

Final Evaluation

Provincial Government Strengthening Programme

Solomon Islands

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Acronyms

CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
IPSAS	International Public Service Accounting Standards
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDPAC	Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination
MIS	Management Information System
MPGIS	Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening
MPS	Ministry of Public Service
OAG	Office of the Auditor General
PCDF	Provincial Capacity Development Fund
PGSP	Provincial Government Strengthening Programme
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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Section 1: Executive Summary

This final evaluation of the Provincial Government Strengthening Programming (PGSP) reviews the first phase of a three-phased programme. The programme has aimed to build the capacity of the nine Provincial Governments in the Solomon Islands to plan, implement and account for development expenditures. This increased capacity was to be used by Provincial Governments to make informed use of a fund provided by the programme, the Provincial Capacity Development Fund (PCDF), in delivering basic services. Provincial Governments were regularly trained and assessed on the management of these funds with the expectation that administrative and accounting skills would progressively improve and would result in increasingly effective use of this development allocation. This regimen aimed to turn Provincial Governments, which previously were under-resourced and had very little administrative capacity, into competent entities capable of planning, implementing and accounting for the delivery of public services province-wide. Improvement in the delivery of basic services was further expected to stimulate local economic activity, increase revenues, contribute to poverty reduction and ultimately contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The original budget was \$US 18.1 million, an amount that included a Solomon Islands Government contribution of \$US 3.5 million. The Government of the Solomon Islands subsequently increased its financial commitment from \$US 3.5 million to \$US 13.7 million bringing the total funds available for the first phase to \$US 28.3 million. This first phase commenced in 2008 and was to conclude in 2012. The completion date was extended and PGSP Phase I concluded in March 2014. A second phase commenced in October 2014.

This evaluation is guided by the application of four evaluation criteria to the programme assessment: (i) relevance and programme design, (ii) efficiency, (iii) effectiveness (including programme impact), and (iv) sustainability. The section on effectiveness has, itself, been divided into four separate sections in order to account separately for four distinct programme components: (i) responsibilities of Provincial Governments clarified and expanded; (ii) resources of Provincial Governments commensurate to responsibilities; (iii) capacity of Provincial Government actors developed; and (iv) an effective monitoring and evaluation system in place.

The objective of the evaluation has been to provide an independent perspective on the extent to which the Provincial Government Strengthening Programme has achieved anticipated results and to suggest what has made this possible. Where anticipated results have not been achieved, reasons are likewise to be suggested. The Terms of Reference have stipulated the importance of identifying lessons learned from the “challenges faced and weaknesses from the implementation of the project’s activities and the outcomes achieved that will be useful for future phases of the programme.”¹ The fact that a second phase has already begun increases the importance, in this evaluation, of articulating how

¹ UNDP, *Terms of Reference: Final Project Evaluation Consultant*, Provincial Government Strengthening Programme, Honiara: UNDP 2014, p. 1

the achievements and shortcomings of the first phase can inform the second, that is, what problems have been observed in the first and what might be potential solutions for the second. In each of the sections, the evaluation therefore explicitly focuses on lessons learned/problems observed followed by recommendations/potential solutions.

OVERVIEW

For the Solomon Islands Government, strengthening Provincial Governments is a necessity. The geography of the Solomon Islands and its largely rural population make Provincial Governments essential actors in development planning, and they can only fulfill this role if they have the skills, resources and the commitment to manage development funds in a disciplined fashion. Using national ministries to transfer resources and plan for development has not worked well. Providing resources directly to community groups has had short-term impacts within chosen communities, but this approach does not build governing capacities necessary for longer-term and province-wide impact. Reinforcing PG capacity to manage resources and deliver services must figure in any sustainable development strategy.

Making Provincial Governments capable of reliably delivering basic services is as challenging as it is essential. PGSP Phase I has achieved results in each of the provinces. But the results are not uniform and in some provinces the results of the programme are modest. This evaluation reports where the programme has had successes and where not. It reviews the benefits that accrue to high performing provinces and the difficulties faced by the low performing provinces and why they persist.

There is a tendency, to which some national and international observers are prone, to judge the programme negatively based on the results in provinces that have not performed well. This evaluation takes a different, more positive view for two reasons. First, the programme has had unqualified success in three and perhaps four provinces. In these locales, planning procedures are followed, administrators know well what they have to do, they keep auditable records on the funds they use and they spend the funds in ways that are making a difference. The approach can work. Secondly, even where there has been little progress in responsible planning and adhering to standards of accountability, or where the funds have not been used effectively, the programme has exposed the impediments and pointed to measures that might improve the likelihood of reforming provincial governance.

The most important impediment inheres in Provincial Government structure. There are three Provincial Government actors: (i) provincial administrators and their staff, (ii) local representatives of national ministries (education, health, agriculture, infrastructure etc.), and (iii) the elected politicians, members of the Provincial Assembly. The provincial administrators and their staff are expected to assume responsibility for implementing programme objectives and in fact most are willing and able. Often, however, the elected politicians and the national ministries have their own interests; they do not fully support the administrators' commitments to plan development initiatives in an equitable and informed manner. This is particularly characteristic of low-performing provinces. The

administrators have been given the responsibility under the programme for planning and implementing development initiatives reliably, but the reality is that in many provinces the administrators lack the authority to fulfill this responsibility.

The structure of Provincial Governments places administrators everywhere at a disadvantage. Where provinces plan and manage development initiatives reliably, one finds an atmosphere of good will and collaboration between the administrators and the politicians. But this is not everywhere the case and particularly not in the provinces where PGSP has been the least successful. In these cases, the administrators find themselves operating on a political playing field that is not level. When core administrators attempt to operate according to accepted procedures or when they insist on adhering to accountability standards, politicians may ask for their removal and almost without exception, their request is granted. Provincial Secretaries know if they do not cater to elected members of Provincial Assemblies they will pay the consequences. Administrators who are vulnerable in this way will think twice before standing in the way of the special political interests; and representatives of national ministries know that any direct support to development programmes supported and approved by local administrators risks being captured by these special interests. They prefer to keep their distance, manage their own budgets and implement their own programmes separately.

Provincial administrators who are expected to implement the principles and practices of PGSP lack the protection and authority to do so. MPGIS, PGSP's home ministry, might have taken a stronger stand against the frequent turnover of core administrators, especially Provincial Secretaries, or might have urged the central government to take a stronger stand against the liberties politicians take with public resources both at the national and provincial levels. National ministries might have been more strongly urged to support the development planning efforts of provincial administrators both technically and financially. But PGSP has been slow to confront these politically sensitive matters. MPGIS needs now to take a stronger initiative, with the support of the central government, to buttress the authority of provincial administrators. It may be difficult but the central government has a considerable stake in implementing the reforms introduced by the programme and the benefits are likely to be considerable.

FINDINGS

The report is divided into ten sections. Except for the first two— Introduction and Relevance – each of the other eight sections is divided into three sub-sections: (i) key issues, (ii) lessons learned/problems observed, and (iii) recommendations/potential solutions. The first, key issues, briefly reviews programme activities, accomplishments and shortcomings relevant to the evaluation criterion in question. The second identifies problems observed in the programme's efforts to satisfy this criterion. The third offers recommendations which, in the judgment of the evaluator, may provide potential solutions to the problems observed.

The principal findings of this report are arranged below by section beginning with Section IV, Efficiency. A brief summary for each section is given followed by recommendations/potential solutions.

SECTION IV: EFFICIENCY

Some provinces have far more difficulty meeting standards of efficiency and accountability than others. This considerable variation has often been taken as a liability; that the poor showing of some provinces in the management of funds and the efficient delivery of services is evidence that PGSP has not everywhere done its job. It is just as reasonable, however, to regard this variation as an asset. The success of a few is evidence that change is possible and those Provincial Governments which have performed, can and should be used as resources for advising and motivating those whose performance needs strengthening.

