


MFAT Management Response to Formative Evaluation of the Initial Implementation of Business Link Pacific

About this document

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

Evaluation report title:	Business Link Pacific Evaluation Report
File title of final pdf report:	BLP Evaluation Report 22 March 2019 - final
GDM Link to final pdf report:	http://pam.mfat.net.nz/mp/document/204812/properties
GDM Link to final Word report:	http://pam.mfat.net.nz/mp/document/206356/properties
AMS Activity Number:	A11963
Activity Manager:	Judy Wan Min Kee
Programme:	Pacific Regional
MFAT response approved by:	Alex Shahryar-Davies, Unit Manager Governance and Economics
Approved date:	5 April 2019
Evaluation cost to MFAT:	NZ\$87,427

Approval

Approval of the MFAT Management Response to Evaluation	
Approved by:	
Signature:	
	Karen Murray Divisional Manager Sustainable Development Sector and Thematic
Date:	29/4/19

MFAT Management Response

Recommendation	Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)	Responsibility	When	12 months progress
1. Note that the Business Link Pacific (BLP) model remains relevant to MFAT and partner country priorities, does not duplicate other donor activities and that the market-based, private sector-focused approach has the potential to be effective in the Pacific context.	Agree. No action required.	Not applicable	Not applicable	
2. Note that BLP has been implemented in an efficient manner in terms of how subsidy investments are allocated and in the staged roll-out across countries. Mentoring and market linkage-related outputs are not yet sufficiently developed to fully assess efficiency.	Agree. MFAT will monitor progress and impact of mentoring and market linkage-related outputs.	Activity Manager	Six monthly	
3. Note that there are signs of progress being made in achieving core outputs and short-term outcomes, with nascent benefits being observable and we see no reason why they would not continue.	Agree. No action required.	Not applicable	Not applicable	

Recommendation	Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)	Responsibility	When	12 months progress
4. Increase the resource and effort dedicated to In-Country Network Representatives (ICNRs) to be commensurate with the importance of their current and future role in sustaining BLP.	Agree. MFAT will work with Managed Service Contractor (MSC) to develop and implement options to strengthen ICNR capability and capacity to deliver BLP outputs.	Activity Manager	Within 3-6 months	
5. Reassess the relevance and balance of the mix of outputs and reprioritise accordingly.	Agree. MFAT has tasked MSC to revise BLP Year 3 workplan to incorporate mentoring services into the Business Advisor Development Programme, rather than as a standalone workstream.	Activity Manager	Six monthly	
6. Develop and promote a clear and succinct set of messages for communicating the objectives and scope of BLP and the role of ICNRs.	Agree. MFAT will work with MSC to strengthen BLP communications.	Activity Manager	Within 3-6 months	
7. Keep the focus on evidence of SME growth potential as the criterion for approving BLP subsidy applications, while retaining the target sectors for future flexibility.	Agree. MFAT will advise MSC to apply industry sector focus as targets rather than constraints to SME participation in BLP. MFAT will instruct MSC to formalise protocols and documentation of SME entry criteria.	Activity Manager	Immediately	
8. Improve engagement with other SME support activities with a view to developing SME referral channels for BLP.	Agree. MFAT will continue to monitor BLP progress in this space.	Activity Manager	Six monthly	

Recommendation	Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)	Responsibility	When	12 months progress
9. Reduce the frequency of formal BLP progress reports from a quarterly to a six-monthly basis, with periodic updates on key issues and risks.	Agree. MFAT has agreed with MSC on six-monthly reports from Year 3 onwards, with quarterly informal reports highlighting key activities and risks/issues for the period.	Not applicable	Not applicable	
10. Note that there is a case for extending BLP to other Pacific Island Countries (PICs), given the design, staged roll-out, and emerging evidence of its effectiveness.	Noted. MFAT will consider whether to extend BLP to other PICs. As part of its consideration, MFAT will consult with PIC partners on their interest and readiness to participate in BLP.	Activity Manager	Within 3-6 months	

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 distributed to Managed Service Contractor	Activity Manager	22 March 2019
2	Evaluation report distributed to BLP partner country stakeholders	Activity Manager	By 1 May 2019
3	Evaluation report distributed to evaluation participants	Sapere Research Group (evaluation consultants)	By 1 May 2019
4	Evaluation report published on MFAT website	Development Support Officer, MFAT Evaluation Team (DCI)	By 30 April 2019