

Summary Note

Donor Roundtable Meeting

Date: 28 July 2021

Governance for Resilient Development
in the Pacific (Gov4RES) Project



Attendees

Donors	Melissa Tipping (DFAT) Natasha Verma (DFAT)	Hyejin (KOICA) Yonjae Choi (KOICA)	Sarah Maccana (MFAT)
UNDP	Levan Bouadze Nicola Glendining Aminisitai Delai Moortaza Jiwajji Karalini Savu Linda Kelly	Lisa Buggy Summer Lee Lynelle Popot Sivendra Michael Elimi Tawake Aaron Buckle	Zainab Kakal Asif Shah Luis Gamarra Asad Maken Radhika Lal

Action Points

1. Finalisation of annual report – written and verbal feedbacks are welcomed from donors over the next two days, which will inform then necessary changes required within the report.
2. A report of this meeting will be prepared. This would reflect some of the questions and project's responses, which would be also useful for updating the annual report.
3. By the end of August – launching of the small grants on the 28 Aug
4. Regional Board meeting – 26 August.

Key Discussion Points

UNDP Resident Rep, Mr. Levan Bouadze opened the meeting by thanking donors for their time and their continuous support and understanding towards the project. He also acknowledged:

- i. The organization has been adopting new approaches to achieve deliver in response to the COVID pandemic. The organization is concerned and conscious of the logistical challenge faced by few of our projects, especially the ones that programming activities in countries outside, Fiji.
- ii. Gov4Res has been one of those projects that is faced with these challenges. However, they have progressed well on many fronts, particularly engagement with project countries.

Gov4Res Deputy Project Manager, Ms. Nicola presented on the results over the last reporting period. Key discussion points included:

- i. Creation of opportunities to accelerate delivery of project activities over the last year. There are several ways the project has done this.
 - a. Establishing partnerships – adjusting the way we work
 - The project is supported through a global team (in-country positions and specialist based internationally). Team members support with the design of in-country interventions.
 - Regional partners – CLFG, who have strong networks across the region for instance with the care about sub national government function, where we haven't had existing networks and they do.
 - PIANGO – a network of umbrella NGO organizations that can support with the provision of technical expertise under outcome 1.2 and 2.2.

- Memorandum of Understanding with government partners, particularly central finance ministries. There are currently three MoU, and another three in pipeline.
- b. In terms of laying foundations, project has undertaken a comprehensive climate change and public financial diagnostic assessment (i.e., CCBII), which provides a useful platform for informing programming entry points.
 - c. Project uses both top-down and bottom-up approaches to support outcome delivery. For instance, project started to coalesce around Ministries of Finance for the national-level or sub-national level interventions (Outcome 1) and works closely with local government and NGO for the community-level interventions (Outcome 2).
 - i. Top-down project results included:
 - Tonga's Ministry of Finance establishing the Resilient Development and Finance Division (RDFD)
 - Tonga's Prime Minister's Office formalizing risk screening process for their Project Proposal Appraisal (PPA), which is for all projects over a certain amount. PPA process has been applied for their national infrastructure investment program in the next cycle.
 - Parliamentary or legislative assembly requesting budget briefings on sustainable development (SDGs)
 - ii. Bottom-up results include:
 - Risk informing community development projects. The project has been working closely with Fiji's Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development (MRMDDM) with the development of the new resilient Sustainable Development Plan (SDP) and staffing of positions to support data and knowledge management functions that provide evidence base for risk informing. The project and its efforts in risk informing community development projects was acknowledged by the assistant minister the Parliament in response to a budget question on 27 July.
 - b. Regional Space – there are opportunity to take scale learnings from Outcome 1 and 2 across the region, and with PIFS. The project has been working through a technical working group on climate finance and public financial management on a piece of research to look at climate finance effectiveness. The research identified that risk informed development can contribute quite substantively, enhancing the effectiveness of climate finance through strengthening PFM.
 - In a recent engagement, Fiji's Ministry of Economy that RID can provide access by enhancing the quality of project proposals. They also reiterated how the climate finance world has a lot of political capital now, which we didn't previously have.
 - Technical working Group on PFM was endorsed by Ministers at FEMM. This legitimizes RID as an ideology within the regional space. PIFS is planning to set up a unit, which will allow the project to work more substantially with PIFs into the future.
 - Established partnership with UK FCDO (Chair of COP26), thus presenting a global diffusion opportunity for the RID work that has been undertaken in the Pacific.
- ii. Output Area Results – overall results have been delayed to some extent, but achievements have been noted in some output areas.
 - a. Output 1.1 – working with Ministries of Finance towards establishing Climate Budget Tagging systems by developing climate change typologies, adjustment to appraisal criteria and project proposal applications.
 - b. Output 1.2 – partnerships with CLGF, PIANGO and UNCDF. Project has established a small grants initiative for seven countries. Additionally, national and subnational initiatives supporting community development projects.
 - c. Output 1.3 – partnerships with Geoscience Australia, and still negotiating with UN Women. Engagement with Women's machineries to ensure that gender and social inclusion is embedded into community development planning. Under this output, the project also supports GIS functions to produce risk maps for projects.