1. Partner the best-performing and the worst-performing provinces in a working, learning alliance. It is advisable to find ways for those provinces that have performed well to partner with those who have not. This would not be difficult to arrange. A small group of administrators and politicians from Choiseul could work with an equivalent group from Malaita to develop ways of achieving a more accountable and efficient administration. The same could be done between Western province on the one hand and Guadalcanal on the other.

SECTION V: RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS CLARIFIED

The absence of a collaborative working relationship among the three groups of Provincial Government political actors has, in many cases, made it near impossible for most of the provincial governments to manage their resources and deliver public services effectively. If these structural difficulties are resolved – and they can be – this will yield considerable benefit; it will advance representative government and contribute to on-going political stability.

PGSP has made only a modest effort to address the roots of provincial government dysfunction. It has not clearly addressed the tension between administrators and politicians or the lack of collaboration between administrators and line ministries. Where PGSP has not performed well, the failure of these three groups of government actors to work together must assume an important share of responsibility.

Resolving the tensions and enhancing collaboration is possible. It is important for there to be a formal agreement on where the remit of elected politicians ends and where that of the core administrators begins. The powers of elected politicians, for example, must not extend to the administration of development financing. Nor should elected politicians have the prerogative of recommending on a whim the dismissal of core administrators. These understandings may require the amendment of national legislation and this may take some time but when this is done and when the core administrators are able to proceed confidently with fulfilling their mandate of administering government

development funds without interference, PGSP and more generally Provincial Government functioning will have made a significant step in a positive direction.

2. Amend the Provincial Government Act. The Solomon Islands Government has budgeted for a task force to undertake a revision of the Provincial Government Act of 1997. This Act does little to shield administrators from political interference which can diminish their performance as development planners and implementers. While a future version of this Act may not succeed in resolving existing tensions, at the very least, attention to the Act would demonstrate that the central government is serious about doing something to improve matters at the provincial level.

3. Upgrade terms of employment for Provincial Secretaries. A higher calibre individual serving at the posts of Provincial Secretary and other core administrative staff would enhance the respectability of their leadership, increase collaboration among the present fissiparous government entities in Provincial Governments and add greatly to the functioning of the programme. The Permanent Secretary of MPGIS has appealed to the Cabinet to approve an increase in grade for the Provincial Secretary. It is a significant step. The increase has been approved in principle. In practice however, presumably because of the extra funding this requires, the cabinet has refused to give its approval for all provinces and instead prefers to try it in one or two provinces only. The Permanent Secretary has rightly suggested this makes very little sense; either one does it or not. But the hesitancy among decision-makers does not bode well for a positive decision. This is unfortunate since improving the terms of employment, especially for Provincial Secretaries, would release them from some of the pressure they are under.

4. Engage citizen support. One might have expected that the projects realized under PCDF would have increased provincial government legitimacy and trust in the eyes of the citizens. This is true to some extent but not enough. Many of the citizens are yet to change the negative image that they hold about provincial administrators. Signboards advertise projects as coming from one donor or another and not an accomplishment of the Provincial Government. A greater effort needs to be made with advocacy and communication to attribute the PCDF projects to Provincial Government administrators.

5. Revise Constituency Development Fund Act. There is nothing new in suggesting a review of the Constituency Development Fund Act. At present the Act allows politicians to have unfettered discretion over the use of their funds. It is widely understood that this has spoiled electoral politics in the Solomon Islands. At a minimum, it has negatively affected Provincial Government functioning since the provincial electorate have come to expect the same generous contributions from their political representatives as they do from national political representatives; provincial politicians do what they can to access PCDF resources for this purpose. The Ministry of Provincial Government needs to make a strong representation to the National Assembly on the urgent need to revise this Act.

6. Reduce turnover of Provincial Government administration staff. The Ministry of Public Service (MPS) and the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening (MPGIS) both have a role in managing human resources for the Provincial

Government administrative staff. They must both realize that the present degree of turnover is untenable if Provincial Government reforms are to succeed. The Permanent Secretaries of the two ministries need to agree on a common strategy that meets the interests of both and at the same time ensures a continuity of tenure for core administrative staff posted to the provinces.

SECTION VI: ADEQUACY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF FUNDING

Adequate funding was made available from UNDP, UNCDF, the European Union, RAMSI/Australian Aid and the Solomon Islands Government to enable Provincial Governments to meet the growing demands expected of Provincial Government administrators as they assume greater responsibility for delivering public services. Phase I began with modest contributions from international donors and from the Solomon Islands Government. Following the second year, the Solomon Islands Government increased its commitments significantly and indications are this will continue. PGSP is to be applauded for the level of financial support it has obtained, an indication of government ownership and support for the programme.

PGSP I has devoted considerable attention to the performance of provinces on accountability matters while according less attention to understanding and improving the development effectiveness of the projects it funds with PCDF resources. As a result, PGSP is not well informed on problems faced in project implementation and on some of the constraints which keep projects from doing better than they could. There continues to be political interference in spite of clear evidence that projects proposed in this way are not well planned and are vulnerable to mismanagement. It is interesting to note that those provinces with the best track record in financial accountability also prefer social sector projects while those with a poor record of financial accountability prefer infrastructure and productive sector projects; it may be advisable for the programme to prefer, in PGSP II, social sector projects in provinces that continue to perform poorly in meeting accountability standards.

A continuing concern has been the lack of collaboration by national ministries with provincial administrators in providing planning and financial support. This needs to change. Greater collaboration by national ministries would contribute greatly to a coherent planning process.

Collaboration does not occur at present because national line ministries understandably fear their resources will be squandered. There is an opportunity, however, for national ministries to play a uniquely positive role in assisting provincial administration to resist pressures from special interests. By joining forces with provincial planners, development planning at the provincial level will have a greater chance of ensuring development efforts are coherent, well planned, well informed and are able to resist the negative impact of special interests, political and otherwise.

7. Accord equal attention to accountability and development results. More information is needed on the development outcomes and constraints of projects implemented with PCDF resources. PGSP II presently relies on a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit which

does very little and the little it does is not helpful. PGSP II should invest in a viable monitoring and evaluation unit.

8. Prefer social sector projects. Social sector projects appear to have a better track record of implementation and have more development impact than infrastructure and productive sector projects. Provinces that decide to place greater emphasis on social sector support are likely to diminish the interference of Provincial Assembly Members who tend to prefer the productive and infrastructure sectors and, at the same time, build a stronger base of popular support and trust in provincial governments.

9. Lobby for technical and financial collaboration by national ministries at the provincial level. National line ministries, especially those in the social sector, are strongly encouraged to increase their collaboration with provincial administrators in jointly planning and budgeting for development investments. Collaboration does not occur at present and perhaps for the reason that planners at the national level, like those at the provincial level, fear resources will be squandered by political interference. There is an opportunity, however, for national ministries to play a uniquely positive role in strengthening Provincial Governments.

SECTION VII: CAPACITY OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ACTORS DEVELOPED

The reliance on assessment schemes to measure, incentivize and build Provincial Government capacity to manage development funding has worked for the most part. This is what drives the programme. As one might expect, the results of these annual assessments have not always been positive. Scoring on the Performance Measures has taken a drop for all Provincial Governments in the last year of the programme, and stakeholders understandably want to know what to make of this.

It is tempting to interpret this as a sign of the programme's failure to adequately improve Provincial Government management and accounting skills. This may be partially true but it is equally true that this is also a sign of the successful functioning of the mechanism for exposing and punishing such practices. By all appearances this mechanism functions well: it identifies incoherent or biased planning and undisciplined implementation. It has done it well enough and with enough support to justify reducing the grants some provinces receive for development investments while flatly disqualifying others. Some of the donors along with other commentators have expressed doubt about the success of PGSP when there is such patent evidence of poor management in a few provinces. The fact is however that no one would have ever known about these instances of mismanagement, or indeed what is happening with capacity building were it not for the programme's own assessment mechanisms nor would the non-performing provinces ever have been punished as has been the case, one of them for the third time and another for the second. The success in building capacity is not only in the capacity itself, it is in the measurement of capacity that serves as an incentive for adherence to accepted practices.

