

Climate Finance Capacity Support Programme (CFCSP), 2024-25

FORMATIVE REVIEW

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June 2026

About Future Partners

Future Partners is a Wellington, New Zealand-based international development consultancy that helps organisations design, implement, and review projects, primarily in Asia and the Pacific. Owned by Kirsty Burnett, the firm specialises in navigating complex environments to create tailored plans, offering services such as project scoping, monitoring and evaluation, and proposal development to ensure sustainable, locally driven development outcomes.

Our clients are the people and organisations who are affected by and benefit from international development cooperation. We respond to a terms of reference by assembling a team of experts from our associates, and other people and organisations we sub-contract to work with us.

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Acknowledgements

The formative review team would like to thank MFAT, the MSC team and in-country partners for being responsive, open and willing to engage in critical thinking. It allowed for a comprehensive review and a better understanding of the opportunities and risks that lie ahead.

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CCD	Climate Change Department/Division
CCF	Climate Change Finance
CFCSP	Climate Finance Capacity Support Programme
CFF	Country Flexible Finance
CFRU	Climate Finance Resource Unit
CWP	Country Work Plans
FIFO	Fly-in Fly-out
FRDP	Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GIS	Geographic Information System
ICESD	International Cooperation for Effective and Sustainable Development
IDC	International Development Cooperation
KRQ	Key Review Question(s)
KPI	Key performance indicator(s)
MSC	Management Services Contractor
MERL	Monitoring, evaluation, research and learning
MFEM	Ministry of Finance & Economic Management (Cook Islands)
MFAT	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
NZD	New Zealand dollars
OECD/DAC	Organization Economic Cooperation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee
PIF	Pacific Island Forum
PFM	Public Financial Management
SIIVA	Solomon Islands Integrated Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SPC	The Pacific Community
TA	Technical assistance
ToA	Theory of Action
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TVP	Target value proportion
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

Executive Summary

This formative review assesses the early implementation of the Climate Finance Capacity Support Programme (CFCSP), a NZD30 million initiative supporting 15 Pacific Island countries¹ to strengthen their capacity to access, manage and deliver climate finance. The review covers the programme implementation period January 2024 to December 2025 and focuses on relevance, early effectiveness, implementation performance and lessons for the final year and any future phase.

Overall conclusion: CFCSP is performing well in its early phase. It is highly relevant, operationally effective in priority areas, and well aligned with Pacific country needs. Its strongest features are flexibility, responsiveness and a consistent focus on addressing institutional constraints that limit climate finance access and delivery. Many identified weaknesses reflect early-stage implementation and are already being addressed.

Relevance and positioning: CFCSP demonstrates strong alignment with country priorities. Importantly, it recognises that key barriers to climate action in the Pacific are often institutional rather than technical. By targeting staffing shortages, coordination challenges, public financial management systems and governance constraints, the programme is addressing root causes that limit climate finance access and effectiveness. It also complements other donor initiatives by filling enabling gaps rather than duplicating project-based support. However, though this complementarity is largely relationship-driven rather than systematically coordinated.

Effectiveness of delivery: Early evidence indicates strong effectiveness where support is closely matched to need. Embedded technical support has been particularly effective in capacity-constrained environments, restoring functionality, improving coordination and strengthening institutional performance. Short-term technical assistance has delivered rapid, high-quality outputs and resolved technical bottlenecks, while longer-term support has contributed to systems reform and capability development. The use of multiple delivery modalities is a key strength, enabling tailored responses across diverse country contexts.

A subsequent phase should be explicitly designed as a flexible, demand-driven facility², reflecting how CFCSP has operated most effectively in practice.

Changed Government systems in Cook Islands

I'm genuinely excited about what's happening with procurement and MERL because I've seen the change in myself and in how we work. MERL used to be a tick-box exercise. We have changed the system from the bottom up. Now it actually makes sense. It's cool... I can see how it works and makes things easier. I can see how it helps us make better decisions.

I've gone from not really understanding it to leading training and seeing others have those same lightbulb moments.

Partners in MFEM in Cook Islands

¹ These are: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

² Refer Appendix D for further information on the differences between the programme and facility modality.

1. Introduction

The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) commissioned Future Partners Ltd to undertake a formative review of the Climate Finance Capacity Support Programme (CFCSP), a NZD30 million initiative funded through New Zealand's International Climate Finance programme and delivered from January 2024 to December 2026. The review examines implementation from January 2024 to December 2025 and is intended to generate practical recommendations to improve delivery during the final year of the programme and inform future climate finance capacity support approaches.

CFCSP operates across 15 Pacific Island countries: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. It is implemented by DT Global under a management services contract (MSC). The programme aims to strengthen partner governments' ability to plan, access, deliver and report on climate finance, including readiness for Country Flexible Finance (CFF) and other international funding sources.

CFCSP is a complementary component of New Zealand's broader climate finance response to Pacific governments' requests for more predictable, flexible finance that aligns with national systems and priorities. It supports countries through a flexible, partner-led model based on country-defined needs. Assistance includes long-term and short-term technical advisers, surge support, mentoring, training, and broader capability development and strengthening. A major focus is improving public financial management and public investment systems for climate action while addressing human resource constraints that limit delivery.

During its first phase, the programme concentrated on engagement, planning and mobilisation. Between March and August 2024, scoping visits were undertaken in 14 countries, while Tokelau was supported through Wellington-based engagement. Country Work Plans (CWPs) were finalised for all 15 countries and aligned with national climate priorities. By February 2025, more than 30 adviser roles had been mobilised, with additional requests under recruitment. Higher levels of engagement had occurred in countries such as the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, reflecting demand and readiness.

At the same time, CFCSP established core systems and enabling frameworks, including a Design Plan, MERL Plan, GEDSI Strategy and Action Plan, Communications Strategy, Ways of Working Charter and Operations Manual. A Pacific Hub was established in Suva to support regional coordination. The programme also contributed to Pacific participation in international climate processes.

Because the programme adopted a design-and-implement approach³, its first year focused on relationship building, refining priorities and setting up systems before scaling up delivery. As a result, while early outputs are visible, significant long-term outcomes are not yet expected. The formative review therefore focuses on relevance, early effectiveness, implementation progress and lessons for the remaining period.

CFCSP aligns strongly with New Zealand's International Climate Finance Strategy, *Tuia te Waka a Kiwa* (2022), which committed NZD1.3 billion for 2022 to 2025 and prioritised mitigation, adaptation, institutional capability, evidence-based decision-making and leveraging additional finance. The strategy emphasises partnership, country leadership, flexibility and strengthening national systems. CFCSP operationalises these principles by helping Pacific countries overcome institutional and systems barriers to accessing and managing climate finance.

³ This was largely a consequence of the original design not being fit-for-purpose.

The programme also sits within a wider Pacific regional agenda led by the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and reflected in frameworks such as the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific. These frameworks identify climate change as the region's greatest threat and call for Pacific-led solutions, stronger institutions, sustainable financing and reduced fragmentation. By strengthening national systems and responding to country priorities, CFCSP supports Pacific governments to lead and scale their own climate responses.

2. Methodology

The formative review of the CFCSP was designed to provide an evidence-based assessment of how effectively the programme was operating during its early implementation phase, and how it could be strengthened in its remaining period and any future phase.

Review purpose

The review sought to determine how well CFCSP was supporting participating Pacific countries to meet their climate priorities and improve readiness to access climate finance, including Country Flexible Finance (CFF). As a formative review, its focus was on improving implementation rather than judging final impact. The review aimed to identify what was working well, what was not working as intended and why, while generating practical recommendations for programme improvement.

Objectives and Key Review Questions (KRQs)

The review had two overarching objectives:

1. Assess the value and effectiveness of the CFCSP delivery modality.
2. Identify lessons to improve future capacity building and technical support.

To achieve this, the review addressed KRQs across five areas:

1. Relevance and responsiveness: alignment with country climate priorities, responsiveness to changing contexts, complementarity with other initiatives, GEDSI integration in design, and focus on strengthening systems for climate finance access.
2. Effectiveness: difference made through embedded technical support and short/long-term advisers, and GEDSI mainstreaming in delivery.
3. Enablers, barriers and conditions for success: factors affecting performance, strengths and weaknesses of the Managing Services Contractor (MSC) model, delivery methods, governance arrangements and underlying programme principles.
4. Learning and adaptiveness: how learning was used to improve coordination, delivery and governance.
5. Sustainability and future pathways: early signs of sustainability and lessons for the final year, future phases and wider MFAT technical assistance approaches.

Appendix A includes the details of each KRQ.

Scope

The review covered programme implementation from January 2024 to December 2025. It included all 15 participating Pacific countries, with in-depth case studies in the Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu. It focused on programme design, early implementation and emerging results. Longer-term development impacts, country-by-country summative assessment, value for money, and effectiveness of downstream

climate finance investments were explicitly out of scope, as these were considered premature.

Approach and methods

The methodology was collaborative, participatory and utilisation-focused⁴, with the intention of ensuring findings were practical and directly useful to decision-makers. Specific methods used to collect and analyse data are summarised in Table 1. A case study approach was adopted to examine context, delivery modalities and emerging outcomes, while identifying cross-country lessons. The characteristics of each country selected as case studies (Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu) are included in Appendix B.

Table 1 Methods used to collect, analyse and validate data

Method	Description	Purpose
Data collection		
Structured document review	Programme documents such as CWP (15), progress reports and presentations (29 and the summary of all adviser progress reports), MERL data, operational plans (9), Terms of Reference (ToR) (43), Activity Monitoring Assessment (1), and design documents (1) were reviewed.	To inform early findings, identify evidence gaps, and assess whether existing data could answer the KRQs.
Semi-structured interviews	Interviews were conducted with stakeholders including MFAT staff (14), DT Global (10), partner governments (26), advisers (18), and regional actors (15). Interviews were guided by tailored question sets aligned to KRQs. Participation was voluntary and confidential.	To gather stakeholder perspectives, validate findings, and fill evidence gaps.
Data analysis		
Cross-case analysis	Evidence from the three case study countries (Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu) was systematically compared to identify recurring patterns, contextual differences, enabling factors, constraints and emerging lessons across diverse implementation contexts.	Evidence from the three case study countries (Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu) was systematically compared to identify recurring patterns, contextual differences, enabling factors, constraints and emerging lessons across diverse implementation contexts.
Rubric-based assessment	Rubrics were used to support transparent and consistent judgements of extent.	To ensure consistent, evidence-based evaluative judgements.

⁴ Utilisation-focused evaluation, developed by Michael Quinn Patton, is a specific evaluation approach that prioritises the intended use of evaluation findings by intended users. It emphasises designing and conducting evaluations in ways that support practical decision-making, learning and improvement, with active engagement of key stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. This shapes all stages of the evaluation process, from definition of questions to reporting.