- d. Output 2 – progress delayed as reflected in annual report. Project had supported Tonga Parliamentary Budget Office with the development of budget briefing, which was presented to both Parliament and CSO.
- e. Peer to peer learning – the intention is to create wider country network and more substantively inform the regional space.

Feedback and Questions on Results

DFAT

Annual report was really well written. There was also reasonably clear-eyed assessment of progress against both outputs and at the country level, which was helpful to identify challenges. Such reporting is welcomed and useful to understand areas of challenge and way forward.

- 1.) For Outcome 2 and 3 – these are both new areas in the design and we note that it would require close monitoring and evaluation. There is a level of necessary ambiguity there and DFAT is interested to know how Gov4Res is tracking progress of regional agents in that area more broadly.
 - a. Acknowledged that partnerships with PIFS have been very fruitful; however, interested to learn how the project is maintaining an eye on other CROP agencies and how they are picking up the RID agenda
- 2.) Considering that incorporation into legislative processes needs to be demand driven, and an external audit requires a mature analysis. DFAT is wondering whether expectations of progress against these areas should be reviewed.

KOICA

- 1.) Monitoring seems to be a challenge due to delayed progress, which KOICA hopes will be picked-up in the next reporting period.
- 2.) Deadline of the project – the proposed extension till December 2025 requires endorsement from all other donor partners because KOICA's current funding commitment to the project is only till 2024.
- 3.) Baselines – KOICA recognizes that Gov4Res has conducted some deep analysis using CCBII and the thorough results were appreciated. However, clarity is needed on why output level baselines remain zero (unchanged) for all outputs. KOICA had requested for baseline study results, at the beginning of this year, and if any updates to the output baseline figures, how the team came up with the existing baselines and what evidence support these numbers? Are there any criteria determining zeros as a starting point?
- 4.) Mismatched targets – the targets on the indicator table in the prodoc and the workplan are inconsistent. Need clarity on whether targets have been updated?
- 5.) Target numbers on Prodoc– did Gov4Res take into account the different phases of project when allocating the targets for each indicator. KOICA is wondering whether project phases were considered when developing target and perhaps could explain the design process?

MFAT

- 1.) For MFAT, climate change remains a great threat in the Pacific and so the program remains relevant in the context, despite the significant COVID distractions that the region has experienced and continues to experience.
- 2.) From MFAT's perspective, the report is consistent with the other work in our portfolio that seeks to target behavior and systems change. And we're seeing across the board that those programs where work relies on establishing new rules, new partnerships, and new relationships as experienced delays.
- 3.) MFAT acknowledges the work of the Gov4Res project, their partnerships with governments across the Pacific to maintain momentum. It is stunning to see the work in Fiji and Tonga around systems change. MFAT also wishes to acknowledge the alignment of Gov4Res project's approach to lead change from within with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs approach. The Honorable Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Nanaia Mahuta, has made a significant commitment towards partner-led development and acknowledging New Zealand's

relationships with specific countries. MFAT acknowledges that working through relationships and entry points is important.

