responded quickly to a request to fund a conference of great importance. The rapid negotiation worked very well and enabled a high level speaker and some other experts to contribute. AusAID is also funding dissemination and publication after the conference, which is important from a closed conference at a high level. Support was forthcoming also from AusAID in finding a key person to speak. So far the arrangements are working well and everything is in place for a successful conference.

Land Management and Development

The project has produced only a two-page report, as it is a simple program for 6 – 8 scholarships. All students except one completed the course, but the program is now finished. USP found it difficult to recruit students who met all four criteria.

Pacific Islands Centre for Public Administration

The project will supply advisory services training for civil servants etc. for 14 countries. USP is only now establishing the centre. They have barely made a dent in the funds allocated as the project started late. USP is only now engaging staff and involving the stakeholders. The funding ends next June so this presents a challenge. USP is involved in discussions with AusAID on ways of going forward.

Regional Scholarship Scheme

The scheme sends 280 students through nine of AusAID's sending Posts. The USP office's function is to look after the students. The impact of the scholarships is on the quality of learning and the ability of graduates to compete in employment at a high level in public and the private sectors.

Climate Change Leaders Program

The program has allowed the establishment of new courses: a diploma in climate change through to PhD. The PhD is now funded elsewhere. Two basic climate change courses are also offered. The first one started late and so the project was extended. An Enhanced Community Adaptation Program is funded for 2011–13.

The overall impact is considerable in terms of USP's overall performance in this area. It provided USP with two major roles: to provide academic qualifications for students (100) and also as a CROP (Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific) agency in society. The program demonstrated how to go out to the people to build resilience. Tools were developed in terms of adaptation and resilience assessment that are being used in various ways and which will be important in future projects and in different contexts. For example, the program directly involved students in assessing and helping in the Nadi floods.

USP's regional focus and internationalisation is affected by the funding. Climate change programs are all Fiji based, but they have developed tools that can be used elsewhere and which will impact on an EU project in 15 countries and on other donor funded projects. The aid encouraged partners to work with the Pacific Climate Change Program. Four country

leaders gave addresses at a recent climate change conference and now their papers are available for students across the region and elsewhere.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Climate Change has developed into an online course. USP will use EU funding to enable people to study in their own countries from next year. The cost of development was high and so would have depleted another area if the development had not been funded through donors.

When funding ceases, the climate change team will sustain the PG Diploma because it was planned with that in mind. Other aspects of the project are costly. USP sees climate change as a key deliverable, but not one that could be sustained without funding, given all its other priorities.

Federal Police English Language Training

The project enabled USP to come up with a tool to determine the level of proficiency of officers in English language and identify those who can benefit from scholarships. Before the project, there was high failure rate of scholarship students from the police service because of the poor language skills, even of some senior people.

Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute (PACLII)

PACLII has produced an Internet-based law resource published around the Pacific. We were not able to access any data about usage of the resource. It consists mainly of case law and legislation available for free and is modelled on other resource banks. Before the project, there was no real library of legal materials that practitioners and researchers could use. AusAID ceased funding of PacLII for 2010, during which time NZ funded it. AusAID resumed funding in 2011 and continues to fund it to date..

The June 2012 PACLII report states that a total of 1729 new documents were uploaded by PacLII over the previous six month period. In addition, a total of 112 Fiji Law Reports were received from USP Laucala library for checking and were uploaded during the period.

If funding is discontinued, PACLII would not be able to continue. However, it is committed to vigorously pursue different sources of funding in next three years. The low general level of wealth and organisation of the legal profession in the region will make this difficult.

PACLII has the potential to impact on teaching and research quality: legal research in the Pacific countries is difficult without resources that are up to date. Local print libraries are out of date too soon and in any case, many island communities cannot access any print libraries. PACLII provides the resources to teach a range of students across the region. PACLII's regional focus, partnerships and policy engagement applies to all jurisdictions, so USP can train students in a more coherent way across all the islands. The resource facilitates vigorous legal communities and a broad concept of the rule of law. Its technical aspects can only be achieved by a regional resource.

Fifteen countries send information to be downloaded onto the resource. The next stage is to try to get more of them to take over more ownership of, and responsibility for, the system and for uploading their own material.

Features of the website add to its regional impact. Many countries have independent websites that exist as separate silos in PDF form. PACLII's material is in HTML form, which makes it much easier to link to related documents and sites and allows for quicker download. These features make coherent study more possible.

