

**Mid-Term Evaluation of the Pacific Community Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific
(PGEP) Project
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

Investment Summary

Investment Name	Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (PGEP) Project		
AidWorks initiative number	58833/22		
Commencement date	1 July 2013	Completion date	30 June 2018
Total Australian \$	AUD3,817,332 [AUD2,504,550.89 expensed at 31 December 2016. Approx. AU\$1,312,782 remaining]		
Delivery organisation(s)	Social Development Program, Pacific Community (SPC)		
Implementing partner(s)	14 Pacific Island Country governments		
Country/Region	Pacific Regional		
Primary sector	Gender		
Initiative description	<p>Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (PGEP) is a five-year project working with the 14 Pacific Island countries (PICs) to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen governments' capacity to mainstream gender; and 2. Improve gender statistics to better monitor progress towards gender equality. <p>The short-term outcomes for PGEP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased general awareness and attitudinal change on gender equality amongst government personnel • Strengthened political will to achieve gender equality • Increased technical capacity of governments to drive gender mainstreaming • Improved organisational culture that supports gender mainstreaming • Gender is embedded in national development plans with clear strategies and adequate resourcing in place • Increased coordination to gender mainstreaming efforts 		

Evaluation Summary

Overall Assessment

The mid-term evaluation found that PGEP is achieving positive and demonstrated gains in gender mainstreaming and gender statistics in seven countries where PGEP has been invited as an active partner; and in a further three countries where assistance has been more sporadic. However, there are more countries than a small team can practically assist, and the mode and approach needs to be refined for future implementation in order to support sustained outcomes at the country and regional level.

Program effectiveness

The review found that progress has occurred towards all outcomes. 'Significant' progress has occurred on increasing awareness and attitudes in gender equality amongst government personnel, and 'limited' progress has occurred on the development of national development plans with gender-specific targets. For all other outcomes, progress towards the outcome has been 'moderate'. Progress is the result of contributions from PGEP, national efforts and leaders, *Pacific Women* and other development programs.

Program Relevance

The need for PGEP remains highly relevant:

- The Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration has identified institutional strengthening for gender mainstreaming as a key regional priority;
- The need for developments in gender statistics to inform evidence-based policy decision making has been identified by Pacific leaders as a priority;
- SPC is the logical and key organisation to deliver the project, with its strategic positioning in the region, its membership of 22 PICTs and its technical expertise. In most PICs, SPC is the sole organisation providing specific assistance on gender mainstreaming and gender statistics
- Political will for gender equality has grown over recent years but the extent of it varies by country. In many instances, 'articulated' will of leaders or policies is yet to be funded, implemented or demonstrated;
- Capacity in both gender mainstreaming and gender statistics is low across PICs. There are wider issues of limited capacity in PIC public sectors, especially in Small Island Developing States, and previous examples of gender mainstreaming programs not being sustained, which increases the relevance (and complexity) of capacity building.

Program efficiency

All PICs interviewed provided overwhelmingly positive feedback about the type of assistance provided through PGEP. Comments centred on the level of the team's technical expertise in gender mainstreaming and gender statistics, as well as their 'partnership' approach to working with countries. However, with limited staff resources, there is a question as to whether the team is spending their time efficiently, on the right mix and type of activities. In particular:

- The project has multiple reporting and accountability systems, and there appears to be limited outcomes-based planning, learning and reflection, or use of the monitoring and evaluation framework
- The PGEP team has spent considerable time and resources on the development and delivery of trainings – some of which are introductory and without consistent follow-up through provision of other technical assistance
- There is strong coordination between PGEP and PIC government agencies, but limited coordination and communication between PGEP and other SPC divisions and development partners.

Evaluation Objective:

This was a learning focused mid-term evaluation of PGEP, commissioned by DFAT to determine progress during the first three years of project implementation (1 July 2013 – 30 June 2016). The evaluation explored questions related to relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the project, with specific objectives to identify:

1. Extent of progress against the project's identified short-term project outcomes
2. Effective approaches and strategies for contributing to improved PIC capacity to progress gender equality and empowerment of women through national and sector policies and strategies
3. Effective strategies for contributing to the generation and use of greater knowledge and information about gender equality issues and women's contributions to social and economic development
4. Success factors, what worked, what did not, in what context, and why
5. Lessons learned for project improvement and for guiding strategic directions
6. Barriers and challenges to progress
7. Recommendations for improvement and for future development of the project

Evaluation Completion Date: 15 February, 2017

Evaluation Team: Sarah Widmer (Team Leader) and Emily Sharp (SPC representative).