Method	Description	Purpose
Qualitative analysis	Interview and document data were coded in NVivo ⁵ and analysed thematically.	To identify recurring themes, patterns and insights across evidence sources.
Validation⁶		
Aide-memoire presentation	Emerging findings were tested with those interviewed through presentation of a written aide-memoire and, in Cook Islands, a face-to-face session.	To validate early findings and refine recommendations.
Sense-making workshop	Emerging findings were tested with MFAT through a workshop before drafting the final report.	To validate conclusions and refine recommendations.

All recommendations are grounded in the findings of the analysis and informed by the evaluation team's expertise, experience and professional judgement.

Limitations and mitigation strategies

Table 2 Limitations and mitigation strategies applied

Limitation	Mitigation strategy applied	Implication
Short implementation timeframe	Focused on early results, trajectories, enabling conditions, and progress toward systems strengthening rather than final outcomes.	Limited evidence of higher-level or sustained outcomes at this stage of delivery.
Case study coverage across three countries	Complemented case studies with portfolio-wide document review and clearly acknowledged limits to generalisation.	While the three countries were complimentary, they may not fully capture the diversity of contexts and experiences across all 15 participating countries.
Attribution challenges in a multi-donor environment	Had planned to apply contribution analysis. However, as each country's theory of action was different, this was not efficient. Triangulated evidence. Have not claimed direct causality except where very clear.	Difficult to isolate the specific contribution of CFCSP from other partner initiatives and contextual factors in some cases. However, in most cases, attribution was clearly identified by partners.
Stakeholder availability constraints	Scheduled interviews early, used flexible timing, and undertook virtual follow-up interviews where required.	All key informants were interviewed except one in Cook Islands and two in Tuvalu. This is not expected to have impacted the findings other than limited the consideration of governance in Cook Islands and Tuvalu.

⁵ A software package designed for qualitative data analysis, allowing researchers to import, organise, and analyse non-numeric data.

⁶ Additional validation methods included triangulation across multiple data sources and stakeholder groups, cross-case comparison, rubric moderation and iterative evaluator debriefing to strengthen consistency and interpretation. Draft case studies were provided to the MSC for factual review, clarification and challenge. All draft reports were also circulated to MFAT for review and comment.

Limitation	Mitigation strategy applied	Implication
Variation between reviewers	Used shared frameworks, common interview guides, agreed rubrics, joint debriefs, and structured cross-case synthesis.	No effect anticipated.
Reliance on qualitative self-reporting	Triangulated findings across multiple evidence sources and systematically coded qualitative data.	No effect anticipated.

3. Findings

A Relevance

i. Extent to which CFCSP reflects country climate priorities and needs

Overall judgement: Strong alignment. CFCSP demonstrates a sound understanding of country needs and has generally targeted the institutional barriers most affecting climate action and climate finance delivery.

A review of the programme suggests a key strength being that “country priority” has not been interpreted narrowly as sector policy or strategy documents alone. Instead, CFCSP recognised that in many Pacific contexts the most urgent climate priorities are often institutional: staffing shortages, weak systems and governance, overloaded coordination units, fragmented reporting and limited implementation capability. By addressing these foundational constraints, the programme appears highly relevant to actual country needs.

A second strength is partner involvement in defining support. Across all three countries, governments had significant input into CWP, priorities and/or ToR, increasing ownership and contextual fit. Based on the CWP, this also appeared to be the case across all 15 participating countries.

Across the three case studies, evidence indicates that CFCSP reflects country climate priorities and needs to a strong extent, although the nature of alignment differs according to context and institutional maturity.

In Cook Islands, support was closely aligned with national priorities relating to climate action delivery, infrastructure resilience, renewable energy, public financial management and climate finance readiness. Activities targeted practical barriers that were constraining implementation, including investment planning, procurement systems, reporting, and audit backlogs and cross-government coordination. Stakeholders reported that assistance responded to real government priorities rather than donor-driven agendas.

In Solomon Islands, alignment was strongest through support to the institutions responsible for coordinating climate finance nationally, particularly the Climate Change Division (within Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology) and Ministry of Finance and Treasury.⁷ Rather than focusing on individual projects, CFCSP prioritised strengthening government capability to manage climate finance more effectively. This included embedded local officers in critical functions such as Geographic Information System (GIS), monitoring and vulnerability systems.

In Tuvalu, alignment centred on acute governance and capacity constraints within the Climate Change Department. With a very small core department managing a large climate finance portfolio, CFCSP support focused on organisational restructuring, coordination systems, grants administration, monitoring and evaluation, and quality assurance. Stakeholders viewed these as immediate national priorities necessary for effective climate action.

While CFCSP generally aligns with articulated national priorities, the quality and coherence of those priorities vary across countries. In contexts where planning systems are fragmented, alignment with documented plans should not be assumed to fully reflect the most strategic issues. This should be considered in any future phase where time to plan is greater.

Box 1: Meeting real needs

When the programme first started, they didn't just arrive with a fixed plan. They worked with us to really understand what we needed. Together, we identified 18 possible actions, but when budget and time became clearer, we had to adapt and focussed on 12 priorities. That shift made sense to me. It wasn't about doing everything; it was about doing the most important things well.

Partner in agency in Cook Islands

ii. Extent to which CFCSP responds to changes in priorities and context

Overall judgement: Strong responsiveness. CFCSP has demonstrated a practical capacity to adjust to country realities and evolving priorities, although responsiveness is somewhat reduced by recruitment delays and learning systems that are still maturing.

Evidence suggests CFCSP is highly to strongly responsive to changing priorities and country context. A consistent feature of the programme is its ability to adapt delivery models, scopes of work and technical inputs as realities emerge during implementation.

Evidence indicates several enabling factors behind responsiveness:

- Regular communication between programme management and partner agencies
- Flexible contractor arrangements
- Willingness to amend scopes of work
- Country-level decision-making input
- Use of blended modalities (embedded, remote, fly-in fly-out (FIFO)⁸, short-term TA).

Most adaptiveness appears to have occurred at the operational level rather than through formal strategic learning systems. It was evident that the programme often adapted because individuals were responsive, not necessarily because monitoring systems

⁷ Note that the National Climate Finance Steering Committee (NCFSC) is co-chaired between these two ministries.

⁸ Used here to refer to a work arrangement where contractors are flown to remote work sites for set periods before flying home for scheduled breaks.

systematically identified change and triggered management responses. However, there are clear examples of both approaches.

In Cook Islands, several assignments evolved after commencement when original terms of reference proved incomplete or did not fully reflect partner needs (Box 1). Stakeholders described DT Global and advisers as flexible in redesigning outputs, adjusting sequencing and responding to practical realities. Examples included changes to tourism, MERL and investment appraisal support.

In Solomon Islands, responsiveness was evident through the programme's ability to fill urgent capacity gaps created when funding from other sources ceased. CFCSP financed or replaced embedded personnel in key functions so institutional capability was not lost. It also provided limited operational support where budget constraints risked making embedded officers ineffective.

In Tuvalu, responsiveness was built into programme design. ToR were intentionally flexible, enabling advisers to help address emerging issues in a high-pressure environment. Programme governance also adapted when early progress stalled, with momentum regained through greater involvement of the Climate Change Department in setting priorities and drafting ToR. This reportedly improved ownership and implementation progress.

iii. Extent to which CFCSP complements other initiatives

Overall judgement: Strong complementarity. CFCSP is well positioned as an enabling support mechanism that strengthens the effectiveness of wider climate finance investments and fills gaps not typically covered by project-based assistance.

CFCSP demonstrates strong complementarity with other initiatives⁹. Rather than duplicating project finance or technical delivery already supported by other donors, the programme primarily fills gaps that allow wider climate finance investments to function more effectively.

Evidence suggests CFCSP adds value in four main ways:

- Institutional complementarity through staffing and systems support to central agencies.
- Functional complementarity by funding capabilities other programmes assume is in place but do not finance.
- Temporal complementarity by preserving momentum when previous donor support ends.
- Strategic complementarity by improving national coordination among fragmented climate finance portfolios across government agencies.

However, while this complementarity with other initiatives appears strong operationally, it seems more opportunistic than systematically planned or resulting from formalised coordination platforms. Stronger formal mapping of other donor support could further

⁹ Over 30 relevant initiatives were identified. These operate across a wide range of sectors and functions, including climate finance access and readiness, public financial management (PFM), governance and institutional strengthening, policy and regulatory reform, climate adaptation and resilience, infrastructure and climate-resilient housing, environmental management, disaster risk management, weather and climate information systems and implementation support. Delivery modalities also vary considerably, including embedded advisers, fly-in fly-out technical assistance, managing contractor models, regional organisation delivery (e.g. SPC and SPREP), pooled technical expert mechanisms, accreditation and readiness support, grant financing, trust funds, mentoring and peer-learning networks, and direct support embedded within government systems.

enhance strategic positioning, though should not be the responsibility of the programme as is something countries need to do as part of their international development assistance coordination efforts.

As an example, in Cook Islands, support complemented existing climate finance mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund and MFAT's Climate Flexible Finance (CFF). Activities focused on public financial management, reporting systems, investment processes and readiness functions that strengthen the country's ability to access and manage other funding streams. Stakeholders explicitly described CFCSP as enabling other climate programmes to be implemented well.

In Solomon Islands, complementarity was particularly strong. Embedded officers supported by CFCSP were actively engaged in work linked to other climate initiatives during the review period. This indicates that strengthening central government capability had spillover benefits across multiple donor-funded programmes. Support also enabled continuity of positions previously financed through other mechanisms.

In Tuvalu, complementarity centred on relieving governance pressure within an overstretched Climate Change Department managing numerous externally funded activities. Stakeholders reported that stronger coordination, financial quality assurance and administrative systems were necessary for many initiatives to proceed effectively. In this sense, CFCSP was addressing a constraint other programmes had largely overlooked.

Overall judgement: Moderate mainstreaming. GEDSI is visible in programme design and policy alignment, but integration is inconsistent and often peripheral. Tuvalu demonstrates stronger practice, while Cook Islands and Solomon Islands reflect more partial mainstreaming. It must be recognised that CFCSP is not GEDSI tagged for OECD reporting but has taken the approach to work toward mainstreaming GEDSI.

GEDSI mainstreaming in design through all CWP appears moderate overall, with notable variation between countries. GEDSI commitments are present in all plans, but the depth of analysis, integration into priorities, and translation into concrete design choices is uneven. The strongest examples of more meaningful integration appear to be RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu where it is included in the CWP, there is alignment with national gender and inclusion policies, and, in stronger cases such as Tuvalu, GEDSI is integrated into the Theory of Action and identified as a priority area. However, even there, the analysis is more targeted to selected roles or policies than systematically embedded across all activities. Tonga, Tokelau and Vanuatu appear to have very limited consideration of GEDSI in the design.