Institute of Education Literacy and Numeracy Research

The Literacy and Numeracy Project was originally designed in two phases. USP started negotiations two years ago but had completed only part 2 of phase 1 by end of June 2012. The impact on the quality of learning and teaching appears to have been less than was hoped for at this stage, as it has mainly informed the Institute of Education.

In relation to a regional focus, the project is going to move into the second phase, which will enable assessment and analysis of students' literacy and numeracy. In this way, a much more detailed understanding of student achievement can be generated that should be significant if applied beyond Tonga. The idea is to inform interventions and strategies for teachers to improve literacy and numeracy.

Annex 8: USP's report of progress of the Strategic Plan targets and key performance indicators

KEY TARGETS	COMMENTS ON PROGRESS WITH AND ABILITY TO ACHIEVE TARGETS
Priority Area: Learning and Teaching	
Learning and Teaching Policy and Plan	The Learning and Teaching Policy which was approved by the Senate at its 29th September 2010 meeting is now available online. The Learning and Teaching Plan is now complete and was approved by Senate in 2012.
Japan-Pacific ICT Centre: 2010	The ICT Centre is now operational with the second phase of the project completed in November, 2011. A Director for the ICT Centre is in office.
Review of Academic Portfolio completed: 2011	This is a work in progress. Nine Working groups were formed to work on particular components of STAR and a Management Retreat in September, 2011 considered progress. A STAR Project Office has been established and is fully staffed. Over 100 courses were deleted in 2011 and a credit framework was approved by Senate in 2012.
Four new University courses at undergraduate level (refer to Strategy 2.2) to be operational by 2011	The University courses were introduced in phases. In Semester 1, 2010 the English for Academic Purposes UU114 course was introduced at the 100-level. The second course, on Communications and Information Literacy (UU100), commenced in Semester 2, 2010, and the last two remaining courses, UU200: Ethics and Governance and UU204: Pacific Worlds are now being offered in 2012.
50% increase in number/percentage of courses to be implemented through Moodle by 2012	At the end of 2011, 482 of 570 courses utilised Moodle, equalling 85% of all courses. The latest update as of June, 2012 on the Moodle Statistics by Faculties is as follows: FALE – 67% FBE – 92% FSTE – 90% Overall : 81% The above statistics are only for the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Courses and excludes CFS and the 600, 700, 800, 900 courses.
Priority Area: Student Support	
Student Charter to be fully implemented by 2010	The Student Charter was approved by Senate and Council in May, 2011.
An increase in the number of student accommodation – additional 100 beds by 2011	The new 10th Hall of residence was opened by the Prime Minister of Fiji, Honorable Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama on 24 November, 2011. The new facility comprises six buildings, each with three floors and accommodates 144 students. Each floor consists of an eight-bedroom multi-share facility and has its own showers, hot water, bathroom, toilets, washing machine, kitchen and cooking facilities. The facility is fully let.
Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) operational by 2010	The GDS was reinstituted in 2010 at both graduation ceremonies. The survey was also conducted for the April and September, 2011 graduations. A 63% response rate was recorded for the April graduation. For the September, 2011 graduation a 71% response rate was recorded and the report is now complete. Benchmark data is being obtained and a longitudinal survey has now been completed based on the two year trend. The GDS survey was also conducted for those who completed their studies in Semester II, 2011 and the response rate was 65%. The draft report for 2012 is ready for circulation to SMT.
Careers Advisory Services to be established by 2011	This will be completed by the end of 2012.
20% improvement in student to computer ratio by 2012	The ratio of the number of students to a computer has improved to 1 computer per 6 EFTS, with specific laboratories at a ratio of 1 computer per 5 EFTS.