10. Customize training programmes to meet provincial needs. General training programmes should be used only for first-time Provincial Secretaries or Deputies and Treasurers. For the most part, training programmes should now be customized taking the

past performance of specific Provincial Governments into consideration to focus on filling some obvious gaps.

11. Review Performance Measure assessment teams. The performance of assessment teams needs to be reviewed. The assessments they undertake are useful only to the extent that they are used to improve the performance of Provincial Government financial staff in meeting a set of increasingly rigorous standards. They should be an integral part of this improvement process. They must also recognize that they need to exemplify the values of meticulousness in their own work in order to encourage it in their clients.

12. Discontinue Minimum Conditions. Minimum Conditions proved a strong incentive initially for Provincial Governments to adhere to a set of basic standards. When the conditions and their application were made more stringent, larger numbers of provinces failed and some have failed in a number of successive years. Disqualifications from accessing development allocations have shamed administrators and politicians, as they should, but they have also punished citizens who do not benefit from the allocation and this is not so justifiable. By all appearances, the disqualifications have done little to motivate the disqualified administrators and politicians in Provincial Governments to improve their performance. It has been suggested, and rightly so, that the Minimum Conditions are perhaps too blunt an instrument which are not succeeding in getting the non-performing Provincial Governments to mend their ways. They should be discontinued. Incentives are still needed and will continue to be needed, but the Performance Measures should be amended to incorporate critical features of the Minimum Conditions and the Performance Measures should continue to be used to reward or punish performing and non-performing Provincial Governments, only not by depriving them entirely of development funding.

SECTION VIII: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

PGSP has kept meticulous account of how the Provincial Governments have responded to their efforts to increase capacity in management and accounting. It has not, however, done the same for the Provincial Government efforts to deliver public services, the ultimate outcomes of the programme.

13. Establish a functioning monitoring and evaluation cell. The programme is without dedicated monitoring and evaluation personnel. Programme officers in MPGIS have intended to engage competent researchers with an agreed-upon approach to collecting information on the projects the programme has financed. At present, MPGIS has engaged only one person, and this person lacks the requisite knowledge or experience. If PGSP and MPGIS are to have any understanding of programme outcomes, experienced monitoring and evaluation researchers need to be in the field.

SECTION IX: CROSS CUTTING ISSUE - GENDER

Attention to gender sensitive programming has increased modestly over time. PGSP staff are eager to do whatever they can to urge their primary clients, Provincial Governments, to do more for women in their development planning. There are constraints, however.

Projects funded under PCDF are limited to small infrastructure, not always compatible with the needs of women. Furthermore, all projects must be approved by Provincial Assemblies where the elected politicians are not always inclined to support gender sensitive projects.

14. *Alter programme procedures to encourage support services for women.* The emphasis on infrastructure on the one hand and the requisite approval of provincial politicians on the other, makes it difficult for even the most well-disposed gender advocate to support more projects to benefit women. Changes should be made to programme procedures to encourage Provincial Governments to focus less on infrastructure and more on facilities or initiatives that are likely to address the particular needs of women. And measures should be taken to achieve a better balance of power between Provincial Assembly members and provincial administrators so that development planners have as much say in planning for services – ones that assist women, for example - as politicians.

SECTION X: SUSTAINABILITY

The good governance practices that PGSP has introduced as part of the programme are on the verge of becoming integral features of standard government practice. Continued funding is needed to complete the job.

15. *Chart the course from project practices to routine government procedures.* When PGSP transitions to a fully nationalized programme, programme structures will need to be merged with existing governing institutions and this will entail changes within the Ministry of Provincial Government Institutional Strengthening and perhaps to the Ministry of Public Services. An operational plan should be prepared to chart the trajectory for fully nationalizing the programme.

16. *Continue international funding.* If the government is prepared to address some of the obstacles to achieving greater PGSP impact, i.e. provide greater protection and tenure for core provincial administrators, revise the Provincial Government Act and urge national ministries to work closely with provincial administrators in planning and financing, then international donors should respond with modest continued support, specifically to fully integrate PGSP practices into routine government procedures.

Section II: Introduction

BACKGROUND

The geography of the Solomon Islands and the preponderance of its population in rural areas (85 per cent) pose a serious challenge for delivering essential services to the majority of the population. Providing education, health, water, energy and other services must necessarily rely on capable sub-national entities; and yet Provincial Governments have been neglected. The result of this neglect has been notoriously low capacity and this low capacity in turn has further justified a reluctance, on the part of the central government, to rely on Provincial Governments for executing programmes and delivering services. The situation has been aptly characterized as follows:

Provincial Governments are currently caught in a vicious circle of low capacity, limited or no mandatory responsibilities and limited or no resources. Central ministries are reluctant to delegate, let alone devolve, responsibilities for service delivery and development management, citing the lack of provincial capacity. And in the absence of delegation of functions, there is little justification for transfers of financial resources or fiscal powers from the centre to the provinces.²

Neglect of Provincial Governments has left the job to the central government and international organizations. The central government is however poorly positioned and easily diverted from tending to provincial needs; in part as a result, a large portion of the population has gone without needed improvements in basic services. The consequences are reflected in the stagnation of Solomon Island development indices over the past decade. Table II.1 shows the trend.

Table II.1: A Selection of Development Indicators for the Solomon Islands

Year	Life expectancy at birth	Mean years of schooling	GNI per capita (2011 PPP)	HDI Value
2005	65.5	4.5	1,621	0.483
2010	67.0	4.5	1,394	0.489
2011	67.3	4.5	1,500	0.494
2012	67.5	4.5	1,376	0.489
2013	67.7	4.5	1,385	0.491

Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report 2014, Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience – Solomon Islands*; http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/SLB.pdf

In 2004, the Solomon Islands Government sought assistance from donor partners for enhancing the capacity of Provincial Governments to assume greater fiscal and

² UNDP/UNCDF/ *Government of the Solomon Islands, National Provincial Government Strengthening Programme (PGSP), Joint Programme Document, 2007*

management responsibilities for service delivery. It was decided, two years later, that four donors (UNDP, UNCDF, RAMSI -Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands - and European Union) would collaborate with the government in a jointly administered programme to strengthen sub-national governing bodies. The resulting Provincial Government Strengthening Programme (PGSP) would differ from programmes that previously relied on funding to central ministries for planning and executing development programmes in remote provinces. It would also differ from an equally common strategy that channelled funds to local wards or community development organizations. PGSP would instead make Provincial Governments the hub of local-level decision-making with the obligation to serve communities and the expectation that they would collaborate closely with central ministries in planning and implementation on a province-wide basis.

The programme proposed to build the capacity of the nine Provincial Governments in the Solomon Islands to plan, prioritize, implement and account for development expenditures. This increased capacity was to be used by Provincial Governments to make informed use of a fund provided by the programme, the Provincial Capacity Development Fund (PCDF), in delivering basic services. Provincial Governments were to be regularly trained and assessed on the management of these funds with the expectation that management and accounting skills would progressively improve and would result in increasingly effective use of the development allocation. This regimen aimed to turn Provincial Governments, which previously were under-resourced and had very little administrative capacity, into competent entities capable of planning, implementing and accounting for the delivery of public services province-wide. Improvement in the delivery of basic services was further expected to stimulate local economic activity, increase revenues, contribute to poverty reduction and ultimately contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The original planners were aware of the complexity of the enterprise and sketched out a fifteen-year programme that would proceed in a succession of three stages, or platforms of five years each, adding up to a fifteen year programme. The first platform was planned for a period of five years to begin in 2008 and was to conclude in 2012. The original cost of the first platform was budgeted at \$US 18.1 million including a Solomon Islands Government contribution of \$US 3.5 million. The Government of the Solomon Islands subsequently increased its financial commitment from \$US 3.5 million to \$US 13.7 million bringing the total funds available to PGSP to \$US 28.3 million. The completion date in 2012 was also extended and PGSP Phase I concluded in March 2014. A second phase commenced in October 2014

OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION

The objective of the evaluation is to provide an independent perspective on the extent to which the Provincial Government Strengthening Programme has achieved anticipated results and to suggest what has made this possible. Where anticipated results have not been achieved it is likewise important to explain the reasons. In all provinces, there is evidence of increased capacity in public expenditure management, there are projects to

show for this and the task of the evaluation is to identify the factors that made this possible. Results are nevertheless far from uniform. Some provinces have performed well in accounting for their development allocations and made good use of them. Others have performed less well and still others have performed poorly. The objective of the evaluation is to detail the achievements that have been made, measure the shortfalls to the extent possible and indicate what factors might be responsible.

