

## DFAT's response to the Independent Evaluation

DFAT agrees with four of the seven recommendations and partly agrees with three recommendations, noting that DFAT's funding for Water for Women has concluded and there are currently no planned future phases of the Fund. However, DFAT will draw on the evaluation's recommendations to inform guidance and lessons on climate resilient inclusive WASH and water programming which will directly inform future DFAT WASH and water investments.

| Recommendation   | Response        | Action Plan  | Timeframe          |
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| 1) DFAT and/or CRC should develop guidance (including templates) to support robust and contextually relevant Climate Resilient Vulnerability Assessments (CRVA) preparation to inform implementation of climate resilience investments.  | Agree           | DFAT will develop, and disseminate guidance and lessons on climate-resilient inclusive WASH, including key requirements of Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessments (CRVAs), to inform relevant investments.   | First quarter 2026 |
| 2) In climate resilience programming DFAT should resource collaboration between research organisations and implementing organisations to continue advancement of thinking and practice.  | Partially Agree | DFAT currently supports climate-relevant research and collaboration with research organisations through existing programs, including the Australian Water Partnership and the Climate Resilient Communities (CRC) initiative. Additional WASH-specific support will be considered on a case by case basis. DFAT will also look for opportunities to incorporate lessons on the value of collaboration between research and implementing organisations.   | Ongoing            |
| 3) In the absence of a dedicated, centrally-managed WASH sector investment, DFAT should incentivise bilateral programs to engage across ministerial portfolios to address WASH issues in an integrated way, noting this may otherwise be overlooked by sector-centric programming. | Agree           | Acknowledging the importance of water security and WASH in climate action, DFAT is implementing climate-resilient water and WASH investments across the development program. Bilateral investments are driven by the priorities of in-country partners, as outlined in Development Partnership Plans (DPP). Where relevant and in line with local priorities, DFAT will encourage a multisectoral, integrated approach. Outreach and advice outlined in climate resilient inclusive WASH guidance and lessons developed will reflect this. | Ongoing            |
| 4) Any DFAT programming in WASH should continue to focus on system   | Agree           | In line with best practice, DFAT WASH programming strives to address long-term sustainability challenges,  | Ongoing            |

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| strengthening in the relevant enabling institutions at all levels: national, subnational, community.  |                 | including via a joined-up approach to systems strengthening at all levels (including at the national, subnational and community levels). DFAT's guidance and lessons on climate resilient inclusive WASH will note the importance of system strengthening.   |           |
| 5) Any DFAT programming in WASH, environmental health, water supply development and community climate resilience should be strongly encouraged to include strategies that address faecal sludge management. | Partially Agree | DFAT agrees that effectively addressing faecal sludge management is critical to good WASH programming and DFAT's guidance and lessons on climate resilient inclusive WASH will include advice on this. However, the merits of addressing faecal sludge management in environmental, health, water supply development and community climate resilience programming will be considered on a case by case basis.  | Ongoing   |
| 6) Any DFAT programming that challenges gender norms and is serious about not doing harm should be required to support/create GBV referral pathways.  | Partially Agree | <a href="#">Australia's International Development Policy</a> prioritizes action on <a href="#">gender equality</a> , and <a href="#">Australia's International Gender Equality Strategy</a> elevates our attention to a do no harm approach. This is supported by DFAT's existing requirements for gender analysis, including, where relevant, gender-based violence, to inform programs of \$3 million and above. DFAT will continue to incorporate GEDSI considerations into (climate resilient inclusive) WASH programs which challenge gender norms. While DFAT strongly encourages and facilitates consideration of GBV referral pathways in all programming, we are noting 'partial agreement' as the exact scope of investments is determined based on local context, including the work of other partners and stakeholder needs' DFAT notes the recommendation's reference to 'any DFAT programming' is outside the specific scope (climate resilient inclusive WASH) of the evaluation. | Ongoing   |
| 7) DFAT investments should be encouraged to resource collaboration with rights-holder organisations in support of the development policy commitment to  | Agree           | In line with its commitment to <a href="#">locally-led development</a> and GEDSI, DFAT will continue to explore the resourcing of collaboration with rights holder organisations as part of WASH programming. For example, The CRC   | Ongoing   |

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| improving GEDSI and locally led development. |          | facility – which will support climate-resilient WASH programming – has its own locally-led development strategy. DFAT’s <a href="#"><i>International Gender Equality Strategy</i></a> commits DFAT to increase support for women’s rights organisations and institutions. |           |