- 4.) MFAT looks forward to the board meeting, where they can hear from country partners and the context-based reflections around progress that's been shared through this report. To add, the country profiles and the assessments conducted through the CCBII reflected in the annex has been a helpful offering that can be shared to their posts in the Pacific, and MFAT is interested to know whether other donors are interested to join a learning conversation, perhaps specific informal briefings about some of the analysis that's included in those country profiles.

SIDA

- 1.) Knowledge exchange – Gov4Res continues to build on the experience and the lessons learned from Asia project and vice-versa. Examples include (i) work with MRMDDM on widening the risk resilience tools to inform development priorities, which is similarly piloted in Indonesia. UNDP Bangkok Office is putting together a disaster and climate change report focused on sub-national government initiatives, which would also touch on the impacts to service delivery. (ii) Climate Budget Tagging, which has been also done in Asia region – Bangladesh, Pakistan and Indonesia, which is currently being done for Fiji and Tonga.

Responses

- 1.) Project Extension – there was an agreement to extend by development partners considering the impact of COVID-19. UNDP understands that the commitments of the development partners might have funding for different timeframe. This may be an issue for some donors, as well as the different reporting timelines. However, hopefully these can be resolved based on the decisions made at the previous board meeting.
- 2.) Outcome 3 Monitoring – considering the regional geo-politics, the monitoring relies largely on the political economic analysis. The project constantly looks for the right kind of entry points to embed all the learnings of what risk informed development means in the regional space. The M and E system currently tracks how well we have been doing that. For instance, how many times, regional agencies are applying the concepts of risk informed development.
 - a. The climate finance space was a unique entry point for the project and links to RID agenda were made through research. But the partnership goes beyond PIFS that is a partner for the working group, which includes other CROP agencies and PFM organisations that are active in the region. The project hopes to achieve more regional outcomes through such partnerships.
- 3.) Outcome 2 – has always been an ambitious space. The project has been modest in its targets in the coming year, but is committed to keeping it in architecture, in terms of design. And the project will be piggy backing off existing governance projects by UNDP. The project will be working closely with the governance team to work with public accounts committees, parliamentarians, and CSO engagements because they have established relationships.
- 4.) Zero Baseline – the baseline figures of zero that we put into the KOICA log frame intended to represent a process baseline. It's not a project baseline which we have established through political economy analysis or through the CCBII, which is more complex and quite hard to put as a quantitative baseline. Rather, this is indicating a zero in terms of the number of activities undertaken. Therefore, from a process perspective, we have got zero at the start because we had not undertaken any activities and then the targets indicator changing to reflect on the expected changes against that. We put a small footnote into the report to outline this. We can perhaps have a specific conversation about this if useful.
 - a. The essence here is that it's, it's because this is a system change and the governance project, the baselines for countries are much more qualitative and quantitative. Therefore, what we had done to fit into the log-frame, we had put in process baselines, which is intended to increase from zero.
- 5.) Target development – certainly scaled over-time. In some cases, it is linked to the expenditure patterns, while in some cases across the outputs of the project. The targets are intended to be spaced sequentially, sometimes peeking in the middle, and sometimes speaking towards the end. And hopefully we represent that adequately.