The Terms of Reference have stipulated the importance of identifying lessons learned from the “challenges faced and weaknesses from the implementation of the project’s activities and the outcomes achieved that will be useful for future phases of the programme...”³ Since then, a second phase has begun. This increases even further the importance, in this evaluation, of articulating how the achievements and shortcomings of the first phase can inform the second. These are lessons learned. The evaluation therefore explicitly focuses on ‘problems observed’ in each of seven sections and in making recommendations, refers to them as ‘potential solutions.’

METHODOLOGY

An *Inception Report*⁴ was prepared and reviewed by UNDP programme staff prior to the commencement of the evaluation. The *Inception Report* included an evaluation matrix with indicators and suggested sources of information for each of four evaluation criteria: (i) relevance and programme design, (ii) efficiency, (iii) effectiveness (including impact), and (iv) sustainability of the programme.

The treatment of effectiveness has been divided into four separate sections in order to account separately for four different PGSP components: (i) Responsibilities of Provincial Governments clarified and expanded; (ii) Resources of Provincial Governments commensurate to responsibilities; (iii) Capacity of Provincial Government actors developed; and (iv) an effective M&E system for PGSP in place.

The *Inception Report* examined the programme from a Theory of Change perspective in order to have, as a basis for the evaluation, an understanding of the logic of programme impact. Different funds in the Solomon Islands espouse different approaches to developing rural economies each with different logics and the *Inception Report* briefly considered the logic of each in order to clarify the unique characteristics of the PGSP approach to be incorporated into the evaluation design.

The *Inception Report* proposed four activities/approaches to assembling information: (i) a *review of documents* on programme planning, implementation, reporting and assessment along with documents on the recent history of the Solomon Islands and applicable academic studies of decentralization; (ii) *site visits*; (iii) *interviews* with programme staff, representatives of select ministries, relevant international bodies and donors and

³ UNDP Solomon Islands, *Terms of Reference: Final Project Evaluation Consultant – Provincial Government Strengthening Programme*, August 2014, p. 2

⁴ Jim Freedman, *Inception Report for the Final Evaluation: Provincial Government Strengthening Programme*, Honiara: 26 January 2015

provincial government administrators and politicians; and (iv) *a review of numerical data* to the extent that numerical data are available. Each is discussed in turn.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

PGSP staff were unusually diligent documenters, especially on the matter of transferring accounting and management skills to provincial administrators. There are reports on the design and conduct of the two measures used to assess accounting competence, guidelines for implementing the assessment measures and annual reports on the results. The files are voluminous and informative. There were quarterly reports, annual reports, five year programme summaries and a baseline study which, in spite of being late to appear, nevertheless amounted to an additional programme summary. There were consultant reports on special issues and a Mid-Term Evaluation. In addition, there were commentaries on the performance of the programme in Reports of the Auditor General which gave an auditor's perspective and a review of Solomon Islands development funds by the World Bank which gave the World Bank's perspective on the PCDF compared to other funds. There were occasional reports from provinces, minutes of the Joint Oversight Committee (JOC), the Programme Fiscal Grants Coordinating Committee (PFGCC) and written accounts of Premiers' Conferences discussing PGSP policy. There was, in short, extensive documentation and most of it reliable.

There was no shortage of information on enhancing Provincial Government accountability. Curiously, information on the projects themselves financed by the programme and managed by Provincial Governments that had received all or a portion of their allocation, was almost non-existent. Information given in annual reports gave the number of projects by sector, but any other information on projects had to be pieced together from files in the separate provinces; some budgeting and expenditure information by province could be extracted from MPGIS accounting records but not for all years of the programme.

SITE VISITS

Discussions were held with Provincial Secretaries or Deputy Provincial Secretaries who are either currently serving or who served previously in all provinces with the exception of Choiseul⁵ and this made it possible to have a picture of the changes and tensions in almost all of them. Extended inquiries were conducted in four of the provinces:

- Central Province
- Western Province
- Makira Ulawa Province
- Guadalcanal Province

The selection was made following consultations with the Programme Manager, UNDP and the Undersecretary, MPGIS to ensure exposure to at least one low-performing provinces (Guadalcanal), one high performing province (Central) and one whose

⁵ Repeated efforts to meet with the Premier and/or Provincial Secretary of Choiseul were unsuccessful for unavoidable reasons.

performance was in between (Makira Ulawa). A fourth province that happened to be a relatively high- performing province (Western) was chosen partly because it is large and relatively complex and partly because of accessibility.

Guadalcanal offices were located on the outskirts of Honiara making them easily accessible. Travel was arranged to Central, Western and Makira Ulawa Provinces where two and three day visits included a series of interviews with core administration personnel, provincial employees, elected Provincial Assembly members, clerk and speaker of Assemblies, members of informal organizations and interested others. In each instance, site visits were made to projects supported with PCDF resources (clinics, schools, classrooms, community halls, women’s resource centre etc.) On a few occasions, meetings were arranged with local chiefs or heads of Ward Development Committees. In most cases, the evaluator was accompanied by a planning officer who provided information on selection, implementation and community involvement. For two of these extended provincial visits (Western and Makira Ulawa) the evaluator was accompanied by the UNDP PGSP programme manager.

INTERVIEWS

Focused interviews were held with 69 interlocutors. Table II.2 gives their distribution.

Table II.2: Distribution of Focused Interviews

Ministry of Provincial Government & Institutional Strengthening	Other National Ministries and Institutions	Provincial Government Officials & Project Beneficiaries	United Nations	Other International Institutions	Other
7	12	37	5	7	1

Interviews conducted in the capital with MPGIS, other national institutions and international organizations laid the foundation for subsequent, more in depth inquiries in the provinces. Interviews with MPGIS and UNDP staff provided information on policy, programme management and historical context. Interviews with national ministries and other institutions in the government raised questions about how government organizations viewed the constraints and possibilities for extending greater fiscal and political responsibilities to provincial government administrations. Some respondents raised serious concerns. Others offered solutions. These two weeks of preliminary interviews set the stage for the three weeks of provincial visits and repeat interviews with key informants in the capital.

Interviews in the provinces fell into three different categories. A first category included the core administration officials, Provincial Secretaries and other core staff and to some extent provincial government staff locally employed. These were frank and informative. Many of the Provincial Secretaries, Deputy Provincial Secretaries along with other core staff worked in difficult political circumstances and did not hesitate to share their experiences. A second category included the elected Provincial Assembly members. Respondents in these interviews were typically not well-informed about the PGSP and

were more concerned to make largely unwarranted complaints against provincial administrators. A third category included citizens, project beneficiaries or members of NGOs, all of whom expressed various degrees of discontent with the politicians and supported the views of the beleaguered administrators.

Documentary sources rarely gave a full picture of the dynamics of provincial government efforts to deliver public services in an accountable fashion. The minutes of the programme's Joint Oversight Committee (the programme's governing board) often contained incomplete information or concerns expressed with little context. Interviews with provincial government personnel made it possible to complete and in some instances triangulate this picture.