Patterns indicate several strengths:

- GEDSI is consistently recognised as relevant to climate action
- CWP reference national policy frameworks
- Multiple inclusion dimensions are acknowledged beyond gender alone
- Some activities explicitly include GEDSI expectations.

However, recurring weaknesses include:

- Limited country-specific diagnostic analysis of exclusion barriers
- Few explicit target groups or prioritised populations
- Weak integration into mainstream technical activities

- Limited articulation of power dynamics, decision-making access, or differential benefits
- Insufficient clarity on how GEDSI should shape resource allocation or activity selection.

This suggests that in most cases, GEDSI is treated as an important principle, but not yet as a core driver of programme strategy.

In Cook Islands, GEDSI was recognised in the CWP and linked to national policies and safeguards. However, it was largely contained within dedicated GEDSI sections rather than systematically embedded across priority activities. There was limited evidence of Cook Islands-specific analysis of barriers or targeted design responses.

In Solomon Islands, GEDSI expectations were also included, with references to incorporating inclusion factors into feasibility, policy and training work. However, stakeholders noted that stronger GEDSI consideration in annual work planning would be beneficial. The design appears compliance-oriented rather than transformative.

In Tuvalu, mainstreaming was stronger. GEDSI was embedded in the Theory of Action, included as an explicit priority area, linked to national policy frameworks, and supported through planned recruitment of dedicated GEDSI advisory capacity. This suggests more deliberate integration into programme design.

v. Extent to which CFCSP focuses on areas that will strengthen systems to improve countries positioning for accessing climate finance, including CFF

Overall judgement: Strong systems focus. CFCSP is highly relevant to climate finance readiness because it targets the institutional and governance bottlenecks that frequently constrain Pacific countries' ability to access and use climate finance effectively.

Evidence indicates that CFCSP has a strong to very strong systems focus and is consistently targeting areas likely to improve country positioning for accessing, managing and utilising climate finance, including MFAT's CFF. This systems orientation is one of the clearest cross-case strengths of the programme (Box 2).

Evidence suggests CFCSP correctly recognised that many barriers to climate finance are not lack of ambition, but weak systems such as:

- Limited absorptive capacity
- Fragmented coordination
- Poor reporting systems
- Staffing shortages
- Weak pipelines or appraisal processes
- Inadequate governance arrangements
- Inability to meet fiduciary or monitoring expectations.

Box 2: PFM in Cook Islands

I can honestly say this programme has completely changed how I see our path to climate finance. We couldn't even think about accessing other funds before because our accounts were years behind, but now we are catching up and getting them audited while, at the same time, building an automated system so we never fall behind again. That combination is powerful. It's not just fixing the past, it's futureproofing everything. I can see how this strengthens our whole public financial management system, improves how information flows, and gives real confidence that we can meet the accountability standards funders expect. It feels like we are finally building the foundation we need to access climate finance and manage it properly.

Partners in MFEM in Cook Islands

By targeting these constraints, CFCSP appears strategically relevant to both access and implementation of climate finance.

The main limitation is that systems strengthening often takes time to convert into measurable climate finance outcomes. Because the programme is early stage, evidence of improved access volumes or long-term institutional sustainability is yet to materialise.

A major strength of the programme is that many systems' investments have value beyond climate finance, strengthening countries' broader ability to manage external and domestic public sector resources (Box 2 and 3).

In Cook Islands, support focused on public financial management, Crown accounts, procurement systems, shared services, investment appraisal, infrastructure planning and reporting processes. Stakeholders explicitly linked these reforms to stronger readiness for accreditation funds and climate finance access (Box 2 and 3).

In Solomon Islands, the programme concentrated on institutional capability within the Climate Change Division and Ministry of Finance. Embedded officers in GIS, monitoring, vulnerability assessment and finance-related roles were intended to strengthen the government's long-term ability to coordinate climate finance and meet accreditation or reporting requirements.

In Tuvalu, the primary focus was governance strengthening within an overstretched Climate Change Department. Organisational restructuring, grants administration, MERL, coordination systems and financial quality assurance were all directed at enabling the department to manage growing climate finance demands more effectively.

Box 3: Shared services in Cook Islands

What really excites me is how the shared services work is pulling everything together across government. We are taking processes that were in people's heads and turning them into clear frameworks, systems and standards that everyone can follow. Suddenly we can see how everything fits, where the gaps are, and how to improve.

It's making our systems stronger, more consistent and more transparent, and that has huge implications. We are not just supporting a few agencies anymore, we are building something that can work across the whole of government, including the outer islands. For me, this is what real systems strengthening looks like, and I can see how it directly improves our credibility and readiness to access and manage climate finance.

Partners in MFEM in Cook Islands

B Effectiveness

i. Difference made through embedded technical capacity support

Overall judgement: Strong effectiveness where workforce gaps are binding. Embedded technical support has delivered tangible early benefits in Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, especially by restoring operational capacity and enabling climate finance functions that otherwise would have struggled.

Embedded technical capacity support appears to have made a strong positive contribution, particularly in countries where core institutional capacity gaps, staffing shortages or continuity risks were the main constraints to effective climate finance management. Impact was strong in Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu where embedded support was a central delivery modality.

Evidence suggests embedded support was most effective where it:

- Filled real human resource shortages rather than marginal capability gaps

- Sat within partner systems and day-to-day operations
- Was locally trusted and functionally managed by agencies
- Addressed urgent bottlenecks affecting multiple programmes
- Combined delivery with informal capability transfer.

The main forms of difference made were:

1. Continuity of operations where agencies were under-resourced.
2. Improved speed and responsiveness in climate finance processes.
3. Better coordination and oversight across fragmented portfolios.
4. Practical on-the-job capability strengthening through shared work.
5. Institutional memory and relationship continuity.

However, several risks remain. Embedded roles can become substitutes for recurrent government staffing rather than transitional solutions. Sustainability depends on whether governments can absorb positions or retain skills. In some cases, agencies wanted greater involvement in recruitment or contract management. There was also limited evidence of structured professional development plans for embedded staff and counterparts.

In Solomon Islands, embedded officers were reported as critical to maintaining government functionality in climate finance coordination and implementation. Roles in GIS, monitoring systems, vulnerability assessment and finance-related functions reportedly addressed major workforce gaps that training alone could not solve. Stakeholders indicated some initiatives would not have progressed without these officers. In several cases, embedded support preserved capability when previous donor-funded positions ended.

In Tuvalu, embedded support was highly valued because the Climate Change Department faced an exceptional workload relative to staffing levels. One embedded finance-related role reportedly doubled the department's financial management capacity (Box 4). Embedded personnel also helped manage emerging issues, strengthen oversight of multiple projects and improve organisational functioning.

ii. Difference made through short and long-term technical assistance (TA) support

Overall judgement: Strong effectiveness through use of differentiated modalities. TA has been most successful where modality matched need, with short-term specialists accelerating outputs and long-term advisers supporting deeper institutional change.

Short-term and long-term TA made strong, positive early contributions, although the type of difference varied by modality (Table 3). Broadly, short-term TA was strongest for specialist outputs and resolving technical bottlenecks, while long-term TA was stronger for systems reform, capability development and sustained organisational change.

Box 4: Financial management capacity in Tuvalu

In Tuvalu, the Climate Change Department (CCD) had 1 finance officer to service the department as well as oversight of 9 project-funded finance officers working on 11 projects.

A local embedded officer with deep technical skills was provided by CFCSP, providing oversight and compliance monitoring skills.

This freed the finance officer from project oversight responsibilities, resulting in improved financial management within CCD and better-quality financial oversight of the projects.

In Cook Islands, TA produced some of the clearest early results. Advisers helped clear Crown accounts backlogs, improve investment processes, support renewable energy planning, strengthen asset management and improve monitoring systems. Stakeholders noted that where urgent outputs were needed, delivery-focused TA added speed, quality and confidence. Where advisers worked collaboratively with counterparts, they also built capability through mentoring, joint problem solving and process mapping.

In Solomon Islands, short-term TA had been used more selectively, including work linked to accreditation requirements such as GEDSI policy development. Long-term support was more prominent through embedded arrangements, though specialist TA remained useful for discrete technical tasks requiring external expertise.

In Tuvalu, long-term governance-focused TA reportedly helped rationalise proposals, improve management structures, establish executive coordination mechanisms and provide strategic advice in a highly pressured environment (Box 4). This was seen as materially improving the ability of the Climate Change Department to function.

Table 3 Comparison of short and long-term technical advice

Assistance Modality	Most effective uses	Cross-case findings
Short-term TA	• Specialist diagnostics	Most effective where targeted expertise was needed quickly to solve defined technical problems or deliver specific outputs. Paired or team-based short-term inputs were particularly effective, as they combined complementary skills and accelerated progress, notably in the Cook Islands.
	• Policy drafting	
	• Feasibility studies	
	• Accreditation requirements	
	• Clearing urgent technical bottlenecks	
Long-term TA	• Systems reform	Most effective where sustained engagement, relationship-building and continuity were required to embed change, strengthen capability and support implementation over time.
	• Institutional strengthening	
	• Mentoring and coaching	
	• Implementation support	
	• Change management	

Common enabling factors included adviser quality, strong communication skills, country knowledge and partner relationships. In several cases, adviser capability mattered more than physical location, with remote/FIFO support workable when relationships already existed.

iii. Extent to which GEDSI is mainstreamed into delivery

Overall judgement: Moderate mainstreaming with pockets of stronger practice. GEDSI is present in delivery and sometimes actively applied, but consistent integration across all technical assistance remains incomplete. Tuvalu currently provides the strongest evidence of operational mainstreaming.

GEDSI mainstreaming into delivery appears moderate overall, with stronger practice in some countries and more limited integration in others. While programme expectations, training and policy commitments exist, consistent translation into day-to-day technical delivery remains uneven.

Cross-case evidence suggests GEDSI mainstreaming was strongest where:

- An adviser personally championed GEDSI

- GEDSI was explicitly written into ToR or outputs
- Data systems were being designed or improved
- Country policy frameworks already required it
- Leadership supported integration.

It was weakest where:

- There were limited data/information systems
- Assignments were narrowly technical and treated as gender-neutral
- GEDSI was seen as a compliance requirement
- No specific accountability mechanism existed
- Partners prioritised urgent operational issues over inclusion considerations.

GEDSI appears to have often entered through monitoring, policy or consultation processes rather than core technical decisions such as staffing models, systems reform sequencing, resource allocation or institutional incentives.

At this stage, mainstreaming remains nascent and uneven, with limited evidence yet of systemic or transformative GEDSI outcomes. The next phase would benefit from stronger accountability, clearer minimum standards, and outcome-level monitoring.

In Cook Islands, GEDSI mainstreaming was generally assessed as moderate. Stakeholders noted that although GEDSI expectations were embedded at programme level and advisers received support, many technical assignments did not see the relevance of GEDSI in the activity. As one adviser explained, “gender and social inclusion are not central to the assignment”. In some cases, this reflected the technical nature of the assignment; in others, it reflected limited understanding or prioritisation during delivery.

