

Independent Evaluation of the Tonga Programme

Key findings from Adam Smith International



Results highlights

New Zealand's investments demonstrate strong performance in some areas and mixed results in others. Our investments in the energy and the law and justice sectors were most effective. Energy investments led to demonstrable improvements in energy access and reliability. Support for law and justice is helping to improve community confidence and trust in Tonga Police.

Context

Delivery of the New Zealand Aid Programme is taking place in a young democracy. It is important that we support Tonga to foster stability in its institutions and human resources. This will strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of our aid.

The relationship

The relationship between Tonga and New Zealand is strong and highly regarded by both partners. Both countries value the opportunities for high level dialogue.

The evaluation noted that New Zealand needed to take Tongan cultural norms into account more. In particular understanding the intangible aspects of the Tongan development paradigm to ensure a meeting of minds.

Aid Quality

New Zealand has a wide-ranging development programme in Tonga. The evaluation found that Tonga could have stronger ownership of its development agenda. It also noted the need for improvements in high level ownership and aid coordination.

The dispersed aid programme can impact on effectiveness. It can place an administrative burden on the Government of Tonga and MFAT staff. There is room to improve reporting on our aid flow to Tonga which will help the Tongan Government strengthen planning and decision-making.

The evaluation considered that we need to work more with the Tongan Government to help strengthen its systems and processes. New Zealand has shown that it is keen to support Tongan priorities but we also need to strengthen effectiveness of our aid delivery and focus on fewer sectors. Our support for economic development in Tonga should focus on growth in the productive sectors.

Adam Smith International recommendations

To improve development effectiveness, New Zealand should develop a country strategy focused on fostering stability and supporting sustainable economic development. The evaluation recommends that we need to develop a strategy for high-level policy dialogue including development issues important to Tonga. New Zealand should ensure that more of a 'Tongan lens' is applied to the development of aid Activities in the country, including from those with expertise in the Tongan political and institutional context.

Insights into Economic and Human Development Outcomes in Tonga



Energy

New Zealand's most effective investment is in the energy sector. This investment has led to improvements in electricity access and reliability and reduced costs to Tonga in the sector. It has also directly addressed key strategic and development priorities for Tonga and New Zealand. The strategic vision in this sector is strong with a high level of political buy-in. New Zealand's implementation partner in Tonga, Tonga Power Limited, has very high capacity. The enabling regulatory framework for the energy sector needs to be strengthened (which is in train).



Law and justice

New Zealand's support for law and justice has been effective and helped underpin the rule of law in Tonga. This is important given Tonga has a young democracy. New Zealand has supported Tonga Police to become a more professional and accountable service. Further improvements to planning and strengthening leadership for Tonga Police will assist in addressing sustainability issues.



Education

Achievements in the education sector are mixed. The Tonga Education Support Programme had an over-ambitious design. A recent evaluation noted that some progress has been made at the classroom level, through teacher professional development and school based management. Data collection and results reporting could be improved. Capacity with the Ministry of Education and Training also needs improvement, and the programme required more support than donor partners, including New Zealand, were able to provide.

New Zealand also supports education through smaller activities, such as the Pacific Literacy and School Leadership Programme (PLSLP) and the Pacific Science for Health Literacy Partnership Programmes (PSHLPP). The PLSLP provides an evidence-base to help teachers and school leaders improve children's learning. The PSHLPP supports young people to develop the skills and capabilities required for a healthy future. Both programmes demonstrate how targeted and context-specific bottom-up approaches can make an impact



Emergency management

New Zealand provides very important and well-regarded support for emergency management in Tonga. More could be done to harmonise and coordinate donors and to strengthen Tonga's National Emergency Management Office. This is key from a resilience perspective.



Transport Safety

New Zealand plays a very important and effective role in the area of safety. New Zealand's support has helped improve maritime and aviation safety in Tonga. Clarity of roles and responsibilities in the maritime sector and a stronger enabling environment would help to ensure long-term sustainable improvements in maritime safety.

This document is informed by Adam Smith International's independent evaluation of the Tonga country Programme completed in 2016.

[Click here for more information about the evaluation.](#)