Agenda Item 2 – Annual Work Plan

- 1.) Details of the workplan in the Annual Report and Annex 3.
- 2.) Changes in implementation strategy - the underlying project logic and design holds in spite of the current situation. However, the project has adjusted its implementation strategy. There are three corner stones of the implementation strategy. This include:
 - a. Power of demonstration - initiating change within a government system is supported through a proof of concept, which demonstrates what change looks like, and what are the benefits of these changes.
 - i. The project will focus on community resilience projects to effect change throughout the process. Three modalities of reaching communities that the project is currently working with. These include:
 1. National Initiatives – working with national ministries in Solomons and Kiribati. For instance, in Kiribati, the project has established a prodoc with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy to support their Water Management projects.
 2. Subnational Initiatives – working with Fiji’s MRMDDM and Solomon Islands MPGIS with most of them currently in the implementation phase.
 3. NGO initiatives – working with CLGF and PIANGO to develop a small grants mechanism for around 70 projects across seven countries. This initiative will bring together local NGOs as well as our local government partners in country, which aligns to the project’s theory of change in that all community priorities of projects that will be aligned to local government priorities. The monitoring of the projects will be done through the in-country focal points.
 4. Some of the national and sub-national initiatives are top-up modalities, whereby the project complements government budget to implement risk measures.
 - ii. Community Resilience Dashboard – a total of 120 projects across seven countries expected to benefit around 17,000 people. The total investment of all projects is about USD 3.12 million, while the total cost of risk-informing about USD 500,000. In some cases, government co-financing, which would follow the top-up modality.
 - b. Pivoting change with government partners – working closely with ministries of finance, as well as local governments and different sectors.
 - c. Capitalizing on the regional space - There is a very strong political economy in the region for climate finance or financing for resilience. The concept of RID across the region has always been seen as a niche or emerging area with only a few countries supporting it. The project has finally found an entry point at the regional level where the concept of RID is firmly linked to enhancing the effectiveness of climate finance and financing resilience. Project envisages to lead research through FEMM working group around enhancing access and effectiveness of climate finance. This already contributes to the work done under Outcome 1 and 2, and also gives a diffusion point for the in-country work.

Questions

DFAT

- 1.) What the range of timeframe is for these 120 projects? Are they all within this financial year or will some spillover into the coming years?
- 2.) Can you possibly please explain what was covered by the top up funding in that last project?
- 3.) Was the top up funding always envisaged in the design? And what is the likely split between CSO and national ministries/sub-national govt?
- 4.) Are there major changes to split between outputs (eg US\$5m to Outcome 3)?

5.) Do you think there any major risks to expending our allocation by our end date?

KOICA

1.) Marshall Islands are receiving far less attention compared to other countries. They seem to be excluded from the country snapshot(annex), CCBII analysis results, and also very marginalized in the work plan 2021_2022. Can you please provide some explanations on this?

Responses

1.) Timeframes – small grants is expected to spill over two reporting periods (2021/2022 and 2022/2023) while the sub-national initiatives in Fiji were expected to be completed within the last reporting period but due to COVID-19, implementation has been delayed. For national initiatives, still in conceptualization phase and awaiting cabinet approval, thus it may spill over to 2022/2023.

a. Small Grants to be launched by next month. Project steering committee expected to meet on 12th of August. Sequence of implementation dates in table below:

Schedule for Small Grants	Timelines
Steering committee meeting	12-Aug-21
Launch and call open	20-Aug-21
Online information session	27-Aug-21
Deadline for applications	16-Sep-21
Shortlisted applicants invited	23 Sep - 6 Oct 21
Full proposals due for GSC review	18-Oct-21
Grant Awards	25-Oct-21
Onboarding meetings	01-Nov-21
Implementation begins	08-Nov-21

2.) Monitoring - we also have to gauge our capacity as a team has to monitor all these projects. The project will be appointing in-country focal points to support, as well as the Gov4Res team in Suva

3.) Top-up Modality -we have different modalities that are that are beginning to emerge in different engagements that we have with our government partners. In Fiji, top-up ranges from around 10 to 17 percent. Currently, Fiji is the only country with the government co-financing and the project is encouraging the same arrangements with partners in Solomon Islands.

a. In terms of financing mechanisms – doing it outside the UNDP system is quite a cumbersome process. However, we are working with partners to use government procurement systems, which requires HACT assessments are being undertaken to transfer cash and monitor the project implementation at various phases.

4.) Status of community projects – the dashboard shows all the segments of the project lifecycle, which allows the project to track progress as it goes from one phase to another.