In Solomon Islands, GEDSI delivery was also moderate. There was evidence of GEDSI-specific support, identification of weaknesses in vulnerability assessments, and growing attention to better data and systems. However, mainstreaming across broader institutional support roles was less evident, and stakeholders saw room for stronger integration.

In Tuvalu, GEDSI mainstreaming was stronger (Box 5). Advisers reported incorporating GEDSI indicators into workplans, collecting sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated information, and considering inclusion issues in organisational reviews and staff systems. Even so, full systems-level mainstreaming remained constrained because dedicated MERL and GEDSI roles had not yet been fully mobilised.

Box 5: GEDSI in management, Tuvalu

The structural reorganisation of the Climate Change Division (CCD) in Tuvalu is supported by CFCSP. The CFCSP TA worked with CCD to incorporate GEDSI principles into the new way of working, notably by ensuring CCD made efforts to understand any disabilities that existing staff may possess. This is important in atolls where hearing loss due to coral dust and infections is prevalent.

C. Enablers, barriers and conditions for success

Overall judgement: Effectiveness is enabled by relevance, flexibility and trust, and constrained by capacity limitations, mobilisation delays and sustainability risks.

Programme effectiveness was shaped by a common set of enabling and constraining factors at three levels: strategic (design), implementation (ways of working and modality) and operational. These are summarised in Table 4. Overall, evidence suggests that the CFCSP has been most effective where support is closely aligned to genuine country bottlenecks, delivered flexibly, and backed by strong working relationships. Constraints mainly relate to limited local absorptive capacity, mobilisation delays and sustainability risks.

Constraints included mobilisation delays, narrow ToR, overload of counterparts, and risk that outputs are produced without sufficient implementation follow-through.

Table 4 Enabling factors and constraints

Factor	Enables or constrains	Evidence	Implications for effectiveness
Design related (strategic)			
Strong alignment with partner priorities	Enables	Across all three countries, support was largely directed to government-identified institutional constraints rather than externally imposed agendas. In Cook Islands this included PFM, infrastructure and coordination priorities; in Solomon Islands capacity for CCD/CFRU; in Tuvalu governance and CCD workload pressures.	Increased ownership, relevance and demand for support. Activities were more likely to be used and valued.
Systems focus rather than project focus	Enables	Support frequently targeted governance, staffing, reporting, coordination and institutional systems rather than stand-alone projects.	More likely to address root causes constraining climate finance access and implementation.
Sustainability risks from reliance on externally funded personnel	Constrains	Particularly evident in Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, where embedded roles were filling essential functions with intended, though uncertain long-term absorption into government structures.	Gains may not endure without transition planning, resourcing, and institutional ownership.
Implementation related (modality and ways of working)			
Flexibility and responsiveness	Enables	Stakeholders in all three countries described DT Global/CFCSP as responsive in adjusting scopes, changing modalities, and responding to emerging priorities. In Cook Islands assignments were revised during delivery; Solomon Islands adapted to operational funding gaps; Tuvalu ToR allowed support to respond to urgent issues.	Improved fit to changing realities and helped maintain momentum in fluid operating contexts.
Collaborative relationships and trust	Enables	Where advisers worked respectfully and closely with counterparts, interviewees reported stronger results. This was especially prominent in Cook Islands and Tuvalu, where trust and practical collaboration were repeatedly cited.	Increased uptake of advice, smoother implementation, and stronger informal capability transfer.

Factor	Enables or constrains	Evidence	Implications for effectiveness
Managing Services Contractor (MSC) model	Enables	Widely seen as reducing procurement and contracting burden, improving recruitment access and adding flexibility.	Often strengthened delivery efficiency in small administrations, but effectiveness depended on clear roles and communication.
Competing priorities and weak absorptive capacity	Constrains	Even strong TA struggled where agencies lacked time, staff or systems to engage. Tuvalu's donor workload and fragmented reporting burden were notable examples.	Reduced uptake of support and slowed institutionalisation of reforms.
Operational			
Access to specialised expertise	Enables	CFCSP enabled access to skills unavailable, unaffordable or hard to retain internally. Cook Islands valued niche advisers; Solomon Islands used embedded local specialists; Tuvalu relied on targeted governance and finance expertise.	Allowed governments to address technical bottlenecks, improve outputs, and undertake work otherwise delayed or impossible.
Limited local capacity and overstretched institutions	Constrains	Acute in Tuvalu and Solomon Islands. Tuvalu CCD had very few core staff managing many donor activities. Solomon Islands agencies faced staffing and budget shortages. Cook Islands also reported stretched staff in some agencies.	Reduced absorptive capacity, slowed implementation, and limited time for engagement with TA.
Mobilisation delays	Constrains	Delays in mobilising advisers or revising ToR were noted across all three countries. In Solomon Islands delays contributed to loss of candidates; Cook Islands and Tuvalu also noted slow mobilisation.	Loss of momentum, gaps in support continuity, and slower response to priority needs.
Limited understanding of programme purpose	Constrains	In Cook Islands especially, some stakeholders were unclear on the relationship between CFCSP, climate finance and CFF. Similar communication issues were noted in Solomon Islands.	Reduced strategic clarity, potentially limiting prioritisation and partner engagement.
Difficult operating environments	Constrains	Particularly in Tuvalu, living conditions, accommodation shortages and remoteness made TA recruitment difficult.	Restricted recruitment options and increased reliance on FIFO or intermittent modalities.

ii. Strengths and weaknesses of MSC model

Overall judgement: The MSC model appears well suited to contexts where public sector systems are thin and rapid access to expertise is required. Its weaknesses were generally manageable, but effectiveness depends on clear governance protocols, transparent accountability, and consistent partner involvement in staffing and prioritisation decisions.

Across the three case studies, the MSC model, implemented through DT Global, was viewed positively overall. This was particularly the case in small-state contexts where government administrative capacity is limited. However, recurring concerns relate to governance clarity, additional layers and ownership of personnel decisions (Table 5).

Table 5 Summary of strengths and weaknesses of the MSC model

Strengths	Weaknesses
Reduces administrative burden on government	Adds an extra administrative layer
Improves access to specialised technical expertise	Can slow mobilisation in some cases
Provides flexibility to adapt to changing needs	Reduced visibility and ownership for partner governments
Strengthens procurement and contract management	Perceived higher management and transaction costs
Well suited to capacity-constrained environments	Governance roles and decision-making not always clear

The principal strength identified by all stakeholder groups in each of the case studies was the reduction of administrative burden on partner governments. Ministries particularly valued having recruitment, contracting, payments and contract administration managed externally. This allowed scarce internal staff time to remain focused on core functions and programme delivery rather than transactional processes. In contexts such as Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, where agencies were already heavily stretched, this was particularly important.

A second major strength was improved access to technical expertise. The MSC model was considered to enable faster sourcing of specialised advisers than many partner agencies could achieve directly. This modality also provided access to skills that were unavailable locally or difficult to retain. Stakeholders also valued the flexibility of the model. It allowed adjustments to scopes of work, recruitment pipelines and delivery modalities as country needs evolved. This responsiveness was repeatedly cited as an advantage over more rigid donor delivery mechanisms.

The model was also considered by partners and MFAT to add value through contractor oversight and performance management. The MSC provided a management layer that could monitor adviser performance, troubleshoot issues and help maintain momentum. Reliable contracting and payment systems were particularly valued by partners and consultants in small-country settings, where delayed payments or weak systems can undermine adviser retention and confidence. A further comparative advantage identified in cross-case evidence was the ability to redeploy expertise across countries, drawing on regional pools of advisers, sharing lessons and mobilising personnel more efficiently than country-specific arrangements. However, there was also a recognition that this was not yet done to the extent possible.

Despite these strengths, several weaknesses were identified. The most common was governance complexity. Some advisers and partners were unclear about decision-making authority, accountability, reporting lines or the respective roles of MFAT, the MSC and partner agencies. This occasionally created uncertainty around priorities and line management arrangements.

Some advisers also felt the MSC could create an additional layer between partner institutions and advisers, slowing communication or creating unnecessary intermediation. Mobilisation processes, while generally considered to be stronger than alternative models, however in some cases they were seen to be slow due to the multiple approval layers. This was particularly where ToR changed or approvals were complex.

The role of partners in selecting TA was mixed. In Cook Islands and Tuvalu partners were consistently a key member of the selection panel. However, this was not the case in Solomon Islands where concerns were raised about limited partner control over staffing decisions. This was particularly the case because embedded roles were functioning as de-facto future government positions.

A further weakness was the potential for institutional knowledge loss if the managing contractor changed. This is because country relationships, contextual understanding and operational memory often substantially sat with the contractor rather than government systems. However, this would also be the case with change in personnel at MFAT or any other body managing this work.

Some advisers noted that MSC fees and management overheads may increase total programme costs. However, this was not raised as a concern by partners. No comparative MFAT cost benefit analysis has been identified to compare the overhead costs of the different procurement modality. Before any assumptions are made about what these costs may be, a rigorous analysis should be undertaken.

Box 6: Way of working

What excites me most is how the programme works with us, not around us. When the advisers come in, they don't just deliver something and leave. They sit with us, challenge us, and draw the knowledge out of us. We build the frameworks together. We make the decisions together. By the end of it, we don't just have a document, we understand it, we believe in it, and we are ready to use it. That sense of ownership is completely different from anything I've experienced before.

Partner in agency in Cook Islands

iii. Principles underlying the CFCSP approach

Overall Judgement: The Ways of Working principles were well reflected overall in early implementation, especially in partner-led design, contextual tailoring and collaborative engagement.

The CFCSP Ways of Working Charter sets out five core principles intended to guide implementation: Partner, Consider, Collaborate, Progress and Adapt. Cross-case evidence suggests these principles were substantially reflected in programme design and early delivery, although application was uneven across principles and countries (Table 6). Strongest performance was generally in partnership, contextual responsiveness and collaboration (Box 6). Weaker performance was evident in pace of delivery in some areas and in systematic use of evidence for adaptation.