Priority Area: Research, Graduate Affairs and Innovation	
Research clusters to be operational by end of 2010	<p>The six Research Clusters are still operational however, in the new Strategic Plan, Research at USP will be organised around the 8 strategic themes namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pacific Cultures and Societies. 2. Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Adaptation. 3. Human Capacity Building and Leadership. 4. Pacific Oceans and Natural Resources. 5. Small Island States, Regional Cooperation and Integration. 6. Sustainable Pacific Economies. 7. ICT and the Knowledge Economy. 8. Government, Public Policy and Social Cohesion. <p>A Leader has been nominated for each of these research clusters, although this may need to be realigned in the reformation towards strategic themes in 2013.</p>
Increase the number of PhD students to 40 EFTS by 2012	<p>The enrolments for PhD in 2011 was 42 EFTS, however as of 20 August, 2012 the current PhD EFTS is 51. This is a 20% growth of PhD enrolments to date.</p>
Increase the number of research-active professors to 20 by 2012	<p>There are now 28 Professors in the University. There are also 4 Directors of Professorial rank and several adjunct professors. There are also two Professors in the Vice-Chancellor's Office. This target therefore has been exceeded.</p>
Increase internal research allocation by 25% each year to 2012	<p>Internal research funding has increased from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 in 2010. This has further increased to \$1.05 million for 2012 with \$450,000 going to internal research and \$600,000 to the Research Clusters.</p>
Increase external research income by 25% each year by 2012	<p>The external research income of \$600,000 is now being allocated to the six cluster areas which will become the 8 Strategic Themes in the new Strategic Plan 2013-2018.</p>

Priority Area: Regional and Community Engagement	
At least 3 member countries visited by a member of the senior management each year.	<p>The Vice-Chancellor visited the following member countries in 2010 and 2011: Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, the Cook Islands, Tuvalu and Niue. He visited Tonga in January 2011 and Emalus Campus in March this year to celebrate the Pacific Islands Forum 40th Anniversary and Vanuatu and Samoa at the end of 2011. He also visited Tonga Campus, the Alafua Campus, Kiribati Campus, Emalus Campus and the Lautoka Campus in 2010 and Tonga again in 2012 for the ceremonies marking the passing of late King George Tupou V. The DVC (ARC) also visited the Emalus Campus in March, 2011, Samoa in May 2012 along with the Cook Islands and Lautoka. Visits to Campuses were also made by the Faculty Deans.</p>
Establish Alumni Office by 2010.	<p>The Alumni Office was established in July, 2009 and a new Alumni Officer appointed. Work on the Alumni database has been completed, however the alumni website is still under construction. Various Alumni gatherings have been organised in New Zealand, Kiribati, Vanuatu and Lautoka, Fiji attracting a number of alumnus from the Pacific. The function of the Alumni Office continued to be strengthened in 2012 to establish stronger alumni networks in the region.</p>
Broaden and expand Bandwidth of USPNet by 2010.	<p>In September 2010, USP successfully upgraded and migrated from the Gilat System to i-DIRECT system. This upgrade has made the USPNet work 300% more efficiently. USP also bought more bandwidth</p>

<p>Infrastructure development implemented in 3 regional campuses by 2011.</p> <p>25% increase of international students by 2012.</p> <p>Increase commercial income from each campus.</p>	<p>(space segment) which increased the total bandwidth from 7.5Mhz to 11Mhz. In July 2011, the construction of a KU-Band Hub Antenna was completed which will allow for the cost-effective deployment of USPNet to remote sub-campuses and rural communities through satellite. To date 5 KU-Band VSATs have been installed at 5 USP sub-campuses: Tonga (Va'vau and Haapai), Vanuatu (Malampa), Fiji (Vanuabalavu), Solomon Islands, USP (co-located test site).</p> <p>Equipment for the 5 remaining sub-campuses has been deployed and installation work for these campuses are planned to be completed by June, 2012. Due to delays with Ku-Band roll-out, Pacific Carrier Multiple Access (PCMA) technology implementation will be delayed further until May/June 2012.</p> <p>Completion of these will see improvements of at least 50% in bandwidth efficiency gains. WAN Optimisation technology will follow the PCMA implementation in July/August 2012 and will stand to improve the responsiveness of USPNet services even further.</p> <p>The Director Property and Facilities (DPF) visited 2 regional campuses- Solomon Islands, Kiribati in 2011 with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) team to evaluate campus physical development and improvement. The Government of the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) is providing some funds towards the development of the Emalus Campus. Campus design for Lautoka has also been done. In February and March, 2012 the DPF also went on site visit inspections of the Cook Islands Campus. The DPF again went on site visit inspections to Vanuatu in April 2012, Cook Islands in May, 2012 and Kiribati in June 2012.</p> <p>USP International (USPI) was fully established in 2010. In 2011, the EFTS for International students was 134. A new Strategic Plan is in place. Target KPIs are back on track with international student numbers for 2011 of 264, a 9% increase over the baseline year. 2012 is expected to meet planned enrolments of 338. The International Office is now under the leadership of the new PVC(R&I), Professor John Blythell.</p> <p>During 2011, USP International partnered with the faculties to attend four student recruitment fairs in Canada, China and India. Semester 1, 2012 is looking to be a very promising year, with the University's largest cohort of new international students with approximately 92 new international students this semester.</p> <p>Target Growth is 10% in 2012.</p>
Priority Area: Human Resources	
<p>Vice-Chancellor's Forum by 2010.</p> <p>Workload Model to be in place by end of 2010.</p>	<p>The University hosted the third annual Vice-Chancellor's Forum on Learning and Teaching at its USP Laucala Campus in Suva, Fiji Islands from 22-23 September, 2011. The participants were addressed by the keynote speaker, Professor Peter McPhee from the Melbourne University on "Thinking about teaching better: Four challenges for fine universities." The two-day Forum showcased USP staff members' work on innovative and successful approaches to improving learning and teaching across USP's 12 member-country campuses.</p> <p>The fourth annual Vice-Chancellor's Learning and Teaching Forum is scheduled to be held on 10th September, 2012. Professor Sally Kift, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic at James Cook University will be the keynote speaker at this forum.</p> <p>Each Faculty has a workload system in place. The post AUQA review of the 2008 audit (in June, 2008), however, highlighted the need for a more comprehensive institution-wide workload model. A Guideline to Academic Workload Model drafted by the three Deans and supported by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Planning & Quality) and the Executive Director HR is now approved by the Senior Management Team and is being piloted in the Faculties. The final Workload Model is currently</p>