NUMERICAL DATA

The programme was selective in its management of numerical data. On some matters, scoring on performance measures by provinces for example, there is a wealth of information and analysis for any given year or for a succession of years. The programme's very particular manner of calculating of PCDF grant allocations to provinces is comprehensive. There are good records on year-by-year revenues of Provincial Governments, whether generated from the fixed service grant allocations or by PGSP or by a province's own internal sources making incomes for provinces easily accessible. Details of yearly audits are well presented.

By contrast, data is lacking on simple measures of programme impact over time, such as net primary enrolment disaggregated by gender in a selection of schools or frequency and reasons for attendance at clinics. These could have been collected and made available. Impressions of changes in livelihood security might have been useful. The programme reports minimally on types of projects executed with PCDF resources and what might have been their impact. Crude measures could easily have been used. It proved difficult for the evaluator to access budgeted amounts and expenditures of PCDF by project, by sector or by province for all programme years.

LIMITATIONS

The evaluation experienced the same limitations as those that constrain the programme generally. It is almost commonplace to reiterate the challenges of geography, i.e. working in highly dispersed locations requiring long periods of costly travel and adapting approaches to separated and different locations. Carrying out the evaluation would have been near impossible were it not for the collaboration of MPGIS and UNDP. Even though the evaluation was allotted a generous five-week period, this barely sufficed to cover all issues. It was not possible to review, in depth, the conduct and performance of the independent assessment teams that annually assessed provinces against the Minimum Conditions and the Performance Measures. Nor was it possible to have a clear picture of why an unexpected number of projects were not completed in time; had there been time, it would have been helpful to meet with contractors, suppliers and transporters.

SCHEDULING

The evaluator worked in Honiara between 22 January and 22 February 2015. Some preparations were undertaken prior to arrival in Honiara and analysis and analysis/drafting continued following departure.

Table II.3: Scheduling of Evaluation Activities (12 January -15 March 2015)

Activity	Dates
Document Review	<i>Prior to departure:</i> 12 January – 19 January <i>In Honiara:</i> 23 January – 27 January
Interviews	<i>In Honiara:</i> 26 January – 3 February 2015 <i>In Provinces:</i> 2 February – 18 February
Site Visits (including preparations, travel and review)	2 February – 18 February <i>Guadalcanal:</i> 2 February and 10 February <i>Makira Ulawa:</i> 4 February – 6 February <i>Western:</i> 11 February – 13 February <i>Central:</i> 17 February – 18 February
Analysis and Drafting	16 February – 17 February and 19 February – 15 March

Section III: Relevance

KEY ISSUES

A large proportion of the eighty-five per cent of the Solomon Islands population living in rural areas have little confidence their government will help them with basic services. Expressions of resentment are common. In the past, the resentment of the population in some provinces boiled over into what is now referred to as the ‘ethnic tension’ between 1998 and 2003 when discontent erupted into sporadic violence. Those days are now passed and a Truth and Reconciliation Committee has tabled a frank and detailed report on the events.⁶ But the concern remains that the government needs to do more to ensure the populations in the provinces have access to even the most basic services and facilities.

The government gives large sums of money for use by elected members of the National Assembly to support development activities in their constituencies. The size of these grants is substantial and they are given with almost no conditions and almost no expectations that the National Assembly member will account for how the funds have been used. Most people know how very large these constituency grants can be. They know the politicians use the grants to help constituents with school fees or with funeral expenses or treatment for a sick relative or if a community makes a strident demand, the member may pay for a solar panel to help with lights in their homes. But apart from these payouts to the electorate there is little evidence that these large grants are used to support informed development initiatives.

Instead of giving the population greater hope, most people regard these constituency grants as further evidence the government is more concerned with retaining its hold on power than with serving the population. Until the Provincial Government Strengthening Programme (PGSP), these constituency grants were the only source of funding to pay for development investments such as schools or clinics or administrative buildings in the rural areas, all the more reason for popular concern when there has been so little visible evidence of benefit to the people. The government, however, has been chastened by the ‘ethnic tension’ events of a decade ago and as the years have passed and expectations from the rural areas have grown, it has become apparent that some change is necessary. There is a growing recognition that some mechanism is needed to provide public services to the rural population and, given the difficult geography that separates the capital from the far-flung nine provinces, it only makes sense to strengthen Provincial Government functionaries and rely on them to deliver essential services.

Before the PGSP, Provincial Governments were meagre operations with hardly any power or resources apart from a service grant from the central government that did little more than pay the salaries of the few provincial officers and give provincially elected politicians their own small constituency funds to be spent in their wards at their discretion. There had been virtually no public funds to spend for schools or clinics or any

⁶ Solomon Islands Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Final Report: Confronting the Truth for a Better Solomon Islands*, Honiara, February 2012

community facility at all except for the modest resources which the national ministries (education, health, infrastructure, women, fisheries and so on) spend without much of a presence and without consulting with the provincial government staff.

The relevance of this project comes first and foremost from an undeniable need. If the government is to deliver any services at all, it must be done through reinforced Provincial Government administration. Decentralization of planning and devolution of functions and resources need to figure prominently in any attempt to improve the delivery of public services and making development resources more available.

DECENTRALIZATION AND GOVERNMENT POLICY

Decentralization has had a chequered history. The logic of such programmes is compelling but their appeal is diminished by the lack of real results once they are implemented. In a recent World Bank study of 20 cases, only a few – approximately a third – are estimated to have been comparative successes and in these they were successes in only a selection of policy areas.⁷ It is relatively rare to find an instance of a decentralization programme which has successfully transferred responsibility over planning and resources to sub-national entities; where the capacity of staff in sub-national government offices suffices to capably plan, implement and account for development resources; and where local elites do not succeed in capturing many of the benefits of the devolved resources.

Commentators on decentralization are rarely unreservedly optimistic. One observer reports that the “experience of decentralisation in less-developed countries has almost everywhere fallen short of expectations and the declared objectives of policy makers.”⁸

What is typically lacking in decentralization programmes is a genuine political will within the central government to give up powers and resources to lower level bodies. In principle, national policy makers are on board. But the reality of transferring resources and control over the perquisites and instruments of political power is something central government leaders may value theoretically but are unwilling to implement practically, no matter how compelling the logic. The question this raises, therefore, is whether and to what degree the Solomon Islands Government is genuinely committed to investing resources in making Provincial Governments work better.

It is difficult to respond with assurance. But there are strong indications of a recognition within the central government that more services must be provided by Provincial Governments if there is to be success in reducing poverty, meeting international standards of humanitarian development and maintaining political stability. The Solomon Islands Government National Development Strategy 2011 –2020 has expressed its

⁷ Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank, *Decentralization in Client Countries, An Evaluation of World Bank Support 1990-2007*, Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2008 p. xvi

⁸ B. C. Smith, *Decentralization: The Territorial Dimension of the State*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985

intention to increase the capacity and resources of provincial governments for this purpose, committing itself to:

Improve service delivery by providing an enabling environment for provincial administrations to deliver goods and services and infrastructure development and strengthen their development management capacity...⁹

More recently, in a policy statement released by the newly elected government, a commitment has been made to strengthen provincial governments, review the Provincial Government Act of 1997 and encourage greater provincial revenue collection.¹⁰ All of these align closely with the PGSP initiative and give reasonable assurance of a growing political will to carry through with the decentralization of power and resources to Provincial Governments.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK

UNDP, for its part, has taken a clear policy stand on the matter in its UNDAF. Outcome 5 provides for “regional, national, local and traditional systems to be strengthened to exercise the principles of good governance, respecting and upholding human rights, especially women’s rights, in line with international standards. Outcome 5.1.5. makes a more direct commitment to strengthening provincial governments in providing for the “capacity of Provincial Governments to be strengthened to implement provincial development to deliver effective services to the respective people at the provincial level.” Explicit in Outcome 5.1.5. is the recognition that achieving this outcome must not only increase the capacity of existing provincial administrations but also obtain the otherwise reluctant participation members of the Provincial Assemblies.¹¹

⁹ Government of Solomon Islands, *National Development Strategy: A United and Vibrant Solomon Island 2011-2020*, Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination, p. 4,

¹⁰ Office of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, *Policy Statement by the Democratic Coalition for Change Government*, Honiara, 27 January 2015

¹¹ United Nations Solomon Islands, *UNDAF Results Matrix*, Honiara, 2013

Section IV: Efficiency

KEY ISSUES

Efficiency in the delivery of public services has been the programme's trademark objective. Each of this report's sections therefore treats efficiency and the closely related issue of accountability from different angles. A number of specific topics are covered in subsequent sections, specifically regarding the efficiency of Provincial Governments in delivering projects supported under PCDF: planning, procurement, contracting, transport, community engagement, financial management and reporting. This section offers only a brief introduction and an overview of how to interpret the widely divergent degrees of efficiency achieved among Provincial Governments.