Table 6 Summary of application of principles underlying CFCSP

Principle	Cross-Case Assessment of Application	Evidence from Case Studies	Overall Rating
Partner: Work in partnership with MFAT, Pacific stakeholders and country partners, leveraging trust and respect.	Strongly applied. Country Work Plans and support priorities were generally developed collaboratively with partner governments. Country agencies had meaningful influence over priorities, ToR and activities.	Tuvalu CCD developed ToR and became a stronger focal point. Solomon Islands CCD approved activities. Cook Islands agencies reported support aligned with their priorities.	Strong

Principle	Cross-Case Assessment of Application	Evidence from Case Studies	Overall Rating
Consider: Understand local context, stakeholder perspectives and partner needs when working across the Pacific.	Support models varied significantly by country, showing contextual tailoring rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.	Tuvalu support focused on governance overload and staffing realities. Solomon Islands focused on embedded local officers. Cook Islands focused on public financial management (PFM) and institutional reform.	Strong
Collaborate: Work collaboratively, communicate openly and frequently, embed a “no surprises” culture.	Relationships between advisers, partners, MFAT and DT Global were generally positive. Frequent communication was often cited as a strength. However, some uncertainty existed around roles and reporting lines.	Most stakeholders highlighted strong collaborative working relationships. Cook Islands and Solomon Islands stakeholders sought clearer governance and communication.	Moderate to Strong
Progress: Build on momentum, pursue opportunities quickly, deliver at pace within guardrails.	Advisers generally delivered practical results quickly. However, mobilisation delays reduced pace in several situations.	Delays noted in Cook Islands and Solomon Islands mobilisation. Tuvalu also faced mobilisation constraints due to difficult living conditions and limited markets.	Moderate
Adapt: Evidence to learn and adapt implementation continuously.	Operational flexibility was evident and scopes of work were adjusted as needs changed.	Tuvalu changed focal point arrangements. Cook Islands assignments evolved after commencement. Solomon Islands adjusted support to fill capacity gaps and operational budget constraints.	Moderate to strong

iv. Strengths and weaknesses of delivery methods

Overall judgement: delivery methods are a clear strength of the programme, with effectiveness driven by the flexible use of multiple modalities rather than reliance on a single approach. No method is inherently superior, with success dependent on alignment to context, task and institutional need. Weaknesses relate primarily to risks of substitution, variable capability transfer and coordination complexity. Overall, the model is sound, with performance hinging on appropriate selection and management of delivery methods.

A key strength of CFCSP has been its use of multiple delivery methods rather than reliance on a single technical assistance model. Across the three case studies, support was delivered through a combination of embedded personnel, long-term advisers, short-term specialists and remote or FIFO modalities. Evidence suggests that no single method was universally superior. Effectiveness depended largely on how well the delivery

method matched country context, institutional need, labour market realities and the nature of the problem being addressed.

Table 7 Comparison of delivery methods

Delivery Method	Main Strengths	Main Weaknesses	Most Suitable Contexts
Embedded technical support	Builds relationships, fills staffing gaps, supports day-to-day implementation, practical capability transfer.	Risk of substitution for government staff, sustainability concerns, more easily reallocated to other activities, unclear supervision.	Under-resourced agencies, coordination bottlenecks, ongoing operational support.
Long-term advisers	Continuity, support reform, skills transfer, mentoring, adaptive engagement over time.	Higher cost, slower recruitment, possible role drift.	Systems reform, organisational change, sustained capability development.
Short-term specialists	Rapid niche expertise, efficient for discrete tasks, lower long-term cost.	Limited ownership, weaker capability transfer, recommendations may stall.	Policy drafting, diagnostics, accreditation, specialist technical tasks.
Remote / FIFO advisers	Access to expertise where residence difficult, flexible deployment, lower cost, efficient for targeted inputs.	Can be weaker relationships, less day-to-day support, lower contextual immersion, but no evidence of this.	Hard-to-recruit locations, specialist advisory roles, intermittent support, where TA knows country, sector and agency.
Team approach	Combines complementary skills and perspectives, enabling more holistic and higher-quality outputs. Accelerates progress on complex or multi-dimensional tasks. Strengthens problem-solving through collaboration. Models different working styles.	Can increase management complexity and transaction costs. Effectiveness depends on how well team members work together and align with partner expectations.	Complex ToR requiring multiple skill sets. Situations requiring rapid progress or where both technical delivery and capability development are needed simultaneously.

The diversity in delivery methods applied has been effective. Clearly no single method is stronger than the others in all circumstances. Adoption of a diverse range of delivery methods should be continued.

v. Strengths and weaknesses of governance model

Overall judgement: Cross-case evidence suggests the governance model was appropriate for early-stage implementation and for small-country contexts requiring agility and trust. It worked best where lead agencies were engaged, communication was frequent and stakeholders had confidence in the focal point. However, a more mature programme phase would benefit from maintaining the strengths of country-led and agile governance, while adding greater clarity and institutional resilience. Priorities include

documenting roles and escalation pathways, clarifying supervision of embedded staff, broadening cross-government participation where relevant, and periodically reviewing whether governance arrangements remain fit for purpose.

The governance model for CFCSP was generally found to be functional, pragmatic and reasonably well aligned to the realities of Pacific small island developing state contexts (Table 8). Governance arrangements were typically light-touch, centred on a lead government focal agency, supported by the MSC, and reliant on regular communication and relationship-based problem solving. This approach appears to have enabled flexibility and responsiveness during early implementation. However, evidence also indicates recurring weaknesses in role clarity, institutionalisation, and breadth of whole-of-government engagement.

Table 8 Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses of the Governance Model.

Governance Dimension	Strengths	Weaknesses	Cross-Case Implications
Country ownership	Lead agencies helped align support to national priorities.	Concentration in one agency may narrow broader ownership.	Retain focal agency model but widen engagement.
Decision-making	Lean structures enabled timely and practical decisions.	Informality may reduce transparency and consistency.	Balance agility with clearer documented processes.
Communication	Frequent engagement built trust and responsiveness.	Communication quality varied by individuals	Institutionalise regular communication channels
Accountability	Government had input into priorities and activities.	Reporting lines and supervisory responsibilities sometimes unclear.	Clarify roles for government, contractor, advisers and MFAT.
Coordination	Focal agencies could direct scarce TA resources strategically.	Limited whole-of-government coordination in some contexts.	Add structured cross-government coordination forums where useful.
Continuity	Relationship-based governance effective in early phase.	Vulnerable to staff turnover or leadership changes.	Reduce dependence on individuals through systems.
Scalability	Light-touch model suited small-state contexts.	May be insufficient if programme complexity grows.	Introduce proportionate governance if programme expands.
Learning and oversight	Some adaptive responses occurred through dialogue.	Limited formal review of governance effectiveness.	Include periodic governance health checks.

D. Learning and adaptiveness

i. Use of learning to strengthen coordination, delivery and governance, including GEDSI

Overall, CFCSP demonstrates moderate to strong use of learning to strengthen coordination and delivery, with implementation experience consistently used to refine approaches and improve programme functioning. Learning processes are well suited to

the Pacific context and effectively capture practical insights. Governance learning is evident and contributing to improvements, though still maturing in consistency. GEDSI learning is emerging, with clear examples at activity level and scope to further apply these insights at programme level. Overall, CFCSP shows a practical and adaptive approach to learning, with a solid foundation to strengthen more systematic application across the programme.

CFCSP demonstrates moderate to strong use of learning to improve coordination, delivery and, to a lesser extent, governance, although the extent to which this learning is systematically captured and applied varies across areas. Evidence from the three case studies shows that learning is most effectively used where it is drawn directly from implementation experience and applied to adjust how the programme operates in practice.

CFCSP's use of formal verbal methods to collect data on progress, changes in context, constraints and lessons learned is highly appropriate in a Pacific context. Documented records from the progress review meetings at a country level and the reflection meetings both contain data that was unlikely to have been collected through a formal written report. A useful supplement would be a consolidated document identifying items requiring further action and what action was taken.

Use of learning to strengthen coordination is evident where operational experience has informed how agencies, advisers and programme actors work together. For example, in the Cook Islands, coordination meetings, consultations and cross-workstream engagement were used to adjust support and better align activities across agencies. Similarly in Solomon Islands, strong communication between CFCSP and government counterparts enabled ongoing feedback on emerging needs, supporting alignment of embedded officers with priority functions and broader climate finance initiatives. In Tuvalu, early implementation experience highlighted the need for stronger government ownership, resulting in changes to focal point arrangements and greater involvement of the Climate Change Department in defining support priorities. These examples demonstrate that coordination improves when learning is actively applied, although more formal systems for cross-country and portfolio-wide learning remain limited.

Use of learning to strengthen delivery is also moderate to strong, with consistent evidence that implementation experience has informed adjustments to Terms of Reference, sequencing, staffing models and delivery modalities. In the Cook Islands for example, assignments were revised where initial ToR proved too narrow or did not reflect actual needs, particularly in tourism, MERL and reform-related work. In Solomon Islands, learning about operational constraints led to provision of modest activity costs for embedded officers. This enabled them to function more effectively. In Tuvalu, delivery approaches were adapted to include blended modalities, combining local embedded support with intermittent external expertise in response to recruitment and accommodation challenges. These examples indicate a programme that is adaptive in practice.

Use of learning to strengthen governance is more mixed and less consistently institutionalised. In Tuvalu, learning contributed to improved governance through a shift towards greater government ownership, including enabling the Climate Change Department to directly shape ToR. In Solomon Islands, regular engagement with agencies and Progress reviews surfaced concerns regarding staffing control, operational budgets and future absorption of embedded roles, allowing some governance adjustments over time. Similarly, in the Cook Islands, learning identified the need for clearer roles, responsibilities and reporting lines between government, MFAT and the MSC. However, evidence that these issues were systematically resolved is more limited,

suggesting that governance learning is present but less mature than learning applied to delivery.

Use of learning to strengthen GEDSI integration is the weakest area across the programme. There are examples of assignment-level learning, such as identifying gaps in disability data collection in Solomon Islands, integrating GEDSI indicators into surveys and workplans in Tuvalu (Box 5 and 7), and providing adviser training and guidance in the Cook Islands. However, while GEDSI progress and learning is consolidated, there is limited evidence that these lessons are being systematically applied to improve coordination, governance or portfolio-wide delivery strategies. GEDSI learning is therefore more evident in technical activities than in strategic management systems. This is likely to be a function of the evaluation being undertaken in the early stage in the life of CFCSP. However it may also be an indicator that stronger mechanisms are needed to translate implementation experience into sustained improvements in inclusion practice.

Box 7: Practical GEDSI delivery examples

Gender and disability disaggregated surveys in Tuvalu; consultation with women representatives to target vulnerable households for water tanks; inclusion of women, youth and persons with disabilities in workshops; vulnerability assessments using separate social group discussions in Solomon Islands.

Based on summary of TA reports

ii. Use of learning to strengthen MERL

Overall judgement: Moderately fit for purpose with strong adaptive management foundations. CFCSP's MERL system is generally fit for purpose for a flexible, partner-led technical assistance programme operating across diverse Pacific contexts, particularly in supporting implementation monitoring, contextual responsiveness and adaptive management. The system is well suited to the programme's current stage of implementation and operating environment. However, it is currently stronger as an implementation and learning framework than as a comprehensive evaluative and results measurement system. Future strengthening should focus on outcome monitoring, portfolio-level analysis, systematic capture of lessons learned, and clearer assessment of contribution to institutional and systems change.