An Evaluation Reference group (ERG) guided and enhanced the quality of the evaluation by peer reviewing and providing feedback on evaluation products (evaluation plan and draft evaluation report) and participation in a workshop to discuss evaluation recommendations.

The ERG consisted of:

Name	Position and Organisation	Email
Anne Markiewicz	Former Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, <i>Pacific Women Support Unit</i>	N/A
Suzanne Bent	First Secretary, Gender (Regional) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Suva	Suzanne.Bent@dfat.gov.au
Kuiniselani Toelupe Tago	Director Social Development Division, Pacific Community	Kuiniselanit@spc.int
Brigitte Leduc	Gender Equality Adviser Social Development Division, Pacific Community	Brigittel@spc.int

DFAT's response to the evaluation report

- The final report submitted by the evaluation team meets DFAT's quality criteria for an evaluation report. It addresses the terms of reference and incorporates feedback on the draft.
- The report reflects an understanding of most of the key issues, the rationale for the majority of recommendations is provided and there is an executive summary for decision-makers. The style, format and writing is clear and concise.
- The evaluation concluded that SPC's PGEP project is achieving positive and demonstrable gains in gender mainstreaming and gender statistics. The evaluation states that *the PGEP project team has inarguably delivered a considerable amount of technical assistance with their available resources*. The analysis of program implementation suggests that the team has managed to implement a range of activities across all 14 PICs.
- The evaluation found that with only four project staff having the responsibility of supporting gender mainstreaming and gender statistics across 14 PICs, in order to maximise effectiveness, it is critical that the team plan activities carefully, leverage off existing opportunities in country, and coordinate with other partners as much as possible. The evaluation identified that a comprehensive, practical and coordinated focus in the next phase of PGEP was critical to embed progress and overcome challenges surrounding gender mainstreaming. This includes careful consideration of what activities have the most value, how the team spends its time given its skills, and how it can maximise its effectiveness with limited resources. It also includes leveraging its position in SPC and *Pacific Women* and with its national government counterparts. Six themes frame the recommendations (identified in the table on page 6).
- The evaluation notes that the use of training be carefully considered as a mode of technical assistance, especially now that the project is moving beyond the first phase of implementation. The main outcomes associated with these trainings have been awareness of gender mainstreaming and coordination between partners. The literature emphasises that training is most effective when followed up with other forms of technical assistance, like project-based, on-the-job mentoring (EIGE, 2013)¹. The need to ensure training is embedded in a package of technical assistance is essential, although the ability for PGEP to do this in each country is limited by the low staff numbers in the project. This means planning and prioritisation is all the more important.

In the spirit of the SPC and DFAT partnership, and given the evaluation was undertaken as a joint process, this Management Response has been jointly drafted and agreed by the SPC / DFAT Evaluation Reference Group members.

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¹ European Institute for Gender Equality (2013). *Mainstreaming Gender into the Policies and Practices of the European Union and EU Member States: Good Practices in Gender Mainstreaming*. Luxembourg: European Institute for Gender Equality.

Recommendation	Response	Actions	Responsibility
1. Strengthen country prioritisation and strategic planning			
<p>Recommendation 1.1: PGEP to work more intensively with a smaller number of countries for the duration of the project, namely those in Groups 1 and 2, and supporting Group 3 PICs through South-South exchange, regional efforts or coordinated efforts with other development partners.</p>	<p>Agree, but SPC proposes a different clustering system based on twin track work on Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Statistics, and on experience of which countries have requested support. The Groupings for Phase 2 of the program will be determined during the design phase.</p>	<p>Technical Assistance in Gender Mainstreaming:</p> <p>Group 1: Support with a comprehensive approach to technical assistance in: Cook Islands, FSM, Palau, RMI, Solomon Islands, Tonga</p> <p>Group 2: Specific interventions when countries request, possibly in collaboration with other SPC's programmes (fisheries, climate change, land divisions) to Tuvalu, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Niue, and Fiji</p> <p>Group 3: Occasional support through regional activities and coordinated efforts with other development partners if required by the countries, for PNG, Nauru, and Samoa</p> <p>Technical Assistance in Gender Statistics</p> <p>Group 1: Countries where statistics are produced but support is needed for analysis: Tonga, Palau, Cook Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu, FSM, RMI</p> <p>Group 2: Countries where support is needed in producing and analysing gender statistics: Fiji, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Solomon Islands</p> <p>Group 3: No support is planned until the (potential) next phase of the project – PNG, Niue, and Nauru</p> <p>All: As data becomes available from the 2016-2020 Census of Population and Housing, PICs will be producing Gender Fact Sheets. Gender Profiles from</p>	<p>SPC</p>

