


MFAT Management Response to Evaluation of Strengthening Pacific Partnerships (SPP) Programme and Recognised Seasonal Employer Worker Training Initiative

About this document

This document describes the programme's response to the evaluation.

Evaluation report title:	Strengthening Pacific Partnership and Vakameasina Evaluation
File title of final pdf report:	Strengthening Pacific Partnership and Vakameasina Evaluation
GDM Link to final pdf report:	See Link Here
GDM Link to final Word report:	N/A
AMS Activity Number:	A10036 and A10919
Activity Manager:	Esther Jens
Programme:	Pacific Economic Development
MFAT response approved by:	Kerryn Lang, Acting Unit Manager
Approved date:	22/11/2016
Evaluation cost to MFAT:	\$100,000

Approval

Approval of the MFAT Management Response to Evaluation	
Approved by:	
Signature:	
	[Name] (Divisional Manager) Stuart Calman, Acting DM SED
Date:	24/11/16

MFAT Management Response

Evaluation team members

Members of the evaluation team from Clear Horizon Consulting were:

Name	Role
Byron Pakula	Principal Consultant
Stuart Raetz	Senior Consultant
Erin Blake	Senior Consultant
Timoci O'Connor	Technical Advisor

Key findings/conclusions of the evaluation

The programme objectives were to evaluate the SPP and Vakameasina activities with a view to providing lessons learned and recommendations for the design of a second phase for both activities.

Overall, the two activities were rated positive for value for money and effectiveness. SPP effectively achieved development outcomes such as increasing the capability of Labour Sending Units and employers, and Pacific Island countries highly value the programme. The RSE Workers Training Initiative has effectively delivered training covering literacy, numberacy, small business skills, life and health skills. The implementation partners for SPP and the RSE Workers Training Initiative are delivering high impact programmes.

Specific Recommendations for Strengthening Pacific Partnerships (SPP) Programme

- Continue to foster productive communications and relationships by providing ongoing assistance to enhance websites, other communication material/systems and opportunities for exchange visits as well as other forums for learning and sharing.
- Update and consolidate the goals and objectives of the SPP programme to ensure concise and achievable end of phase outcomes, and clear causal pathways. Develop a more robust M&E plan to support programme management and capture robust data on programme outcomes.
- Facilitate the development and implementation of Labour Mobility Strategic Plans for each PIC, and integrate key elements of these into the New Zealand Aid Programme's bilateral Country Strategies and Joint Commitments for Development.
- Continue to work through SPP to develop tailored country-specific action plans and support the implementation of these. These plans

should be integrated with the Labour Mobility Strategic Plans and retain successful strategies implemented under Phase 1.

- Develop a separate, more intensive support programme for under-represented PICs and those who struggle with additional and unique challenges.
- Explore options with key partners to make SPP more cost-effective and sustainable. This could include reviewing the contributions from partners who are benefiting from the programme as well as integrating the system with other PIC labour mobility objectives.
- Continue to engage LSUs and remittance service providers to cut the cost of remitting cash for workers and to maximise the opportunities for pensions and other savings schemes.
- Develop a Sustainability Plan clearly defining sustainability for the SPP programme and different strategies for ensuring the sustainability of programme and labour mobility outcomes in each country.

Specific Recommendations for Recognised Seasonal Employer Worker Training Initiative (Vakameasina)

- Ensure training is more practical in terms of skills that workers can use in their home country by aligning the training modules with MFAT's country strategies and PICs development strategies.
- Identify pathways for semi-skilled workers to acquire additional skill development that is recognised by relevant institutions.
- Expand the modes of training to include a variety of engagement options for workers including pre or post season training programmes, intensive employer supported short courses, webinars, train-the-trainer and/or peer-led training programmes.
- Explore options for taking advantage of employers' willingness to make contributions to Vakameasina (in terms of funds, infrastructure and technical expertise) and strategically deploy these to support programme activities to expand the programme in a cost-effective manner.
- Review and expand the outcomes and activities of the RSE Worker Training Initiative to include job relevant skills development, post-deployment PIC relevant skills and the up-skilling of semi-skilled workers.
- Develop and implement a more systematic M&E Plan to better measure the Vakameasina programme's longer term outcomes and impact.