The review found that many aspects of the MERL system are appropriate to the realities of a multi-country, flexible technical assistance programme operating across highly diverse Pacific contexts (Appendix C). Monitoring and learning approaches support adaptive management and enable implementation experience to inform programme adjustments in real time. As discussed earlier in this section, progress review meetings, reflection discussions, adviser reporting, stories of change and ongoing dialogue between partners, advisers and programme management are generating valuable operational learning that is already informing delivery, staffing arrangements, Terms of Reference and coordination mechanisms across multiple countries.

The MERL system also demonstrates several broader strengths. These include strong partner ownership through Country Work Plans and Theory of Action processes, integration of GEDSI considerations into MERL systems, and use of multiple monitoring approaches suited to an early-stage programme. The programme is also already operating in practice as a flexible, demand-driven facility with multiple delivery modalities, and many aspects of the MERL system appropriately reflect this through country-led design, responsiveness and contextualised monitoring approaches.

At the same time, the review identified several limitations affecting overall fitness for purpose. Monitoring currently focuses more strongly on implementation, activities and

outputs than on progress toward and contribution to higher-level outcomes such as institutional performance, capability transfer, systems strengthening and sustainability. Programme-level results architecture also remains relatively underdeveloped, limiting the ability to assess portfolio-level contribution and overall coherence across countries. In addition, while lessons are being identified through implementation experience, their systematic capture, synthesis and use across the programme appears uneven.

Overall, the review concludes that the MERL system is sufficiently fit for purpose for the programme's current phase and delivery model, particularly in supporting adaptive implementation and operational learning. As the programme matures, the MERL system will need to evolve from a primarily implementation-focused monitoring system toward a stronger results, learning and evaluative framework capable of assessing contribution to longer-term institutional and systems change.

E. Sustainability and future pathways

i. Early signs of sustainability of capacity, systems and partnerships

Evidence of sustainability remains necessarily limited because CFCSP is still at an early stage of implementation. Even so, there are credible early signs that the programme is contributing to more sustainable capacity, systems and partnerships across the three case studies. The strongest evidence relates to systems and institutional arrangements, while the long-term sustainability of externally funded human resources remains less certain.

Early signs of sustainability of capacity are mixed but positive. In the Cook Islands, interviewees reported capability gains through mentoring, joint problem-solving and practical collaboration with advisers (Box 2 and 8). In all cases, support was sustained and linked to real work. In Solomon Islands, sustainability is being pursued through embedded roles intended to strengthen government capability over time, with the expectation that positions may eventually be absorbed into the public service (Box 9). This cannot be expected to be achieved in this phase. In Tuvalu, additional finance and governance support has helped expand the operational capacity of a highly stretched Climate Change Department. However, across all three countries, capacity gains remain vulnerable to staff turnover, overstretched counterparts, and uncertainty about whether governments will be able to retain or fund capabilities once external support ends.

The strongest evidence of sustainability relates to systems. In the Cook Islands, support has produced process maps, manuals, strengthened reporting systems, reusable methodologies and progress toward automation of core financial processes. All of these can continue beyond individual assignments (Box 2 and 3). In Solomon Islands, foundational systems such as data management arrangements, GEDSI-related

Box 8: Sustainability

In the past, I've seen technical advice come in, produce a report, and disappear. Those documents often just sat on the shelf. This time, it's the opposite. Because we've been part of every step, we know the thinking behind it, and we're committed to making it work. Even between visits, we keep the momentum going, and the advisers stay connected with us. It feels like a true partnership.

Partner in agency in Cook Islands

Box 9. Solomon Islands Need to Grow

In Solomon Islands the Climate Change Division sees embedded officers as an opportunity to grow, with CFCSP roles moving to the establishment.

The CFCSP funded GIS Officers are such an example, where their skills are used by other ministries, reflecting demand for GIS services within the broader government structure.

policies and regulatory items are being established to strengthen institutional functioning. In Tuvalu, sustainability is central to the support model itself, with assistance focused on organisational restructuring, stronger governance arrangements and improved administrative systems within the Climate Change Department. However, the systems for Tuvalu and Solomon Islands are unlikely to be sustained without further support to embed implementation. Across the cases, these types of reforms are more likely to endure than stand-alone outputs, provided they continue to be implemented, used and updated after programme completion.

Early signs of sustainability are also evident in partnerships. Across all three countries, stakeholders frequently described constructive, trust-based relationships between advisers, implementing partners and government counterparts. In the Cook Islands, respectful collaboration was repeatedly cited as central to progress. These relationships had continued after contracts were completed, with advisers providing ongoing support to individuals. In Solomon Islands, strong communication between CFCSP and partner agencies supported confidence in the model and smoother implementation. In Tuvalu, contextual understanding and close working relationships helped build government ownership and responsiveness. These partnerships are an important sustainability asset because they strengthen confidence, facilitate problem-solving and can support future cooperation beyond the life of specific assignments. However, relationship gains may weaken if there is high turnover of advisers, changes in delivery arrangements or no ongoing support.

Overall, CFCSP is showing early but still fragile signs of sustainability. The strongest prospects lie in strengthened systems and constructive partnerships. Sustainability of capacity is more uncertain, particularly where it depends on externally funded personnel rather than institutionalised roles, domestic financing and long-term retention strategies.

ii. Lessons for the remaining year of delivery and any future phase

Drawing on evidence from the three case studies, several practical lessons emerge for the remaining year of delivery and any potential future phase. As the programme is still at an early stage, these lessons focus less on long-term impact and more on what early implementation experience suggests would improve effectiveness, sustainability and value for money. A consistent message across countries is that CFCSP has established a strong foundation, but greater benefit is now likely to come from consolidating gains, strengthening systems and refining delivery arrangements rather than expanding activity volume.

Consolidate and sustain gains

1. Prioritise implementation and institutionalisation of Phase 1 outputs rather than commissioning substantial new design work.

Across the case studies, many policies, frameworks, systems and diagnostic products have already been developed. The strongest value in the remaining period is likely to come from helping partners operationalise these outputs, embed them into routine systems and ensure staff can use them effectively. This was particularly clear in the Cook Islands, where stakeholders noted stronger emphasis on design rather than implementation to date.

2. Provide greater continuity of support where reforms depend on embedded or long-term advisers.

In Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, uncertainty about continuation risks losing capable personnel before systems and roles are stabilised. In small labour markets, replacement

is difficult and momentum can be quickly lost. A six-month extension would provide the necessary continuity while a decision about Phase 2 is made and implemented.

Future phases should use longer-term commitments to countries and specific support where institutional support is central to the delivery model. This may be a minimum of three years, but in many cases may be five years.

Refine delivery model and governance

3. Clarify governance arrangements early, simply and consistently.

Across the three countries, stakeholders sought clearer articulation of roles, reporting lines, communication expectations and decision-making authority, particularly where personnel are embedded in government agencies but contracted externally. A concise governance protocol at country level would likely improve accountability and reduce friction.

4. Continue to tailor future support to country-specific system constraints rather than applying a uniform model.

The case studies showed that constraints differ significantly: Tuvalu requires help managing overall climate finance workload and emerging governance mechanisms; Solomon Islands benefits from embedded institutional capacity; Cook Islands is more ready for implementation support and selective specialist inputs. Future phases should maintain flexibility to reflect differing country maturity and needs.

5. Improve partner ownership of staffing decisions.

Partners were generally involved in recruitment decisions. However, this was not consistent. Consistent partner involvement in recruitment, prioritisation and performance feedback would improve ownership and sustainability, especially where roles may transition into government structures.

6. Design any future phase explicitly as a facility rather than a conventional programme.

The review found that CFCSP has operated most effectively where it functioned as a flexible, demand-responsive facility able to tailor support across countries, modalities and changing needs. Explicit facility design would better align governance, investment decision-making, monitoring and adaptive management with how the model operates in practice. See Annex X for implications.

Strengthen monitoring, learning and GEDSI integration

7. Strengthen monitoring to capture outcomes, not only activities and outputs.

Current monitoring was commonly perceived by stakeholders as activity and outputs focused. Future delivery should better track outcomes, in particular capability gains, use of systems, behavioural change, ownership and institutional performance. This is particularly important for institutional support models where value is often indirect and spread across multiple climate finance initiatives.

8. Integrate GEDSI more deliberately into technical delivery and adaptive management.

Across the portfolio, GEDSI commitments were generally stronger in plans, reporting and compliance processes than in the core logic of technical assistance. Future phases should require clearer GEDSI application in scopes of work, implementation methods, data systems and review processes.

iii. Lessons for MFAT's wider approach to technical assistance

The three case studies provide practical lessons for MFAT's wider approach to technical assistance in the Pacific. While drawn from climate finance capacity support, the findings are relevant to TA more broadly in small and capacity-constrained contexts where institutional bottlenecks, workforce shortages and coordination challenges often limit development effectiveness. A consistent message is that TA delivers the greatest value when it is treated as a strategic capability instrument rather than simply a source of short-term expertise. This means being clear about when TA is needed, selecting the right type of support for the problem at hand, and managing advisers in ways that maximise institutional performance, sustainability and value for money.

The key lessons from CFCSP for MFAT's wider approach to technical assistance were:

When and where to use TA

1. Prioritise institutional support where system constraints are the main barrier to results.

Across the case studies, support to central functions, governance systems and coordinating agencies often generated wider benefits than activity-specific inputs. In Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, strengthening core institutions improved the enabling environment for multiple climate finance initiatives rather than only one project. This suggests that in small Pacific administrations, TA focused on how institutions can deliver higher leverage than narrowly project-based support.

2. Treat localisation as a design principle, not a substitute for support.

Solomon Islands demonstrated that domestic expertise can fill many technical roles, but still requires external financing, management support and occasional specialist inputs.

¹⁰Localisation should therefore focus on sourcing, ownership and long-term transition pathways rather than assuming external assistance is no longer required.

How to use TA

3. Anchor TA in real work priorities and government systems.

Across all three countries, practical on-the-job support linked to current workflows was consistently viewed as more effective than stand-alone training. Problem-solving through real tasks, process improvement, mentoring and support embedded in routine systems built stronger ownership and greater likelihood of sustained use.

4. Plan transitions from the start.

Where advisers fill essential roles, management should include early planning for handover, localisation, absorption into government systems, or exit pathways. This reduces dependence and protects gains.

5. Use communities of practice across advisers.

Advisers often face similar challenges across countries. Creating structured peer exchange across advisers can spread practical solutions, tools and lessons quickly while reducing duplication.