		other surveys such as Household, Income, Expenditure Survey (HIES) will be produced based on PIC requests.	
Recommendation 1.2: PGEP to develop strategic priorities specific to each group of countries, and update country workplans with clear links between planned activities and strategic priorities, as well as between country-level indicators and program-level results.	Agree	<p>Review of PGEP country workplans will be completed for Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, and Tonga by July 2017.</p> <p>PGEP will work with other SPC programs to finalise workplans for Tuvalu, Fiji, Vanuatu and Kiribati by November 2017.</p> <p>Review of the workplans for FSM, RMI, and Palau will be completed by November 2017. The North Pacific SPC Gender Adviser will support this process.</p>	SPC
2. Reframe the approach to technical assistance in PICs			
Recommendation 2.1: PGEP to shift its modes of technical assistance towards on-the-job mentoring, extended in-country visits, and a modular approach to training that is complemented by other activities. For PICs in Groups 1 and 2, the focus of training should shift to gender statistics and analysis, and application of gender mainstreaming in programs.	Agree	<p>SPC agrees with this recommendation, and the finalisation of country workplans will reflect this recommendation. The SPC PGEP team addressed this recommendation in their February 2017 staff annual team planning. These workplans will be finalised as per the timeline reflected in recommendation 1.2</p> <p>PGEP will recruit a gender equality adviser, bringing the number of gender advisers in SPC to three, in order to increase its capacity to respond to the countries requests in a strategic way.</p>	SPC

<p>Recommendation 2.2: PGEP to develop and disseminate simple, sector-specific guidelines to support the application of gender mainstreaming across sectors.</p>	Agree	Based on current work and available information, sector specific gender mainstreaming and WEE guidelines will be developed in 2017 for the following themes: fisheries, education, statistics, employment and small businesses.	SPC
<p>Recommendation 2.3: PGEP to develop gender mainstreaming activities based on the specific priorities and entry points within each PIC, and to tailor workplans towards PIC-led activities. Workplans must be based around the strategic priorities described in Recommendation 1.2.</p>	Agree	See response for 1.2	SPC
<p>Recommendation 2.4: Where possible, PGEP to identify a small number of local gender and statistics practitioners across the region, work with DFAT and other partners in developing a shared approach to building their capacity, and reframe technical assistance to incorporate their involvement in introductory activities.</p>	Agree, whenever practical and possible	<p>SPC proposes to use a team approach with specialist (international/regional) consultants and practitioner-level (regional /national consultants), in order to provide capacity development opportunities. SPC notes the need to be aware that it may not always be possible to find national consultants in situ as there is a shortage of national consultants with gender mainstreaming skills. SPC agrees that there are some resource people in-country who can raise awareness and deliver gender training at the community/national level, but working on gender mainstreaming in government institutions is a scarce skill set.</p> <p>There are opportunities for the PGEP program to leverage support through the <i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit Gender Panel (both Specialist and Practitioner level). The Support Unit will share with the PGEP</p>	SPC and DFAT (including through <i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit)

		<p>team the list of approved Advisers on the Gender Panel. Opportunities will be explored for SPC and the Support Unit to identify common capacity development activities, to be supported through <i>Pacific Women's Capacity Development (CD) Strategy</i> and yearly CD work plan.</p> <p>Adviser support needs will be identified through the PGEP country workplan process so that SPC can proactively identify consultants, either through the Support Unit Gender Panel or through in-country networks.</p> <p>SPC will also explore modalities to offer internships.</p>	
3. Increase the focus on mainstreaming within SPC			
Recommendation 3.1: SPC to complete its rapid review of gender mainstreaming efforts across divisions to identify entry points for greater coordination.	In process	PGEP program is already working towards this recommendation. Stocktakes of SPC Division of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystem and the Geoscience Division are almost completed. The Land Resources Division has requested support to conduct a stocktake before July 2017.	SPC
Recommendation 3.2: SPC to provide adequate resourcing to support 'people-centred' mainstreaming within SPC divisions.	Agree	<p>The SPC Divisional stocktake process has supported the identification of strategic actions to address gender mainstreaming through the divisions' programmes and resources. The Divisions are increasingly allocating funds to enable resourcing for this gender support.</p> <p>SPC is in the process of identifying opportunities across its divisions to cost-share staff to assist with the gender mainstreaming process.</p>	SPC and DFAT