Lessons for MFAT

Lessons that MFAT can take from the evaluation are:

No.	Lesson	Programme response
1	Define sustainability for the activity; develop a sustainability plan for the activity and Pacific Labour Mobility	MFAT/PDG agrees with this. In the redesign of the two activities, MFAT is looking to clarify what sustainability means for the sector, what our long term strategy is and where we see our support in the short, medium and long term.
2	Develop a more robust M&E plan to support programme management and capture robust data on programme outcomes and impact	MFAT/PDG sees a need for a strengthened Monitoring and Evaluation framework that is flexible and able to adapt to the changing programme. For SPP in particular, we will look to create a robust M&E plan which has a renewed focus on gender and sustainability.
3	The report makes a number of references to align the programme with the MFATs country strategies and PICs development strategies.	MFAT/PDG aims to work closely across country and regional programmes and to align priorities in the bilateral Joint Commitments for Development with the Aid Programme Investment Priorities (2015-19). In the redesign, we will ensure that we consult with the country programmes in the aim to align our priorities with those of Pacific Island countries.

Recommendations for MFAT

We recommend the following:

No.	Recommendation	Programme response
1	Explore options for taking advantage of employers' willingness to make contributions to Vakameasina (in terms of funds, infrastructure and technical expertise) and strategically deploy these to support programme	MFAT will explore these options in the redesign of the RSE Worker Training Initiative (aka Vakameasina).
2	Develop a separate, more intensive support programme for under-represented PICs and those who struggle with additional and unique challenges	Agree. MFAT aims to work with the implementation team to tailor the support for Labour Mobility to each country's needs.
3	Expand the modes of training to include a variety of engagement options for workers including pre or post season training programmes, intensive employer supported short courses, webinars, train-the-trainer and/or peer-led training programmes.	MFAT will explore different methods and training options in the redesign of the RSE Worker Training Initiative.

Further programme response

Clear Horizon's access to data and subsequent analysis were partially limited by the low number of survey responses received. Despite this, the evaluation draws valid conclusions which can inform the next phase of support.

MFAT follow up actions

This table lists actions that MFAT will undertake in response to the findings, lessons and recommendations of the evaluation.

Lesson learned / Recommendation	Action	Who will action	When	Resource Implications
<p>Coordination across labour mobility initiatives: there is a need to improve coordination of labour mobility initiatives, with a country focus rather than a donor or programme focus.</p>	<p>MFAT is undertaking two new designs for the next 5-year phase of SPP and Vakameasina. These designs will include consideration of how MFAT can take into account the needs of specific Pacific Labour Sending Units and tailor support to their needs, while keeping in mind New Zealand's broader development strategy for individual countries. There is also a need to be aware of other Labour Mobility players and donors in the Pacific and ensure that support to PICs is coordinated.</p>	<p>MFAT/MBIE</p>	<p>By 1 July 2017</p>	<p>Approval of up to \$200k will be sought for the two designs.</p>

Lesson learned / Recommendation	Action	Who will action	When	Resource Implications
<p>Cost effectiveness of activities: SPP and Vakameasina are a good investment and are largely cost-effective. However, to scale up the programme into new areas, there are opportunities for MFAT to access private sector funding, funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and other development partners that benefit directly from some components of the programme.</p>	<p>In the redesign of the two activities, this option will be explored. The current lesson is more applicable to the RSE Worker Training Initiative, especially if training directly benefits the NZ employers. In kind contributions from employers, such as providing classrooms for the training, have been very valuable and there are other options that can be explored for in-kind contributions. It is unlikely that Labour Sending Units benefiting from the support will be asked to contribute.</p>	<p>MFAT</p>	<p>By 1 July 2017</p>	<p>Funding for support for the redesign of SPP and the RSE Worker Training Initiative.</p>
<p>Engaging with LSUs and partner Governments: There is a strong demand in PICs for MBIE through SPP to be more consultative and responsive to their needs. Continue to work through SPP to develop tailored country-specific action plans and support the implementation of these.</p>	<p>MFAT is looking at improving consultation on the action plans, monitoring and reporting, troubleshooting, and consensus-building in the new designs.</p>	<p>MFAT/MBIE</p>	<p>By 1 July 2017</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Lesson learned / Recommendation	Action	Who will action	When	Resource Implications
<p>Update Results Framework: MFAT and MBIE to revisit and update the design of SPP (programme logic/results framework) and strengthen data collection of programme outcomes.</p>	<p>MFAT will take action throughout the redesign to get specialist help for an M&E framework. The framework will include a detailed programme logic/results framework, M&E questions, performance measures and data collection measures as suggested in the evaluation.</p>	<p>MFAT, in consultation with MBIE</p>	<p>By 1 July 2017</p>	<p>Will require additional resources and therefore additional costs.</p>

Dissemination plan

The evaluation will be shared with partner organisations, MFAT staff and other stakeholders in the following ways:

No.	Method of dissemination	Responsibility of	When
1	Evaluation report published on the New Zealand Aid Programme website	The Development Support Officer of the Evaluation Team (DSE)	On signing management response
2	Evaluation report distributed to the following stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fruition Horticulture Ltd - Vakameasina Steering Committee - Regional Horticulture and Viticulture bodies - Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment - Pacific Island Labour Sending Units - Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 	Activity Manager	On signing management response

No.	Method of dissemination	Responsibility of	When
3	The evaluation report shared with Fruition Horticulture	Activity Manager	By 30 November 2016
4	Evaluation report shared with MFAT staff and Posts via Formal Message	Activity Manager	By 30 November 2016

Report Release Checklist

Note: This checklist must be used for all evaluations that will be published in full on MFAT's website. Where the report has been commissioned by a partner organisation and is published on their website, MFAT should simply seek written permission from the partner to provide a link to the published evaluation from our website. Attach a copy of the partner's permission to this MFAT Response to Evaluation template in lieu of this Report Release Checklist.

NAME OF THE REPORT: STRENGTHENING PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP AND VAKAMEASINA EVALUATION

AUTHOR(S): CLEAR HORIZON CONSULTING

REPORT MONTH AND YEAR: SEPTEMBER 2016

All evaluation reports should be able to be publicly released in accordance with the principle of availability (Section 5 of the Official Information Act (OIA)). However, this principle can be overridden if there is 'good reason' (as set out in the OIA) to withhold information. Use this checklist to help you decide if sections in the evaluation report should be withheld.

If any of the answers to these questions is 'yes' then:

- *A hard copy of the report should be marked up with brackets around the information to be withheld, and the OIA section under which the information is to be withheld noted (refer to MFAT Style and Practice Guide OIA Requests)*
- *The PDF copy of the report that is submitted to the Development Support Officer (DSE) for the library and public release will have the withheld information whited out and the reasons for withholding noted in the margins. The following note should be placed in the report: Certain information in this report has been withheld in accordance with the Official Information Act and the grounds for withholding, as at the time of publication, are noted in the margins.*

If you are unsure whether a good reason to withhold exists seek advice from the PDG staff member responsible for OIAs or the MFAT corporate legal team.

OIA Section 6 Conclusive Reasons: Are there words in the evaluation that are likely to:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| a) Prejudice the security or defence of NZ or NZ's international relations? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| b) Prejudice the entrusting of information to the Government of NZ on a basis of confidence by (i) the Government of any other country or (ii) any international organisation? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| c) Prejudice the maintenance of the law? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| d) Endanger the safety of any person? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| e) Damage seriously the NZ economy? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

OIA Section 7 Special Reasons: Are there words in the evaluation that are likely to:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| a) Prejudice the security or defence of the Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau or the Ross Dependency? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| b) Prejudice relations between the governments of NZ, and governments of the Cook Island and Niue? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

c) Prejudice the international relations of the governments of the Cook Islands or Niue

Yes No

OIA Section 9 Other Reasons: Are there words in the evaluation that need to be withheld to:

(Note: There is need to balance Section 9 grounds for withholding against 'public interest considerations'. Consider the negative consequences from release, and whether or not these consequences are outweighed by the public interest in access to the information.)

- a) Protect the privacy of natural persons? Yes No
- b) Protect trade secrets and commercial positions? Yes No
- c) c)Protect information that is subject to an obligation of confidence where release of the information would be likely to i) prejudice the supply of similar information from the same source and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied or (ii) otherwise damage the public interest? Yes No
- d) Avoid prejudice to measures protecting the health or safety of members of the public? Yes No
- e) Avoid prejudice to the substantial economic interests of New Zealand? Yes No
- f) Avoid prejudice to measures that prevent or mitigate material loss to members of the public? Yes No

- a) Maintain the constitutional conventions including the confidentiality of advice tendered by ministers and officials? Yes No
- b) Maintain effective conduct of public affairs through free and frank expressions of opinion and protection from improper pressure or harassment? Yes No
- c) Maintain legal professional privilege? Yes No
- d) Enable a minister department or organisation holding information to carry out commercial activities without prejudice or disadvantage? Yes No
- e) Enable a minister, department or organisation holding the information to carry on negotiations without prejudice or disadvantage? Yes No
- f) Prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or advantage? Yes No

Other Reason: Is there any other reason for withholding information?

- If the answer is yes then seek advice from the PDG staff member responsible for OIA or the MFAT corporate legal team. Yes No

RECOMMENDATION

- Withhold selected parts, noting sections of the OIA applying to these in a copy of the report that is filed, and white-ed out in the copy of the report to be forwarded to the Development Support Officer (DSE) for public release and the library
- Release entire report

Signed by Esther Jens (Activity Manager)

Signed by Kerryn Lang (Acting Unit Manager)

Date: 22/11/2016