Type of TA

6. Use clear role typologies.

Different adviser roles serve different purposes, such as embedded capacity support, specialist troubleshooting, reform facilitation, surge support, delivery acceleration, or coaching. Not all advisers are primarily engaged for capability development, and

¹⁰ Note that to date this is undertaken on a case by case basis rather than systematic process.

management approaches should reflect this honestly and explicitly. Clear categorisation helps ensure that recruitment, supervision, reporting expectations and performance measures are appropriately matched to the actual function of each adviser rather than applying a single capacity-development model to all roles

7. Use a mix of TA models and maintain flexible modality choices rather than relying on a single approach.

Across the review, in-country, remote, fly-in/fly-out, embedded and short-term models all demonstrated value depending on country conditions, task type and labour market realities. TA portfolios should therefore combine modalities such as embedded support, short-term expertise, facilitation and systems assistance, while actively managing deployment choices rather than defaulting to one model. Often the strongest outcomes result from a combination of different forms of assistance and adapted to context. For example, in the Cook Islands, capability-building advisers supported longer-term reform and relationship-building, while product-focused specialists accelerated urgent outputs.

How to manage TA

8. Retain management contractor models in thin-capacity contexts.

The MSC model was strongly valued for reducing administrative burden, accelerating access to appropriate expertise, and providing the flexibility needed to respond to evolving partner priorities. It also offered reliable contracting, performance oversight and continuity of support, making it particularly well suited to small administrations where government capacity is best focused on strategic leadership and implementation, rather than procurement and contract management.

9. Support adviser induction and contextual readiness.

Advisers with strong country knowledge and understanding of local systems were consistently more effective. For large TA pools, structured onboarding, country briefings and peer handover systems can shorten ramp-up time and improve performance.

10. Measure technical assistance by utilisation, value-add, and institutional outcomes, not only deliverables.

Traditional monitoring can undervalue technical assistance that creates benefits through enabling others to perform, resolving delays, coordinating actors, strengthening systems, or generating improvements across multiple programmes. To better capture the full value of TA, MFAT should strengthen monitoring to assess utilisation of adviser inputs, capability gains, system performance, coordination benefits, reform implementation, responsiveness, unblockers, and synergies generated across investments, alongside delivery of agreed outputs.

11. Create light but regular performance dialogue, not only formal reporting.

Continuous communication between advisers, delivery managers, MFAT and partner agencies was a recurring strength. Short, structured check-ins can identify bottlenecks early, adjust priorities and maintain alignment more effectively than relying mainly on periodic written reports.

4. Conclusion

CFCSP is an example of a programme for which the original design was fundamentally flawed. However, the programme had implementing partners with sufficient technical expertise, communication skills and mutual trust to redesign and implement it in a manner that enabled the achievement of the intended results.

MFAT staff, MSC staff and participating country officials all contributed to this enabling environment. There is value in MFAT investing time to better understand the dynamics that enabled this to occur.

CFCSP's strongest features are its flexibility, responsiveness and tailoring to country needs, consistent with a facility model. In future, when outcome-level evaluation commences, this is likely to make assessment of success more difficult if treated as a traditional programme, but less so if assessed as a facility.

Many of the shortcomings identified by the formative review were already in the process of being addressed. Their identification reflects the timing of the review, early in CFCSP's maturation, rather than poor management practices or programme redesign.

There is clear value in the continuation of CFCSP, both in terms of improving access to climate finance and maintaining New Zealand's reputation as an enabling partner. This continuation must occur with urgency if disruption is to be avoided.

Such disruption represents the greatest risk to CFCSP. A gap in funding would result in loss of momentum, which in turn would negatively impact access to finance across the Pacific. This is particularly important for embedded advisers, who are likely to seek alternative employment in the coming months if funding is not secured. In some countries, such as Tonga, entire areas of climate finance risk losing functionality.

In light of this, and the success of the current phase, the formative review recommends continuation of the current model with minor adjustments based on learning, including formally adopting a facility approach. We caution against substantive changes to governance or management that could lead to the delays noted above.

Finally, the formative review team thanks MFAT, the MSC team and in-country partners for their responsiveness, openness and willingness to engage in critical reflection. This enabled a comprehensive review and a clearer understanding of the opportunities and risks ahead.

Appendix A: Key review questions

The draft review questions included in the Terms of Reference (ToR) were revised following discussions with the MFAT and DT Global teams. A revised draft was submitted to these stakeholders and further comment obtained. This was then incorporated and the KRQ finalised as follows.

Review purpose: How well is CFCSP supporting countries to meet overall climate intentions and priorities and improve positioning to access climate finance inc. CFF?

- a. Assess relevance and responsiveness^[1].
 - i. To what extent does the CFCSP reflect countries climate priorities and needs as set out in their national strategies and country work plans?
 - ii. To what extent is the CFCSP responding to changes in countries climate priorities and needs that result from contextual changes?
 - iii. To what extent does CFCSP complement other initiatives?
 - iv. To what extent is GEDSI being mainstreamed into the design through the Country Work Plans?
 - v. To what extent does CFCSP focus on areas that will strengthen systems to improve countries positioning for accessing climate finance, including CFF.
- b. Effectiveness^[2]:
 - i. What difference is the CFCSP making through embedded technical capacity support^[3]?
 - ii. What difference is the CFCSP making through provision of short and long term technical adviser support?
 - iii. To what extent is GEDSI mainstreamed into delivery?
- c. Enablers, barriers and conditions for success:
 - i. What factors are enabling or constraining the effectiveness of CFCSP at country and regional levels?^[4]
 - ii. What are the strengths and weaknesses for using the Managing Service Contractor model for contracting CFCSP?
 - iii. What principles underlie the CFCSP approach and how do they enable or constrain the effectiveness of CFCSP^[5]?
 - iv. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the different delivery methods used to develop capacity through CFCSP?
 - v. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the governance model?
- d. Assess learning and adaptiveness^[6]

^[1] Responsiveness refers to changes to meet country context changes.

^[2] This will include consideration of how CFCSP support is strengthening national systems, coordination, and readiness to access climate finance.

^[3] This is also known as capacity supplementation.

^[4] This will include consideration of scale.

^[5] This will include responsiveness in how support is delivered.

^[6] Adaptiveness is adapting to learning.

- i. How is learning from implementation, including insights on GEDSI, being used to strengthen coordination, delivery and governance within the CFCSP?

Review purpose: How can the remainder of the CFCSP be improved?

Review purpose: How can any future phases of the CFCSP be improved?

- e. Explore sustainability and future pathways:
 - i. What early signs indicate that CFCSP supported capacity, systems, and partnerships are sustainable? We note that it is very early to identify such signs and anticipate the response to this will be extremely limited.
 - ii. What lessons should inform the remaining year of delivery and any potential future implementation phase?
 - iii. What lessons from CFCSP should inform MFAT's wider approach to TA?

Appendix B: Case study countries

Characteristics

Dimension	Cook Islands	Solomon Islands	Tuvalu
Country context / scale	Small state with relatively stronger institutional systems and higher baseline capability.	Larger, more complex system with fragmented institutions and capacity gaps across agencies.	Very small, highly capacity-constrained state with extreme workload pressures.
Institutional capacity	Moderate to relatively strong, but stretched in key areas (e.g. PFM, coordination).	Uneven capacity, with critical gaps in central coordination and technical functions.	Very limited capacity, with a small core team managing large climate finance portfolio.
Nature of constraints	Systems improvement and implementation bottlenecks (e.g. reporting backlogs, investment processes).	Workforce gaps, coordination challenges, and loss of capacity when donor support ends.	Acute staffing shortages, governance overload, and administrative pressure.
Primary focus of support	Systems strengthening and implementation support (PFM, investment, reporting, coordination).	Institutional capacity and continuity through staffing and technical functions.	Governance strengthening, organisational restructuring, and core system functionality.
Dominant delivery modalities	Short-term TA and long-term advisers (non-embedded), some remote/FIFO.	Strong use of embedded technical support, supplemented by targeted TA.	Mix of embedded roles, long-term governance advisers, and flexible ToR-based support.
Role of embedded support	Limited, not a core modality.	Central modality, filling critical workforce and operational gaps.	Highly important, significantly expanding functional capacity of core department.
Role of short-term TA	Highly prominent and effective for delivering outputs and clearing bottlenecks.	More selective use for specialist inputs (e.g. accreditation, policy).	Used alongside longer-term support for targeted expertise.
Role of long-term advisers	Supporting reform, systems improvement, and mentoring.	Less prominent than embedded roles but present in some areas.	Central for governance, coordination, and organisational strengthening.

Dimension	Cook Islands	Solomon Islands	Tuvalu
Use of team-based / blended approaches	Evidence of paired or complementary TA inputs to accelerate outputs.	Blended model combining embedded staff with specialist inputs.	Blended modalities (embedded + external expertise) to manage constraints.

Findings and evidence

	Cook Islands	Solomon Islands	Tuvalu
1. Relevance & strategic fit	CWP anchored in national frameworks (NSDA 2020+, climate policies); activities include PFM, infrastructure resilience, renewable energy and governance. Evidence: explicit alignment in CWP and stakeholder statements that support addressed “real and already-identified government needs”.	CWP aligned with NDS/Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) ¹¹ ; focus on strengthening CCD and CFRU capacity to manage climate finance. Evidence: activities approved by CCD; Theory of Action (ToA) emphasises improving policy execution, coordination and delivery.	ToA explicitly targets CCD governance and coordination constraints; priorities include organisational restructuring, MERL and grants systems. Evidence: support designed to address overload of CCD managing multiple climate finance programmes.
2. Responsiveness & adaptiveness	ToRs revised during implementation (e.g. MERL and tourism work); phased approaches introduced when capacity constraints identified. Evidence: interviews noting deliverables changed to better align with needs; delays due to mobilisation.	Embedded roles adapted to context (e.g. MRV officer ¹² expanded to legal work); operational funding added when budget constraints limited field work. Evidence: Year Two reporting and interviews.	ToRs designed with flexibility; TAs respond to ongoing “fire-fighting” needs due to limited CCD capacity. Evidence: interviews noting frequent unplanned issues and need for rapid response.

¹¹ Used to refer to a strategic, multi-year policy framework used by various national governments to outline their development priorities, align budgets, and track socioeconomic goals

¹² An MRV officer is a professional responsible for managing a system of Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification for greenhouse gas emissions and climate change mitigation activities.