Human Resources Strategy and Plan implemented by 2011. Increase in the number of PhD staff at lecturer level and above by 2012.	<p>being drafted.</p> <p>This is now complete and presented to the Senior Management Team and being piloted in 2012.</p> <p>As of 20 August, 2012 the Doctoral Qualifications of academic staff at lecturer level and above by Faculty is as follows: FAL: 54%; FBE: 69%; FST:68%</p>
Priority Area: Governance, Management and Continuous Improvement	
<p>Review of Council governance, structures and roles completed by 2010</p> <p>Integrated Management Cycle encompassing planning, budgeting, review and audit operational by 2010</p> <p>Formal implementation of External Quality Audit review completed by end of 2011</p> <p>Risk Management Plan Developed by 2011</p>	<p>This was reported to Council in May 2010 and the new management structure is embedding well. The University elected its new Pro-Chancellor, Mr Ikbal Jannif in its 2012 May Council meeting.</p> <p>Identification of KPIs and targets of SMT members have been conducted and disseminated. The P&Q Office has created a Strategic Plan Online Monitoring tracking System (SPOMS) with traffic light indicators that is now "live" online. Training has taken place for over 50 managers and staff. The 3rd Strategic Planning Workshop for the SMT and HOS was completed in September, 2011 with another follow up retreat done from 16-18 March 2012 to undertake planning for the Strategic Plan 2013-2018. The main agenda of this workshop was the presentation of the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan initiatives. Another audit on the Strategic Plan has been conducted by our internal auditors (KPMG) in April 2012. SPOMS results of the current Strategic Plan now show 75% achievement at 20 August, 2012.</p> <p>A progress report made by the AUQA Auditor Professor Robyn Quin was made to Council in November, 2010. Affirmations and recommendations arising from the Quin Report are now closed although they are still monitored to ensure no slippage occurs.</p> <p>The University is on track for the next international academic audit in 2013. The University has also begun its initial meeting with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and this accreditation process formally commences in 2013.</p> <p>A Risk and Insurance Unit was created in February 2009. The University has developed its Risk Mitigation Plan and Risk Management Policy approved by the Council in 2010.</p> <p>The University now has a Risk Register where 59 risks have been identified and this includes the top 11 risks. Assessment of the University's risk is being continuously monitored by the Risk and Insurance Unit which is responsible for administering risk management and insurance program in compliance with the Universities policies, procedures and countries legislation (Campuses). This target is now achieved.</p>

Annex 9: DAC and AusAID criteria ratings: Specific questions for consideration in the review report

Criteria below are rated according to the scale: 6 = very high quality; 1 = very low quality. Below 4 is less than satisfactory.

