

Independent evaluations of the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau country Programmes

KEY FINDINGS

OUR RELATIONSHIPS

Adam Smith International (ASI) found that we have strong and enduring relationships with the four Pacific Island countries. Our strategic framework of assistance works well. High level priorities are incorporated into each country Programme.

Each country has a different constitutional relationship to New Zealand. The evaluation considered these differences should be taken into account.

THE QUALITY OF OUR AID DELIVERY

The evaluations considered that New Zealand generally delivers high quality aid. We have also done a lot to consolidate our Activities. The New Zealand Aid Programme has moved to higher order modalities, mostly budget support and is using country systems more.

New Zealand is a strong and influential partner in each country. ASI recommends that MFAT consider strengthening its human resource capacity to ensure consistent and targeted advice is provided.

ABOUT THESE PROGRAMME EVALUATIONS

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade commissioned ASI to complete independent evaluations of the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau country Programmes.

The evaluations looked at New Zealand's contribution to sustainable human and economic development for each country.

They also explored the quality of aid delivery to each country and the relationships between them.

Finally recommendations were provided to improve our country Programme assistance in the future.

[Access the reports on the website](http://www.mfat.govt.nz)—www.mfat.govt.nz

Results from Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau

The evaluation concluded that New Zealand's development cooperation has contributed to sustainable economic and human development in the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau.

ASI recommended strengthening of the environment for the private sector and in-country government capacity. Results highlighted by ASI are outlined below.

Cook Islands



- Our support for tourism has led to demonstrable economic development outcomes. The next step should see them address a number of challenges to ensure sustainability.
- Investment in renewable energy has also had an impact. An example being the *Te Mana o Te Ra* project which meets 5% of Rarotonga's electricity needs.
- The Health Specialist Visits Programme, our most significant health investment, operates effectively and achieves good outputs. It is highly regarded by Cook Islanders.
- Education sector budget support is contributing to education outcomes including NCEA achievement comparable to New Zealand. Much of the Cook Islands education budget is allocated for salaries, New Zealand support helps meet outcomes.

Niue



- Tourism is increasingly important contributing to GDP increase. Tourism numbers have grown over the course of our support.
- Support for Niue's banking sector has ensured continuance of facilities. More needs to be done to provide an enabling environment for the private sector.
- Significant long term support has been provided for health ranging from rebuilding a hospital to providing medical specialists. Sector support provided significant value for money, with locums being critical to ongoing health services.
- Education support is significant, essentially the only non-salary expenditure available. Without these funds, an improvement in teacher quality would be severely limited. Some issues include low levels of qualifications for primary school teachers and low level of returning teachers.

Samoa



- Tourism is important to the economy and a focal point of our development cooperation.
- We have made some significant renewable energy investments which will see an increase in energy security.
- Support for the Small Business Enterprise centre has been impressive with an impact assessment finding it is providing value for the Samoan economy.
- Mixed results from the Health Sector Programme which aimed to improve the Government's effectiveness in managing health services.
- There are mixed results from education support. Adoption of school grant fee schemes and improving access have been positive. But donor and Samoan government investments have yet to demonstrate improvements in education quality.

Tokelau



- Tokelau has seen us invest heavily in renewable energy resulting in a high proportion of renewable energy generation.
- The effectiveness of health results was affected by capability at village level alongside fragmented workforce development and planning. Tokelau's unique health needs and context mean that approaches can be difficult to implement.
- Opportunities for Tokelauans to access tertiary education has been the focus of support in education. ERO's 2013 review of early childhood and schooling provision confirmed many of the challenges faced in Tokelau. An outcome of the review is the implementation of a five year project to improve education services.

Recommendations from the evaluations

The independent evaluation recommended that we take a more strategic approach when deploying our resources and addressing public/private sector issues.

ASI recommended the following actions to improve country Programme assistance in the future.

Develop a new process for country strategies in partnership with New Zealand government agencies.

This could result in country strategies highlighting major constraints to economic and human development. It could also articulate how all New Zealand resources will be used to address constraints.

Bilateral programmes should be the focus of our country strategies.

Other forms of funding could then be deployed to support the bilateral programme and address constraints.

An increase in MFAT technical expertise would support high quality policy dialogue.

An increase in technical expertise will enhance a shift to other forms of funding. Linking country strategies to business unit or operational plans would ensure this occurs. Plans would include information on how resources will be deployed.

We should prioritise the reduction of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

The prioritisation of the reduction of NCDs needs a systematic approach. NCDs could have significant impacts on health budgets along with economic development. They also potentially impact on migration to New Zealand.

New Zealand should focus on improving the enabling environment for the private sector.

This economic development issue should be a focus in the Cook Islands, Niue and Samoa in particular.

Moving to general budget support in Samoa and the Cook Islands could see further consolidation.

Moving to general budget support would further consolidate these programmes. This should be accompanied by a performance management programme in partnership with each country.