

MFAT Management Response to the Samoa Strategic Evaluation (2018 – 2024)

Evaluation Report Recommendation	MFAT Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)
Consider improving activity documentation and reporting to enable the measurement of activity alignment to Samoa Country Plan goals and outcomes.	Agree. MFAT's Development Capability and Insights (DCI) division has implemented an extensive training programme for new development staff (and MFAT partners), which includes sessions and guidance on reporting. New activities will have clear alignment to Country Plan outcomes.
Consider improving activity documentation and reporting to enable the measurement of activity alignment to priority themes particularly interconnected and cross-cutting themes such as gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) and climate change.	Agree. Activities that have specific thematic (GEDSI, climate, etc.) outcomes will develop relevant indicators that will illustrate progression (or otherwise) towards those outcomes during activity implementation. Progress towards those outcomes will also continue to be reported on in activity monitoring documentation.
Consider developing an overarching monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) framework or guidance for the Samoa Country Plan that ensures consistency in the specification of outputs and short-term outcomes and supports aggregation of results including cross-cutting themes such as GEDSI and climate change.	Partially agree. New PDG Plans (including the Samoa Plan) all include Theories of Change (ToC) and indicator tables. Further additions to Samoa Plan MERL will be considered, however any proposed additions will have to factor in monitoring and reporting requirements which could be resource intensive for both Wellington and Post staff. Plan guidance has been developed by DCI, and is being utilised by design and implementation teams when creating new activities.
Pursue opportunities in future programming to use a strategic or programmatic approach instead of individual projects, where feasible and appropriate, including in cocoa agriculture and private sector development investments.	Agree. As mentioned in the report, programmes are already being developed for private sector development and health within the Samoa Programme. MFAT will balance the effectiveness of our High Commission and Embassy Fund activities in Apia.

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Ensure that future activity designs provide resources for institutional strengthening and capacity development for local implementation partners.	Agree. Health activities already provide coordination resourcing for Ministry of Health. Consideration will be given for extra resourcing in all new activities.
Explore opportunities to expand use of budget support for sector development using appropriate arrangements to support implementation, monitoring and performance reporting.	Agree. Sector-based budget support is already being explored within the Samoa Plan, however this support will ultimately depend on partner (Government of Samoa) preference.
Consider providing additional technical assistance with budget support to enable institutional strengthening and capacity development to support reform progress and implementation of sector development.	Partially agree. Work is underway at MFAT to establish a regional technical assistance (TA) facility to more efficiently respond to TA requests. However, MFAT has noted that TA requests within Samoa are sporadic, and the market in-country is quite saturated (e.g. through DFAT TA facility and ABD).
Take advantage of opportunities for Post to optimise its engagement with Samoa on its budget support investments, particularly in relation to the Joint Policy Action Matrix (JPAM).	Agree. Post will take a more strategic approach to engagement on the Joint Policy Action Matrix, noting the impact and high value of this investment.
Document and draw together past and planned NZ Inc security-related agency engagement with Samoa counterparts as part of long-term agency and sector planning for institutional strengthening and capacity building to inform the Samoa Country Plan.	Agree. Lessons jointly learned during CHOGM support have contributed to the design and implementation of new inter-agency activities in Samoa such as the recent Police and Customs agreements.
Capture and codify the lessons learned from CHOGM support to develop and document a model for mobilising NZ Inc capabilities to meet event-specific and programmatic counterpart agency needs.	Partially agree. Lessons learned from CHOGM have been captured. Where possible, MFAT will utilise and share lessons learned from CHOGM with NZ Inc. agencies during similar events.