Please note that we found that most questions could not be assessed with any validity through a simple rating, as they each raise complex issues. For this reason we have added extensive comments as well as attempting an overall rating for each question.

Relevance

5 Were the objectives relevant to Australian and New Zealand Government and partner government priorities?

5 Were the objectives relevant to the context/needs of USP, member countries and students?

Comment – USP certainly now recognises the importance of education, environmental issues, health, inclusiveness and gender.

Research projects were well-targeted, but perhaps more emphasis is needed in developing international development objectives, which are critical to long-term sustainability, for example, strengthening the role of regional campuses in hosting international students.

AusAID and NZ MFAT have been crucial partners in assisting USP achieve most of its strategic goals.

As far as the regional campuses are concerned, the needs of the campuses and their students are beginning to be met and the projects and funding are considered to be appropriate.

Effectiveness

5 Were the objectives achieved? If not, why?

4 To what extent did the Partnerships contribute to achievement of objectives?

Comment – In many cases, USP would have attempted to achieve the objectives with or without the partnership agreement, though the funding was of immense benefit to the achievement of these objectives.

Australia's assistance has been very effective in many ways in: infrastructure; capacity building; and building strong student support services with positive outcomes. However, USP has very thin resources at the senior academic level to deliver much of the program. The senior management team needs strengthening with senior and experienced academics to hold key positions such as Deans, PVCs etc. if it is to be effective in the next phase of its development.

Representation of NZ MFAT and AusAID on Council and the University Grants Committee is important. Membership not only provides strategic quality input into USP's Strategic Plan but also advises on academic initiatives aligned to global, NZ MFAT and Australian education priorities. They also engage with different sections, groups and staff in discussing issues about continuous improvement.

The funds have not concentrated on human resources and perhaps this has been a problem in terms of achieving some of the goals.

As far as projects are concerned, sometimes it is difficult for staff to start projects on time due to other work and staffing issues. More scrutiny of project timing at the planning and approval stage would be of great assistance to USP in their implementation schedules.

Efficiency

6 Did the implementation of the partnerships make effective use of time and resources to achieve the outcomes?

Comment – The partnership agreements were designed to fit with USP's strategic objectives and the reports fitted with a sensible reporting schedule and so there was not a wasteful accountability burden. NZ MFAT and AusAID both contribute funding to USP's recurrent budget and in support of implementation of the Strategic Plan. This is the most effective way to provide support as it allows USP the flexibility to apply the funding to areas of greatest priority as determined by the University and its members. It also reduces transaction costs.

Assistance aligned with the Strategic Plan has been an efficient way to achieve set targets and KPIs.

For all activities and new initiatives USP prepares business plans.

Local campuses are required to increase enrolments and this has increased their efficiency, but they have limited staff (both academic and support), space, facilities and equipment to serve the increasing numbers.

Sub-questions:

- **Were the partnerships designed for optimal value for money?**

Comment – Yes.

- **Have there been any financial variations to the Partnerships?**

Comment – Not to our knowledge, though in the case of some projects, funding was withdrawn when a particular project was not completed in a timely way.

- **Has management of the Partnerships been responsive to changing needs?**

Comment – Yes.

- **Did the Partnerships suffer from delays in implementation? If so, why and what was done about it?**

Comment – There were no excessive delays to our knowledge. Where there were problems, USP could discuss these with the aid agencies in a positive manner.

- **Did the Partnership have sufficient and appropriate staffing resources?**

Comment: In our opinion, Posts may have rather too few resources in the regions for making links with the tertiary sector in order to be sure that it is achieving relevant objectives and to encourage coherence.

5 Was a risk management approach applied to management of the Partnerships (including anti-corruption)?

Comment – We found no evidence of excessive risk or corruption. The corruption issue is well dealt with by USP with various levels of checking that in some cases, leads to delayed actions (e.g. payments signed off by six or more people).

3 What were the risks to achievement of objectives? Were the risks managed appropriately?

Comment: The main risks were a lack of management capacity and HR problems. Management remains thin and HRM is a relatively weak area within the University.

The three-year contracts are often reviewed right at the end of the contract, leaving people in a difficult situation where they are virtually forced to apply for other jobs in case they are not renewed. USP may consider changing to a different system, at least for some key posts; for example, rolling three-year contracts renewed annually, so that staff always have two years' remaining contract. This would have relatively little budgetary implication but may lead to a reduction in key staff turnover and management disruption.