		DFAT will continue to raise the issue of gender and gender mainstreaming in the Annual DFAT/SPC High Level Consultation.	
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4. Improve coordination and communication with other development partners			
<p>Recommendation 4.1: DFAT (primarily through <i>Pacific Women</i>), PGEP and UN Women to strengthen regional and national planning and coordination.</p>	Agree	<p>PGEP team has already started to work with UN Women to map respective programs across all PICs in order to increase knowledge and strengthen coordination. The PGEP team has shared this document with DFAT and the Support Unit and a meeting has taken place to include <i>Pacific Women</i> activities in this mapping exercise.</p> <p>PGEP and the Support Unit will meet on a bi-monthly basis to ensure coordination of <i>Pacific Women</i> Gender Adviser's work with PGEP program activities. The PGEP team will be invited to <i>Pacific Women</i> Gender Adviser Community of Practice events.</p> <p>Whenever possible, SPC-PGEP, DFAT-<i>Pacific Women</i>, and UN Women to conduct joint planning and review mission in countries.</p> <p>SPC will ensure that DFAT Posts are advised of the timings of their in-country visits and have an opportunity to meet with visiting teams.</p>	<p>SPC and DFAT (including through <i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit)</p>

<p>Recommendation 4.2: PGEP to develop a regional online platform for sharing learning and lessons between PICs.</p>	Partially agree	<p>DFAT, through the <i>Pacific Women's</i> Research Strategy Advisory Group is collectively planning for a Pacific 'Research Clearing House'. SPC is on this Group and will contribute to the development of an online research platform to share research lessons and findings.</p> <p>The <i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit will complete a website update before June 2017. As a program funded under <i>Pacific Women</i>, SPC will share lessons and findings through the 'Research, Evaluation and Learning' page on the revamped <i>Pacific Women</i> website.</p> <p>The Support Unit will work with SPC to develop a number of evaluation briefs based on the PGEP evaluation findings. These resources will be developed before June 2017.</p>	SPC and DFAT (through <i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit)
5. Build south-south learning and exchange			
<p>Recommendation 5.1: PGEP to identify sector-specific gender specialists for South-South exchanges on sector-based gender mainstreaming, and other opportunities for South-South exchanges on gender statistics analysis.</p>	Agree	<p>SPC proposes a 2-step process: 1) identify sectoral initiatives that are addressing gender issues in a selection of countries and specialists working in the sectors; 2) explore modalities for effective South-South exchange.</p>	SPC
<p>Recommendation 5.2: PGEP to reframe regional trainings so they are part of a strategy supporting South-South exchange.</p>	In process	<p>Regional trainings will maximise South-South exchange to the fullest extent possible.</p>	
6. Strengthen and align monitoring, learning and reporting processes			

<p>Recommendation 6.1: PGEP to review monitoring, reporting and learning processes, and align the revised monitoring and evaluation framework with SPC results framework and PEARL policy.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>PGEP MEL processes reviewed and updated by June 2017 (for preparation of Annual Report FY 2016-17).</p> <p>PGEP team to participate in the <i>Pacific Women</i> Monitoring and Evaluation System review, scheduled to take place May 10-12. PGEP will share experiences with <i>Pacific Women</i> in this workshop to contribute to the refine and update of the <i>Pacific Women</i> M&E system.</p> <p>PGEP to recruit a MEL officer and a communication and knowledge management officer to strengthen this component.</p>	<p>SPC and DFAT (through <i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit)</p>
<p>Recommendation 6.2: DFAT (through the <i>Pacific Women</i> program) to take a participatory approach with PGEP to develop guidelines for the end-of-project evaluation.</p>	<p>Partially Agree</p>	<p>SPC (through the PGEP team) in collaboration with DFAT, will use participatory approaches, to develop the proposed new phase of PGEP based on recommendations from the mid-term evaluation and in consultation with the countries.</p>	<p>SPC and DFAT (including through <i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit)</p>

Communication and Dissemination of Findings:

- The PGEP team will share the final evaluation report, along with the management response with SPC's Senior Leadership Team
- The final evaluation report, along with the Management Response will be uploaded onto DFAT's website
- The final evaluation report, along with the Management Response will be uploaded onto the *Pacific Women* website
- SPC will share the final evaluation report with Permanent Secretaries, Directors for Women and SPC Country Focal Points
- The PGEP team will share the final evaluation report with development partners (ADB, UNESCAP, UN Women and MFAT)
- The Support Unit and PGEP team will develop and finalise briefs that highlight findings and recommendations. These briefs will be shared with partners.