

EVALUATION BRIEF

EVALUATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT FOR CUSTOMS SECTOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE PACIFIC AND TIMOR LESTE

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION

- Customs have built a strong and trusted relationship in the Pacific region
- Technical expertise is highly regarded with advisors being a good cultural fit
- The Cook Islands Border Management System are showing some benefits. However, it is too early in process to determine whether desired outcomes will be achieved.
- The Pacific Leadership Programme was well-designed and delivered.
- The initiative should focus more on the needs and circumstances in each country.



ABOUT THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATION

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the New Zealand Customs Service (NZCS) have been working together since 2011. To date, \$6.254m was provided by the New Zealand Aid Programme with an independent mid-point review (this evaluation).

Work has focused on long-term, targeted bilateral support to the Cook Islands, Samoa and more recently Fiji. Support has focused on strengthening governance and leadership, assisting in the development and implementation of improved national legislation, policies and procedures; and overseeing Customs modernisation and border management in the region.

This evaluation focused on the overall coherence and future strategic direction of New Zealand's investment in Customs capacity building in the Pacific, evaluates the effectiveness of the Partnership Arrangement as a management tool and informs the development of Partnership Arrangements with other State Sector partners.

WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS WERE MADE?

The report recommended developing a more structured approach to planning, prioritising and sequencing capacity development activities.

Evaluators saw a need for strong contract management disciplines. This would include greater transparency around budgeting and expenditure, risk monitoring and reporting and results reporting.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

MFAT and Customs are currently redesigning this programme of support. Findings and recommendations from the evaluation are being taken into account.

SEE OVERLEAF FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT WORKED AND WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

EVALUATION INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FROM THE MFAT WEBSITE: WWW.MFAT.GOV.TZ

We welcome feedback. You can contact us at evaluation@mfat.govt.nz

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION

WHAT HAS WORKED WELL?

The NZCS has built trusted relationships with partner countries in the Pacific. Technical expertise of NZCS staff was highly regarded by all interviewed. In-country technical advisors were a good fit for the organisations and cultures they worked with. Their support was well delivered and, overall, they were highly appreciated.

Systems and capability had been implemented but were still developing meaning that outcomes will be achieved in the long run. There are clear trade facilitation benefits from automated components of the Cook Islands Border Management System (CIBMS). Full benefits are not as yet being realised until full functionality of the system is deployed.

Leadership training from the NZCS was well designed and implemented and is generating benefits at an individual and organisational level. There has been rigorous and systematic monitoring and evaluation (M&E) throughout the training. Adjustments were made to the training based on from the M&E thus making it more effective.

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS COULD BE MADE?

The evaluation found that there needs to be a more systematic approach to capacity development and tailoring of Customs support to local circumstances.

There needs to be more consideration of the relationship between border management and economic growth. The evaluation team considered that development objectives needed to be at the forefront of any support funded by the New Zealand Aid Programme.

The report noted that the NZCS had not always adequately tested and assessed the needs and circumstances of the respective partner and adapted its advice/solutions as a result. The lack of assessment and adaptation has contributed to unresolved issues and risks with some of the major activities – in particular the CIBMS and the new legislation in both the Cook Islands and Samoa.

DETAILS ABOUT THE EVALUATION

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