Impact (Rate if feasible)

6 Did the Partnerships produce intended or unintended changes in the lives of beneficiaries and their environment, directly or indirectly?

5 Were there positive or negative impacts from external factors?

Comment – Both. Regional partners saw the investment in USP as a vote of confidence in its management at a time when the University was vulnerable. At the same time, governments allowed inflation to erode USP's unit of resource.

There has been a positive impact from the partnerships in terms of learning environment for students, relationships with the region, relevance to members, quality and relevance of programs, inclusivity especially of students in the region who are able to benefit from improved DFL facilities and programs, and the employability of students graduating with a better range of relevant skills and experiences.

The assistance provided has changed the outlook, the physical structure, the growth in numbers of people seeking an education, and the positive perception of the USP.

Campus Directors report that the investment and projects have greatly impacted on student learning.

Impact is not just a factor of a particular aid but a combination of several factors, including the intentions and capacity of the beneficiaries themselves. The regional nature of the University is by definition a complex configuration but achievements have been great in the review period.

Sustainability

2 Do beneficiaries and/or member government stakeholders have sufficient ownership, capacity and resources to maintain the Partnership outcomes after Australian and New Zealand Government funding has ceased? To what degree can this be expected from core funding to the recurrent budget?

Comment – If Australian and New Zealand Government funding ceased, USP would have no choice other than to significantly reduce its range of offerings in terms of teaching, research and consultancy, make staff redundant and reduce its capital plans. USP could not achieve its strategic objectives in the next planning period with the funds from member governments and other regional partners. In fact, with the emergence of new national universities, this funding is more likely to reduce in real terms than increase.

USP will need to develop more capacity in its human resources and its management if improvements achieved in its operation are to be sustained and built upon.

All aspects of the partnerships are works in progress and some of the accomplishments require a longer time frame to become fully embedded. Educational change by its nature is long term. The University remains the best entity for the capacity building and training that the Pacific region needs.

Sustainability is a long-term issue dependent on reaching and maintaining international quality in all core areas (teaching and learning and research). This will probably take two to three Strategic Plan cycles, provided that the management capacity of USP is maintained during these cycles. Even then, there are still political issues over the level of government sponsorship that are largely outside USP control.

2 Are there any areas of the Partnerships that are clearly not sustainable? What lessons can be learned from this?

Comment – The core activity of the University could be sustained with a reduction in aid, but at a reduced level. Its contribution to the regions could be reduced and plans to reduce the inequality of student experience between campuses could be put on hold.

USP has some further work to do in ensuring member governments are aware of the realities of funding and that contributions will need to rise at some stage. USP needs to work on providing governments with evidence of the value of increasing their contributions.

Gender Equality

4 What were the outcomes of the Partnerships for women and men, boys and girls?

4 Did the activity promote equal participation and benefits for women and men, boys and girls?

Comment – The partnerships have raised awareness in USP of gender issues and there is a certain amount of activity around these issues: for example, the introduction of gender studies in the teaching program. However, there remains work to do at a deeper level. USP will need systems to ensure gender equality is meaningfully tracked and reported to Council, e.g. the types of courses taken, the time to completion for men/women, employability /destinations, the student experience, regional variations in all of these issues etc.

There is no real evidence of significant gender inequality either in research or teaching, although males seem to underachieve on some islands. A higher proportion of women is participating and achieving across activities. However, it is not clear that this is due to any significant affirmative action agenda.

In some of the regions, such as the Solomon Islands campus, there has been a large increase in women coming to study at the campus over the review period.

Sub-questions:

Did the Partnerships promote more equal access by women and men to the benefits of the Partnerships, and more broadly to resources, services and skills?

Did the Partnerships promote equality of decision-making between women and men?

Did the Partnerships help to promote women's rights?

Did the Partnerships help to develop capacity (donors, partner government, civil society, etc) to understand and promote gender equality?

Comment – USP has a consultative planning and management system that allows all to participate in decision-making. This system stems from USP's own initiative.

Regional partners state that USP raises gender as an issue in various fora in the region and has contributed to improved gender awareness.