PGSP has achieved some success within Phase I in incorporating international standards of accounting and efficiency into the practices it requires of Provincial Government administrators. Section VII *Capacity of Provincial Government Actors Developed* reviews the mechanisms used by the project to do this. Provincial Governments must undergo regular assessments of their procedures and succeed if they are to access the PCDF resources at all. Assessments have not been easy and Provincial Governments have had to forego, on a number of occasions, all or some of their allocations if they do not satisfy these conditions. Successfully passing the assessments and accessing the full allocations have been a powerful incentive for Provincial Governments to meet programme standards of efficiency and accountability. The Auditor General's Office has given them high praise for the regular use of international accounting practices and the computerization of records. There have been manuals and training programmes and assessments and coaching by programme staff for Provincial Governments to improve the efficiency, transparency and integrity in delivering services.

In other provinces the improvements have not been as impressive though they too have received the manuals, they have been trained and coached and strongly encouraged to meet these standards. The administrators in these provinces may have attended training sessions and they may be aware of the requirements but in these less successful provinces there may be political interference from politicians or rapid turnover among administrators, or both, and however much the administrators may wish to introduce integrity and good practice in provincial affairs, they find it difficult.

LESSONS LEARNED/PROBLEMS OBSERVED

Considerable variation in how well different provinces have performed raises the question why some provinces have succeeded in raising the level of efficiency and accountability while others have not. Capacity in procurement and contracting has increased significantly in some provinces and not in others. Administrators closely monitor implementation in some provinces and not in others. Some Provincial Governments have succeeded in disbursing a large proportion of their allocations while others have not. It is essential to understand these differences.

Procurement and Contracting. Technicians and planners at the provincial level have not had, until PGSP, any real experience in procurement and contracting. A serious difficulty is that provincial planners in a given province may be unfamiliar with tendering and contractors when bids come from contractors they do not know and even from contractors based in other provinces.

This is a unique problem in the Solomon Islands given the dispersed archipelago, the inability of provincial governments to know about non-reliable contractors and the difficulties local engineers face when attempting to budget a project. Technical staff follow procedures for the most part. But this does not mean they are always successful in choosing reputable contractors. Difficulties arise when an untrustworthy contractor takes advantage of a rural province or when a provincial politician interferes with the process no matter how diligent provincial government staff may be in following the procedures they have learned in training events. There is evidence that in the majority of cases administrators and technical staff do follow procedures because they know they will be assessed on their performance in doing so and yet in every province there are numerous projects that have suffered because of contractor failure.

Estimating costs. Technical staff and planning officers, however well trained, have had difficulty estimating individual project costs with the result that some projects exhaust their resources before completion and have to be put on hold. Some of the more disciplined provinces have begun to contract out project budgeting to professional consultants, and those who do this have found it reduces the number of projects which remain unfinished at the end of a fiscal year. Others in the less disciplined provinces or in places where there is less of a commitment to efficiency, do not do this and have non-completed projects on the books for several years.

Undisbursed funds (making the best use of resources). In the better performing provinces, a large proportion of the funds available for a fiscal year are disbursed. In the lesser performing ones, large amounts may be unspent. Some reasons are mentioned above such as skill in contracting and budgeting. Poor implementation may also occur when politicians interfere and oblige administrators to expedite a particular project without submitting the project to accepted planning procedures thus increasing the likelihood of irregularities and delays. The result is a proportion of unspent funds at the end of the fiscal year. When observed by the assessors, a large amount of unspent funds can reduce a province's subsequent year's allocation adding to the difficulties in completing an unfinished project. And when projects are not complete, communities may lose confidence in the process and withdraw their interest or participation, leaving materials unattended abandoning the commitments they originally made to completing the projects.

Provincial Government financial staff are trained to keep track of accounts, to ensure that all expenditures are fully justified and to avoid the most common implementation problems such as preventing damage to materials. Still these things happen, especially if there is not full community involvement or if the contractor proves unreliable or if provinces do not follow the guidelines out of neglect whether it is deliberate or otherwise.

Some provinces have fully absorbed the directives and have a good record and this can be clearly seen in their ability to spend the lion’s share of their allocation. Others have not.

Table IV.1 shows the scope and nature of the problem. In Column 1, the nine provinces are listed in descending order based on their record in satisfying some basic performance measures in 2012 and 2013 and Column 2 gives, for each of these provinces, the proportion of their allocation unspent at the end of the fiscal year. The variation is, as expected, considerable. And it is also clear that generally those provinces, which have done the best job of learning and practicing good principles of management have also succeeded in spending the greater proportion of their allotment.

Table IV.1: Provincial Ranking on Performance Measures and Proportion of Allocations Undisbursed

Column 1 Provinces listed by Performance Measure ranking averaged for 2012 and 2013	Column 2 % Allocations Undisbursed 2013
Choiseul	10.6%
Central	4.8%
Western	22.4%
Isabel	23.4%
Makira	13.5%
Temotu	46.4%
Guadalcanal	27.5%
Ren Bell	Did not qualify for 2013 funding
Malaita	Did not qualify for 2013 funding

Source: PGSP project files for 2013

A great deal of effort has been made to provide training and resources. Still the differences remain. Some of the impediments may stem from strong opposition among local elites to allow the administrators to perform the functions they are expected to perform and in this case, improving efficiency and accountability will be more difficult. But not impossible. It simply means that alternative means and motivations need to be devised to facilitate the task of administrators.

RECOMMENDATIONS/POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Partner the best-performing and the worst- performing provinces in a working, learning alliance. It would not be difficult to partner those provinces that have performed well with those that have not. A small group of administrators and politicians from Choiseul could work with an equivalent group from Malaita to develop ways of achieving a more accountable and efficient administration. The same could be done between Western province on the one hand and Guadalcanal on the other.

Section V: Effectiveness - Responsibilities of Provincial Government Clarified

KEY ISSUES

The primary activities under this component are two studies, one in 2009 and the other in 2012. The first, known as the Functional Assignment study,¹² was undertaken by a national consultant and although the programme had hoped the study would provide a critical analysis, it limited itself to describing positions in the provincial government as they are commonly understood or as they are described in the Provincial Government Act of 1997.

Little was done on this component until 2012 when a consultant was commissioned to undertake a follow-up study of the impact of provincial government structure on effective services delivery. This study, known as the Gerhard Report, was perceptive. A final draft was submitted in May 2013, *The Public Sector Organisation around Public Service Delivery in the Provinces*, and unlike the first, it took pains to demonstrate why the political and organizational structure of provincial government has been, for the most part, incapable of delivering public services that responds to local needs.¹³

The Gerhard Report describes provincial governments as constituted of three silos disconnected from each other. One silo includes the national ministries delivering services to rural areas – education, health, infrastructure, agriculture, women and environment – making modest investments in provinces but with very little representation in the provinces and almost no consultation with the two other primary actors in the provincial political arena.