Agenda Item 3 - Project Management

- 1.) Expenditure against budget – considering the proposed changes and adjustments to the implementation strategy, the project can accelerate program activity expenditure and ultimately progress to meet the budget envelope and cover the surplus from the previous reporting period. Detailed conversations have taken place with donor partners in terms of underspend and project appreciates the openness and flexibility shown towards extension of project contract.
- 2.) Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning – change and reform projects are difficult to monitor and track progress because a lot of the changes are qualitative (e.g., behavior change or institutional reform). Therefore, the project measures progress at three levels. First, against outcome target indicators, second, against output indicators, and lastly against activities indicators. These are described in detail within Annex xx of the report. The project used a traffic light approach to indicate progress in the annual report.
- 3.) Communications - the core of the projects comm's strategy seeks to amplifying partner voices. This speaks to objective 1 and 2 around motivating country partners and regional diffusion, which the project has done well. However, the project recognizes the need for greater visibility for donors and for UNDP. The project proposes to get more visibility at output and activity level as demonstrated in the annual report (25 tweets and 22 Facebook posts reaching 22,000 people). The project has identified that activities are publicity opportunities. For instance, peer to peer exchange, appointment of a new post in government, coaching session with government partners, which opportunities for social media or press releases. The project has set up a Trello board that provides live feed. This could be a potential source of future communications opportunities for donors and other partners to utilize. The project is also looking to recruit a communication for development senior specialist to support these efforts.
 - a. The project has started having conversations with donors around enhancing visibility of branding in the coming years. However, team still needs to know clearly what content is required, is it draft press releases, links to social media post, and also what channels are preferred and the comms focal points to speak too.

Questions

- 1.) MFAT – The Gov4Res approach in terms of taking both bottom-up and top-down entry points according to the country context is really sensible and is also helpful in the context of other work MFAT does. For example, MFAT supports work around hazard risk analysis and spatial mapping through research institutes. MFAT is happy to have a detailed conversation about the countries they are currently supporting with hazard risk analysis to identify potential synergies.
- 2.) In terms of community development grants scheme - realizes the triple dividend in terms of impact for communities, relationships between sub national government, between NGOs and communities. Trialing and piloting these approaches are also importantly because it contributes to this conversation in terms of communications, providing good visibility. In addition, MFAT really supports the idea of co-financing, and the relationships that come out of that learning.
- 3.) MFAT is committed on a principal's level to enjoy communications and timely communications. So, look forward to working with other donors and yourselves on how we make that happen.
 - a. UNDP response – It was the previous meetings that we would put the logos of all donors on every single press release or social media post going out because we want to any sort of complications about who's funding more of what and so on.
- 4.) KOICA - regarding daily communication, KOICA is happy to endorse the current arrangements. Currently KOICA only uses facebook page for social media, and there is no need to receive heads up for every single post. It helps to receive content prepared by the team for KOICA to repost.

- 5.) For major event, like the launch of the small grant scheme, KOICA is very much interested in making it more public and increase visibility of the project and these initiatives. Happy to contribute to the joint press release, so that we can also send to our Korean team members.
- 6.) Considering the current pandemic situation, we understand that activities may take time to be implemented, so there may be some issue on budget expenditure. Perhaps if you might have a second thought on changes of activities, KOICA supports the decision to increase funding for small grant activities. This can be discussed in more detail if needed.
- 7.) DFAT – Gov4Res has been responsive on comms and DFAT is happy with the way it is moving on with communications.
- 8.) Design budget - wondering if there have been substantial changes to line items. DFAT needs to know if there were any updates to the design budget because I think it's probably it is needed with the current pandemic. For instance, what is the split for Outcome 3, is it still USD 5 million, and if that is what the project is still committed to. DFAT wants to see a little more detail on the budget linked to the implementation plan to get a deeper understanding of where the relative focus lies (NGO vs subnational vs national).
- 9.) Outcome 3 – the project indicated that it does still have a large budget allocated. A more detailed plan required for two reasons. First, it is a large amount of money and would take time to program. Second, the project is starting to engage with forum that goes beyond just technical such as PIFS technical working group that reports up to the ministers and leaders. DFAT would like to predict to some degree and be able to dip in and out as necessary. That's just not simply in a technical forum so DFAT wanted to flag that that's an area that we would like to have a little bit more. I think detail around to understand what's coming up and how that will play out.

Conclusion

- 1.) UNDP thanked donor partners for their useful feedback and comments. Also thanked the donors for their commitment towards a project like Gov4Res that is principled to bring changes.
- 2.) Acknowledged that the changed implementation strategy will support in the delivery and achievement of tangible results, not only in terms of overall outcomes and impact but also in terms of resources utilized to deliver results.
- 3.) Acknowledged the importance of open communication and increased visibility.