The University is committed to gender equality and the promotion of gender awareness. It has a Senate Committee on gender, and a gender plan. It is planning to develop a University-wide gender development plan, programs on gender at all levels from regional

community engagement workshops and courses to postgraduate work. There is the opportunity and ability for USP to lead in the area of gender in the region, including politics, social, economic, scientific, health, responsibility and entrepreneurship spheres.

Monitoring and Evaluation

6 Does evidence exist to show that objectives have been achieved?

4 Were there features of the M&E (monitoring and evaluation) system that represented good practice and improved the quality of the evidence available?

Comment – There are features of M&E processes and systems at USP in development that will eventually allow more analysis of, for example, student outcomes and student evaluations. USP provides information on Strategic Plan implementation through its SPOMS system, which can track outputs. USP also collects and analyses data relating to outcomes (eg times to completion, retention rates etc). They have also developed surveys to gain information on graduate destinations and employability.

USP can improve further by formalising internal M&E processes. The Strategic Plan includes a very good analysis of previous achievements.

Mechanisms are in place for implementation / engagement with AusAID and NZ MFAT: 6-monthly meetings, Council meetings, annual meeting in Wellington/Canberra with the Vice-Chancellor, indirectly through AusAID and NZ MFAT's representatives to USP Council and Grants Committee and ad hoc but relatively frequent engagements by Suva Posts. M&E has been inbuilt in the HLC process. In addition, M&E occurs involvement in high- level regional bodies such as PIF. This review itself is one form of M&E.

3 Was data gender-disaggregated to measure the outcomes of the Partnerships on men, women, boys and girls?

Comment – There is data on the achievement of the two sexes, but analysis could be taken further and lead to action; for example, on the underachievement of males on some campuses.

Did the M&E system collect useful information on cross-cutting issues?

Comment – We are unable to provide a rating to this question as the evidence about cross-cutting issues that we explored was mainly qualitative rather than stemming from the M&E system.

Analysis & Learning

6 To what extent were the Partnership designs based on previous learning and analysis?

6 To what extent was learning from implementation and previous reviews (self-assessment and independent) integrated into the Partnerships?

Comment – USP is very active in its consideration of many kinds of reviews and in implementing their recommendations. Since the partnerships are based in part on USP's strategic objectives, there is a very positive impact from reviews.

We do not have the evidence to comment on how AusAID had taken previous reviews into account in their partnership agreements, but assume, since they work effectively, that such evidence must have influenced them, and particularly AusAID's move to incentive funding, which seems to have almost entirely positive impact.

NZ MFAT decided that program and project funding was diverting USP from its core business and creating transaction costs on both sides. It decided that there were benefits from having a more strategic engagement with USP. NZ MFAT also wanted to align its aid program to bigger, fewer, longer and deeper activities.

Lessons (No rating required)

What lessons from the Partnerships can be applied to designing future activities?

Comment – AusAID’s move to incentive funding has had a positive impact.

NZ MFAT’s hands-off approach reduces the accountability burden on USP and its own administrative burden, and works well as long as the partner organisation does not suffer adverse changes and the environment remains relatively constant. The approach certainly provides the space for the University to achieve strategic goals as long as the donor has confidence in the University. NZ MFAT can draw on other evidence that such confidence is warranted: the Governance and Management Enhancement and Strengthening Project and the follow-up to the 2008 Quality Audit.

The accountability burden can be reduced to a manageable level if the M&E demands of the donors continue to be aligned with each other, with the various funding streams and with USP’s own planning and reporting periods.

Given that one of the purposes of core funding is to reduce transaction costs for both parties it is important to find an appropriate balance regarding information requirements and engagement. This has implications for the proportion of funds provided to projects versus the proportion provided via core or incentive funding. USP is at a stage of maturity where the proportion of project funding provided by AusAID might be reduced and perhaps restricted to areas where seed funding is especially useful, such as developing research and consultancy. It would be useful if incentive fund assistance could cover more expert human resources, especially in some key specialised areas where the University faces recruitment challenges and on providing more student support in the regional campuses.

Any move to competitive funding for service provision needs to be considered in the light of transaction costs to both parties versus the benefits of a simpler system.

The regional campuses need capital and other investment, especially human resources, to provide students with a quality higher education experience and support them academically and in other ways.

AusAID and NZ MFAT should continue to support USP through its new Strategic Plan 2013–2018. The Plan focuses on the region rather than just Suva, and so aid will be able to assist the regional campuses to better serve the increasing number of students who study there.