Another silo is the Provincial Assembly and the group of Assembly members chosen from its elected members to serve on the Executive. The Premier is one of these, the Deputy Premier is another and in some instances where there are enough elected members, a few ministers. The Provincial Assembly and its Executive specifically regard themselves as the real power in the provinces and take umbrage when others do not acknowledge this.

A third silo is comprised of the Provincial Government administrative staff. Some are paid by the Provincial Government including those who manage the day-to-day affairs (accounts officers, engineers and other members of the works division, clerks and drivers). The five senior “core” administrative staff are paid by the national Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening (MPGIS) and include the Provincial Secretary, Deputy Provincial Secretary, Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer and the

¹² Joe Raisi, *Review of Functional Assignments for Provinces / Provincial Governments*, Discussion paper, MPGIS/PGSP, December 2009

¹³ R. Gerhard, *The Public Sector Organisation around Public Service Delivery in the Provinces, Issues Paper to Inform the Preparation of PGSP II and Pilot Activities to be Undertaken in 2013*, MPGIS/PGSP, Honiara, May 2013

Chief Planning Officer. These core staff members have had, until PGSP, small budgets and only few responsibilities and as a result were not highly regarded. The elected members of the Provincial Assembly could seek their dismissal with little consequence or concern. These elected politicians have never taken kindly to a Provincial Secretary who exercised any real authority and they do not hesitate to use their power as elected officials to have an uncooperative Provincial Secretary removed.

PGSP has altered the situation by making a development fund available to the Provincial Secretary and other administrative staff over which these core administrators are expected to exercise principal control. With the PGSP and its fund, the Provincial Capacity Development Fund (PCDF), the administrative staff have become political actors to reckon with. While this has raised the standing of the Provincial Secretary and other administrative staff, it has, at the same time, increased their vulnerability.

The picture the Gerhard Report gives is one in which these three bodies – (i) national line ministries working out of Honiara, (ii) Provincial Assembly elected members and (iii) administrative core staff employed by the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening – have their own source of funding and operate largely independently. The study argues that this makes for a disjointed provincial administration recommends ways of integrating the three silos.

The silo imagery is helpful; however, it is only partially correct. The three groups of Provincial Government actors are not so much separate as they are in conflict operating frequently against one another. This would seem to be particularly the case as PGSP has made the Provincial Capacity Development Fund (PCDF) available for development investments and placed the administrators in charge. Politicians want access and they want it frequently for purposes that are not intended in the PGSP protocol. It places the Provincial Secretary in a difficult position since if he refuses, he injures relations with the Premier and other elected officials who will not hesitate to initiate proceedings for his dismissal. If he agrees, he will most likely be found out when the PGSP undertakes its annual assessment and he and the province may be disqualified from receiving the annual grant from the PCDF. It has placed the Provincial Secretary between a rock and a hard place.

It is therefore not just a matter of separate silos and separate functions. It is rather three organizations at odds with each other. In most provinces, attempts by the politicians to access PCDF funds are on-going, and the pressures on Provincial Secretaries to either collaborate with the politicians or incur their discontent (and risk being removed from office) places the provincial staff in a difficult situation. It takes a public servant of considerable acumen to survive. Not surprisingly, many of them do not. This is a primary weakness of the PGSP programme which relies on capable, continuous management of the funds over an extended period of time and in a way that adheres to explicit accounting procedures that require practice and experience. With a few exceptions, given the political vulnerability of the Provincial Secretary and his staff and the often capricious demands of the politicians, clashes between the political wing (Provincial Assembly members) and the administrative wing (core staff appointed from the Ministry of

Provincial Government) are common. Provincial Secretaries do not stay very long in one place. And when they do, they do not have the authority, in all but a couple of provinces, to adequately ensure the PCDF is planned and administered with integrity and accountability.

THE PROBLEM OF LEGITIMACY

What Provincial Governments need most in order to fulfill the PGSP mandate is greater legitimacy. Resources help as does a reinforcement of staff capacity, and PGSP has done provided both. But ultimately it is acceptance by provincial citizens, their representatives and provincial government staff of what responsibilities are to be assumed and by whom. This is why a clarification of roles is such an essential part of the programme. This is the PGSP component that has received the least attention and achieved the least.

Provincial Assembly members continue to be reluctant to recognize the role of the appointed provincial administrators as they are unwilling to recognize any other authority apart from their own. The line ministries prefer to go about their business independently and proceed with their own programmes without consultation with Provincial Government planners; they are particularly reluctant to throw in their lot with the provincial administrators, however competent they might be, because they may not last long in their job and because their resources are vulnerable to interference. The result is a conspicuous lack of clarity, and consequently legitimacy accorded to those who have the responsibility for managing the funds made available through the programme.

LESSONS LEARNED/PROBLEMS OBSERVED

PGSP has done relatively little to clarify these roles and most especially to reform the governance mechanism within provincial governments in a way that will increase the legitimacy of the administrative staff to do their job and increase the trust¹⁴ the population has in their capacity to do so. The following are some conspicuous obstacles.

The Provincial Government Act of 1997. Frequent reference is made to the failure of the Provincial Government Act to address the persistent dysfunction within Provincial Governments. There is a clear need for the present act to be updated and revised and even if amendments to the act do not explicitly ensure less political interference, at least an effort would demonstrate that the central government is serious about resolving the matter, a resolve that now appears lacking.

Weak Provincial Secretaries. It goes without saying that the present Provincial Secretary position comes with conspicuous weaknesses that very directly undermine the function of the programme. They are on short-term contracts that can be terminated at any time. Their salaries are not commensurate with the status that they should have and, especially in the recent past, they do not have adequate backing from the Ministry of Provincial

¹⁴ The word *trust* has been used by more than one of the interlocutors consulted to describe the pervasive suspicion among the populace or electorate that their interests are not taken seriously by elected and appointed officials.

Government and Institutional Strengthening. If they are to stand firm and protect the public resources against threats of misuse, they need more support and standing.

Lack of popular support. Provincial citizens have little confidence in provincial administrators or even awareness of what they do. When projects are completed in their community they assume it has been their politician in the Provincial Assembly who has arranged it for them. If they know anything more at all it is from the signboard erected near projects which may have the name of donors or the name of the project but nothing about the role of the provincial government itself. If citizens were aware that it is the provincial administration above all seeing to their public sector services, this would strengthen the mandate of the provincial administrators to exercise their functions with confidence.

Constituency Development Funds. The government’s practice of providing substantial grants to members of the National Assembly as constituency grants for use at the politicians’ discretion has a negative impact on the functionality of Provincial Governments and PGSP’s efforts to improve their accountability. National politicians use these constituency grants to secure the loyalty of their electorate by providing them with school fees, defraying the cost of weddings or providing water tanks or solar panels or simply making gifts in cash. Voters have come to expect that politicians will use payouts to secure their loyalty. This has made things difficult for provincial politicians since voters generally have come to expect the same at the provincial level as at the national level, that politicians should pay for votes. But provincial politicians do not have anything like the Constituency Development Funds available to them. The ward development grants they receive for small development projects are not enough and therefore, without any other alternative, they apply what pressure they can on provincial administrators to make use of PCDF grants for enhancing their standing among their electorate. Where they are strong enough, politicians prevail and PCDF grants end up supporting projects that have not gone through the normal approval channels. They can easily be mis-managed; these kinds of projects rarely serve the population in the most effective fashion and diminish funding for more worthy initiatives. When this happens as it regularly does, citizens observe that it is the politicians who hold power and legitimacy in the province and not the administrators, further diminishing PGSP’s effectiveness.

Turnover of provincial administrative staff. The frequent turnover of staff within the administrative staff who are the principal actors in PGSP is an important factor in the strength of Provincial Governments to fulfill their functions. Table V.1 reviews turnovers by giving the number of vacancies among the 46 administration core staff nationally for the years 2013 and 2015.

