



## DFAT Management Response

### *Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund 2019 Midterm Review Report*

#### Overview of the WPHF

Established in 2016, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) is a multilateral trust fund, hosted by the UN Development Programme's Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO), which manages all UN trust funds. The WPHF's Secretariat is hosted by UN Women, as the UN agency that leads on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) matters. The WPHF addresses a key gap identified in the 2015 Global Study on the Implementation of UN Security Council 1325, which emphasised the need for increased "predictable, accessible and flexible funding for women's civil society organisations working on peace and security at all levels." The WPHF offers a valuable and innovative mechanism for connecting donors with local civil society organisations at the grassroots level, which typically lack visibility and/or access to funding from large institutions, such as the UN.

Australia was a founding donor and supporter for the WPHF, and continues to provide regular, small-scale contributions to the fund, with priority on the Indo-Pacific region. Australian advocacy has resulted in increased WPHF activity across the Pacific, with the expansion of its footprint to seven countries (Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Palau, Vanuatu and Samoa).

#### Independent Midterm Review (August-December 2019)

As per the Terms of Reference stipulating the purpose, scope and monitoring requirements of the WPHF, the Secretariat engaged an independent consultant to conduct a Midterm Review (MTR) between August-November 2019. The MTR assessed the effectiveness and efficiency of the WPHF against its objectives over the period of 2016-2019. In particular, it explored its relevance in the peace, security and humanitarian landscape; its mandate and functions; governance and financial structure; communications and stakeholder engagement; and its sustainability. DFAT was engaged in the evaluation process as a longstanding donor to the WPHF. The MTR, released December 2019, identified key challenges, lessons learned, and best practices drawn from WPHF experiences and achievements to date. It provided seven recommendations to ensure continued growth and value of the funding instrument.

The WPHF Secretariat, and associated leadership, such as the Funding Board, National Steering Committees, Management Entities at the country level and other key stakeholders, are responsible for addressing the recommendations. These recommendations consider opportunities to improve governance structures, resourcing, partnerships and engagement strategies in order to ensure the fund capitalises on its momentum and develops in a sustainable manner. As an ongoing and key



donor to the WPHF, the findings of the MTR are relevant and have implications for our contributions. DFAT supports/agrees to all of the recommendations put forward as they align with monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements contained within our partnership agreement and will strengthen organisational capacity to help achieve the overall outcomes of the DFAT-WPHF investment.

DFAT welcomes the WPHF Secretariat's subsequent management response to its MTR, which addresses each recommendation with proposed responses and timeframes to address concerns as far as possible. DFAT is encouraged by the fact that the WPHF has already commenced implementing a number of its responses. DFAT will continue to support the WPHF Secretariat as it implements these recommendations, including through advocacy and engagement opportunities to showcase the fund and its work.

The recommendations of the MTR are provided on the following page for reference.



No.	Recommendations	DFAT's management response
1	Design a comprehensive capacity building strategy and empowerment process matched with financial resources.	DFAT welcomes a clear and considered strategy to identify existing limitations of the WPHF structure and a process through which this can be strengthened, including indication of where additional resources are required to support this. DFAT notes that the WPHF has already hired specialised staff to address these limitations and invested in opportunities to build capacity of WPHF grantees, including through the development of an online global community of practice and knowledge management platform – the WPHF Community.
2	Revisit the WPHF theory of change (TOC) and results framework, adjust and harmonize including a results-based management perspective	DFAT encourages WPHF to strengthen its TOC and results framework to ensure they appropriately reflect the intent and value of the WPHF. DFAT further supports prioritisation of a more robust and realistically oriented results framework, considerate of both qualitative and quantitative measurements, and with guidance for users. DFAT notes WPHF progress in developing outcome indicators for the COVID-19 Emergency Response Window and is currently reviewing the results framework.
3	Improve governance functions; procedures for shortening the process of project approvals; and address the issue of yearly turnover of projects	DFAT welcomes WPHF initiatives to enhance transparency of its governance structures and project approval and implementation processes, including exploring ways to empower civil society partners as decision-makers in the project approval process. DFAT notes that in response, WPHF is now submitting more detailed analysis and data to the Funding Board to support more robust decision-making, and to improve the timeframe of project approval processes.



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4	Seek to leverage and expand partnerships at all levels to a greater extent and improve coordination	DFAT supports stronger and expanded partnerships at all levels, which has proven to be a key component of the growth achieved by the WPHF to date. DFAT notes that the COVID-19 will limit WPHF's ability to undertake site visits and for in-person cooperation.
5	Strengthen engagement of men to support women's empowerment in conflict prevention, humanitarian responses, peacebuilding and economic recovery	DFAT supports developing targeted opportunities for greater engagement with men in WPHF activities. This demonstrates that WPS is not a women-specific agenda – it has far reaching implications and relevance for all members of a community and thus requires their involvement.
6	Consolidate results, deepen existing interventions, expand the WPHF work in a balanced way, and capitalize on the momentum generated and the commitment of partners for sustainability	DFAT welcomes this focus on consolidating the achievements of the WPHF and building on the momentum over the past five years. The MTR shows the WPHF has and continues to deliver results and expand in a balanced way, which we agree is important to ensure sustainability of the Fund and ensure it achieves its outcomes, as well as creating an enabling environment for individual projects and partners.
7	Gather and disseminate best practices and lessons learned	DFAT encourages the dissemination of best practices and lessons learned to support diverse civil society organisations and other partners to benefit from the breadth of WPHF global activities. DFAT notes that the WPHF Secretariat has initiated efforts to address this recommendation through the development of the WPHF Community to connect partners and build capacity.