	Cook Islands	Solomon Islands	Tuvalu
3. Complementarity & systems role	Activities linked to CFF, GCF and other initiatives; supports enabling systems such as investment appraisal (redesign of target value proportion (TVP)), asset management and legislative reform. Evidence: stakeholders noted programme “enables other climate programmes to be implemented well”.	Embedded officers (e.g. GIS, SIIVA ¹³) actively support other initiatives; institutional capacity enables broader programme delivery. Evidence: officers unavailable for interview due to work on other donor-funded activities.	Governance and financial oversight support enables CCD to manage multiple donor projects; addresses coordination bottleneck. Evidence: stakeholders reported other initiatives depend on improved CCD capacity to function effectively.
4. Effectiveness of delivery	Delivery-focused TA produced outputs (e.g. Crown accounts, renewable energy plans); capability developed through mentoring, process mapping and joint work. Evidence: backlog in financial reporting addressed; renewable energy planning improved readiness.	Embedded TA increased capacity (e.g. GIS capacity increased by 200%); enabled climate finance processes and reduced bottlenecks. Evidence: CCD reported activities could not proceed without these roles.	TA improved coordination (e.g. reducing proposals from 70 to 8); embedded TA doubled financial management capacity; improved organisational functioning, governance systems and ability to manage workload. Evidence: interviews and organisational review outcomes.
5. GEDSI	GEDSI included in CWP and linked to national policy; largely confined to GEDSI section. Evidence: expectations stated but limited translation into activities; delivery evidence shows GEDSI often not central to assignments.	GEDSI included in risk tables and policies; requirement to align with Solomon Islands Government GEDSI policies. Evidence: GEDSI data gaps identified (e.g. vulnerability assessments), but limited mainstreaming across activities.	GEDSI integrated into ToA and activities; planned GEDSI adviser; delivery includes GEDSI indicators, surveys and disaggregated data. Evidence: TA incorporated GEDSI indicators and disability data into staff surveys and reporting.
6. Enablers and barriers	Enablers: strong alignment, flexibility, collaborative relationships. Evidence: stakeholders describe advisers as committed and responsive. Barriers: limited capacity, mobilisation delays,	Enablers: embedded model, SIG commitment to capacity building. Evidence: acceptance of embedded officers. Barriers: limited budgets, small technical pool, mobilisation delays.	Enablers: strong contextual knowledge and relationships. Evidence: trust and rapid mobilisation of support. Barriers: very small CCD, high workload, difficult living conditions, TA mobilisation challenges.

¹³ Refers to staff working on the Solomon Islands Integrated Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment

	Cook Islands	Solomon Islands	Tuvalu
	unclear ToR, weak understanding of climate finance linkages.		
7. Delivery model	Blended TA model (capacity-building advisers, specialists, training, systems support). Evidence: ToR, different modalities used depending on need.	Embedded officer model central; Evidence: ToR, most TA are embedded.	Mix of embedded TA and FIFO specialists; Evidence: ToR
8. Governance	Governance through MFEM and CCCI but roles unclear. Evidence: interviews.	MSC provides mobilisation and monitoring. Evidence: strong communication with CCD; concerns over limited control of mobilisation and contracts.	MSC valued for flexibility. Evidence: CCD develops ToR and directs support; governance described as strong and partner-led.
9. Learning & adaptation	Strong real-time adaptation; ToR adjusted based on implementation. Evidence: multiple examples of redesign during delivery. Monitoring focuses on outputs; limited capture of outcome-level change.	Learning incorporated through progress reports and feedback loops. Evidence: GEDSI monitoring identified data gaps; some institutional learning evident.	Learning used to improve governance (e.g. shift to CCD-led ToR improved engagement). Evidence: adaptation of programme processes based on experience.
10. Sustainability & future pathways	Early signs include systems, tools and automation (e.g. reporting systems, process maps); capability gains emerging. Stronger prospects through systems and processes, less reliance on external staff. Evidence: automation of Crown accounts and manuals developed. Risks: staff capacity and implementation gaps.	Systems and roles established; sustainability depends on SIG absorbing positions. Risk due to reliance on externally funded embedded roles. Evidence: intent to absorb embedded roles into establishment noted in CWP and interviews.	Organisational reforms underway; sustainability focus on governance strengthening. High risk due to dependence on external personnel, but strong focus on system strengthening. Evidence: restructuring of CCD and improved coordination; risk from limited fiscal capacity.

Appendix C: Assessment of the MERL system

This was developed from through the qualitative analysis (Table 1) based on documents and data from the semi-structured interviews. The recommendations are grounded in the findings of the analysis and informed by the evaluation team's expertise, experience and professional judgement.

MERL Dimension	Strengths	Weaknesses / gaps	Recommendations
Overall judgement	Strong foundation for a complex, responsive TA programme. Particularly effective for implementation tracking and adaptive management.	Less mature as a system for robust outcome measurement and evaluative performance assessment.	Evolve the MERL system in the next phase from implementation-focused monitoring toward a stronger results, learning and evaluation framework aligned with MFAT expectations.
Transition to facility modality¹⁴	The programme already operates in practice as a flexible, demand-driven facility with multiple delivery modalities.	Current framing as a "programme" rather than a Facility creates misalignment between design, delivery and MERL, particularly in expectations of attribution and results reporting.	Formally transition to a facility modality and align MERL accordingly. This includes: adopting a contribution-based ToC, defining facility-level outcomes, strengthening portfolio monitoring, embedding contribution-focused evaluation, and elevating learning as a central function.
Theory of Change / Results Logic	Clear overarching logic linking capacity support to strengthened systems and improved climate action. Country Theory of Action broadly aligned to this logic.	Outcomes are not aligned to MFAT definitions of STO, MTO and LTO and are often too high level, limiting measurability. Logic does not explicitly reflect contribution in a multi-actor environment.	Align ToC and all country ToA to MFAT STO/MTO/LTO definitions. Reframe as a facility contribution model, explicitly recognising multiple actors, assumptions and external influences.
Overall, MERL design	Well suited to a flexible, partner-led, multi-country technical assistance approach. Already reflects many characteristics of a facility, including responsiveness and country-led design.	Currently stronger as an implementation monitoring and adaptive management system than as a full performance and evaluation framework. Framing as a "programme" creates some conceptual	Retain the flexible design but formally reposition as a facility. Align MERL purpose toward learning, adaptation, contribution and portfolio performance rather than programme-style attribution.

¹⁴ Refer Appendix D for further information on the differences between the programme and facility modality.

MERL Dimension	Strengths	Weaknesses / gaps	Recommendations
		misalignment with how it operates in practice.	
Programme-level results architecture	Country-level monitoring allows contextualised tracking aligned to national priorities.	Lack of a clear programme-level results framework makes it difficult to assess overall effectiveness, coherence and contribution. Current structure does not reflect a facility operating across diverse contexts.	Define a small number of facility-level outcome domains (e.g. systems strengthening, capability, access to climate finance). Focus on patterns of contribution across the portfolio rather than aggregation of outputs.
Country ownership	Strong emphasis on co-design through CWP, Theory of Action, and MERL processes. Supports ownership and relevance.	Quality of ownership may vary depending on capacity and engagement of partner agencies.	Continue and strengthen partner-led approaches. Under a facility model, ensure countries play a central role in prioritisation and shaping support.
Monitoring	Wide range of monitoring approaches used (results measurement table, adviser reports, meetings, updates, stories). Appropriate for an early-stage programme and supports adaptive management.	Monitoring focuses more on inputs and outputs than on progress toward and contribution to outcomes. Limited tracking of sustainability, capability transfer and system change.	Expand monitoring to include progress toward and contribution to outcomes, including sustainability and uptake. Under a facility model, track portfolio performance, modality effectiveness and enabling environment factors.
Evaluation	Independent review processes provide external assessment.	Internal evaluation is not well embedded in the MERL system. Limited ability to assess what works, where and why.	Integrate internal evaluation into MERL in the next phase, including thematic reviews and modality assessments. Under a facility model, emphasise contribution analysis and portfolio-level evaluation.
Research	No formal research component, which is appropriate for a delivery-focused TA programme.	Risk that introducing research could divert focus from delivery if not carefully targeted.	Do not introduce standalone research. Only undertake targeted research as part of a formal adaptive management process to inform implementation decisions.
Learning	Strong emphasis on reflection, learning workshops, peer learning and communities of practice. Positive	Rollout is uneven across countries. Learning does not always appear to be	Continue and strengthen learning mechanisms. Under a facility model, make learning a core function, using cross-country comparison to

MERL Dimension	Strengths	Weaknesses / gaps	Recommendations
	foundation for adaptive management.	systematically linked to decision-making.	inform strategic decisions and allocation of support.
Lessons learned capture	Intent to capture lessons through adviser completion reports.	Completion reports appear to be inconsistent and do not reliably capture lessons. Regular reporting lacks a structured lessons learned component.	Introduce a “lessons learned” section in adviser progress reports. Use this to inform adaptive management and future ToR design.
Use of narrative evidence	Positive change stories provide useful qualitative insights and illustrate change pathways.	Focus on positive stories rather than all stories of change risks bias and over-reliance on anecdotal evidence if not triangulated. May emphasise success over learning.	Use narratives to explain contribution pathways, not just success stories. Consider introduction of most significant change methodology. Systematically triangulate with monitoring and evaluation data.
GEDSI	GEDSI is clearly integrated into MERL design and processes.	Focus appears stronger on process than on measuring substantive outcomes for different groups.	Strengthen GEDSI outcome measurement, including who benefits, participation, and reduction of barriers for excluded groups.

Appendix D: Facility introduction

How does a facility and project/programme differ

In projects and programmes, the underlying logic assumes that the whole is achieved through the sum of its parts. Activities and outputs are designed so that, if each component is delivered as planned, the intended outcomes and impacts should logically follow. The theory of change is therefore largely additive and internally complete: delivery of all components is expected to be sufficient to achieve the stated results, and accountability rests primarily with the implementing partner.

Facilities operate on a different logic. While individual activities contribute to higher-level outcomes, no single activity, nor the full set of activities funded under the facility, is expected to be sufficient to achieve those outcomes on its own. The facility theory of change is therefore explicitly contributory rather than comprehensive. It recognises that outcomes depend on a wider system of actors, policies, investments, and contextual factors beyond the facility's control, and that the facility's role is to influence, enable, de-risk, or accelerate change rather than deliver it directly.

Framing of theory of change

This means that a facility theory of change must be framed at a higher, more strategic level than a project or programme theory of change. Rather than asserting that "if we do X, Y will happen", it articulates how the facility's functions, such as brokering, convening, technical assistance, and flexible financing are expected to strengthen conditions for change. The causal logic emphasises contribution pathways, leverage points, and complementarities with other actors, rather than a closed causal chain that the facility alone can complete.

Implications for MERL

Because the facility does not, and cannot, achieve the whole outcome on its own, MERL cannot be based on attributing outcomes to delivery of facility-funded activities. Instead, MERL systems must assess the quality and relevance of the facility's contributions, the appropriateness of strategic choices, and the extent to which the facility is influencing wider systems in the intended direction. A core function of MERL in a facility is therefore to actively monitor the external environment, including policy settings, institutional capacity, political economy dynamics, market conditions and the actions of other actors. This enables the identification of emerging barriers, gaps, risks, and opportunities that may enable or constrain progress towards intended outcomes.

Facilities are expected to demonstrate that they are using evidence and learning to adapt strategy, reprioritise activities, and where necessary, redefine pathways of contribution in response to changing conditions. Accountability therefore encompasses both results achieved and the quality of decision-making, adaptation in the face of uncertainty and factors beyond the facility's direct control.

In summary: Facilities evaluate contribution to change across a system whereas projects and programmes evaluate delivery against plans.