Table V.1 Vacancies in Provincial Administration Core Staff Positions: 2013 and 2015

Year	Number of core staff vacancies (out of 46)	Per cent vacancies of total core staff positions
2013	12	26%
2015	14	30%

Source: Ministry of Public Services , Human Resource MIS data 2013 and 2015

Staff turnover significantly reduces continuity in provincial government management. The turnover is both a consequence and a cause of the on-going lack of cooperation between the core administration and the Provincial Assembly on the one hand and the central line ministries on the other. It is a consequence because Provincial Secretaries who do not support members of the Provincial Assembly may face allegations of misconduct and be removed. Over a five-year period, five Provincial Secretaries were removed in Guadalcanal province. It is also a cause since the lack of continuity in these core positions weakens the Provincial Secretary and other core staff making whoever fulfills this role even more vulnerable to the whims of the politicians. Furthermore, it makes it even more unlikely for national ministries, reluctant at the best of times, to consult with Provincial Secretaries who may not be in office more than a few months.

RECOMMENDATIONS/POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Amend the Provincial Government Act. The Solomon Islands Government has budgeted for a task force to undertake a revision of the Provincial Government Act of 1997. This Act does little to shield administrators from political interference which can diminish their performance as development planners and implementers. While a future version of this Act may not succeed in resolving existing tensions, at the very least, attention to the Act would demonstrate that the central government is serious about doing something to improve matters at the provincial level.

Upgrade terms of employment for Provincial Secretaries. A higher calibre individual serving under more secure tenure at the posts of Provincial Secretary and other core administrative staff would enhance the respectability of their leadership, increase collaboration among the present fissiparous political entities in Provincial Governments and add greatly to the functioning of the programme. MPGIS has appealed to the Cabinet to approve an increase in grade for the Provincial Secretary from an SS2 to an SS3. It is a significant step. The increase has been approved in principle. In practice however, presumably because of the extra funding this requires, the cabinet has refused to give its approval for all provinces and instead prefers to try it in one or two provinces only. MPGIS has rightly suggested this makes little sense; either one does it or not. But the hesitancy among decision-makers does not bode well for a positive decision. This is unfortunate since one of the indisputable factors in the poor performance of some provinces has been the lack of competence and standing of the Provincial Secretaries and Treasurers.

Engage citizen support. One might have expected that the projects realized through the PCDF would increase Provincial Government legitimacy and promote greater trust from citizens. This is true to some extent. However, most citizens are yet to change the negative image that they hold about provincial administrators. Signboards advertise projects as coming from one donor or another or a gift of a project and not an accomplishment of the Provincial Government. A greater effort needs to be made with advocacy and communication to attribute the PCDF projects to the Provincial Government administrators.

Revise Constituency Development Fund Act. There is nothing new in suggesting a review of the Constituency Development Fund Act. At present the Act allows politicians to have unfettered discretion over the use of their funds. It is widely understood that this has spoiled electoral politics in the Solomon Islands. At a minimum, it has negatively affected Provincial Government functioning since the provincial electorate have come to expect the same generous contributions from their political representatives as they do from national political representatives; provincial politicians pressure administrators to allot PCDF resources for this purpose. The Ministry of Provincial Government needs to make a strong representation to the National Assembly on the urgent need to revise this Act.

Reduce turnover of Provincial Government administration staff. The Ministry of Public Service (MPS) and MPGIS both have a role in managing human resources for the provincial government administrative staff. They must both realize that the present degree of turnover is untenable if Provincial Government reforms are to succeed. The Permanent Secretaries of the two ministries need to agree on a common strategy that meets the interests of both and at the same time ensures a continuity of tenure for core administrative staff posted to provincial governments.

Section VI: Effectiveness - Adequacy and Effectiveness of Funding

KEY ISSUES

Two issues on the adequacy of resources are addressed separately:

1. Quantity of resource flows
2. Quality of resource utilization

QUANTITY OF RESOURCE FLOWS

Once PGSP was underway, after the first two years, the commitment by the Solomon Islands Government began to increase. The original commitment by the SIG of \$US 3.5 million was augmented to \$US 13.7 million over the course of Phase I, an increase of 290 per cent. Table VI.1 shows the commitments of international organizations on the one hand and national government on the other over the life of PGSP.

Table VI.1: International and National Commitments to PGSP (\$US million)

Programme Budget	International Organizations	Solomon Island Government	Total
Original Budget	14.6	3.5	18.1
Revised Budget	14.6	13.7	28.3

Source: PGSP files

At the beginning of the programme, contributions by the Solomon Islands Government made up 19 per cent of total project financing and by the end of the first phase, after increases in years three and four and a considerable increase in year five, contributions by Solomon Islands Government made up 48 per cent of total programme commitments. Funds have been more than expected and, with a significant proportion coming from the Solomon Islands Government, government ownership has increased along with the adequacy of funds available.

For most of the provinces, PCDF allocations were on the order of SBD 6-9 million in a large province such as Western Province and SBD 2-3 million¹⁵ in a smaller province with less population such as Isabel. Given that provincial governments previously had no funds to spend for development investments, these PCDF allocations have represented significant assets and an impetus for increasing the role and influence of Provincial Government administrators in planning for development.¹⁶

¹⁵ SBD 7.53 = \$US 1.00

¹⁶ It is important to recognize, however, that while PGSP/PCDF funding did increase the political clout of the core provincial administrators, the size of these grants were no where near as large as the constituency grants given by the government to the National Assembly members and the power these funds gave provincial administrators was dwarfed by the power the constituency grants gave politicians. Between 2008 and 2012, constituency grants to politicians totaled \$US 79 million while PGSP funding to provinces for administering PCDF amounted to \$US 18.9, less than a fourth of the constituency grants. See: World Bank: *Solomon Islands: Toward a Better Investment in Rural Communities*, May 2013

At the same time and largely as a result of programme activities, four out of the nine provincial governments increased their own source revenue. Revenue collection from licenses and fees and other sources had stagnated in the years previous to the programme as Provincial Government administrators had little motivation to go about the difficult task of collecting levies, licenses and fees. And though these funds are not those provided through the Programme, their increase is attributable to the programme's presence. PGSP provided direction and mentoring in a number of areas and it became obvious that there was considerable room, in some of the more well-managed provinces for an increase in revenue by keeping better records and by motivating the revenue collectors to be more thorough in their efforts. The result is in Table VI.2.

Table VI.2: Increase in Own Source Revenue, All Provinces 2008-2014 (SBD million)

	Revenue collected in 2008/9	Revenue collected in 2013/14	Per cent increase
All provinces	10,896,479	41,262,350	280 %

Source: Momodou Lamin Sawaneh and Bishnu Puri, *Baseline Study: Provincial Government Strengthening Programme*, Ministry of Provincial Government Institutional Strengthening, September 2014, p. 34

The amounts vary considerably and in five out of nine provinces, the change is either minimal or in some cases negative. Overall however, taking all provinces into account, the result is a marked increase. At the beginning of the programme, revenue raised by the provinces themselves was hardly a third of the revenue that was provided by the central government for recurrent expenditures, known as the fixed service grants; by the end of the programme, it rose to nearly 90 per cent of fixed service grants. For some provinces, the impact was substantial.

QUALITY OF RESOURCE UTILIZATION

One is immediately struck by the very large numbers of manuals and brochures on the instruments devised for assessing the performance of provincial administrative staff in managing the PCDF, lists of conditions and the performance results year to year ranging from the functioning of public accounts committees to the reconciliation of bank statements. With every change in the Performance Measures or Minimum Conditions, a new operating manual was prepared and at year's end, a new consolidated report. There are summaries of how Provincial Governments fared against the Minimum Conditions and Performance Measure annually and year by year from 2008 to 2014 for every province, tabulated and analyzed and sometimes graphed in dramatic demonstrations.

This is in contrast to the scarcity of material on how the PCDF resources have actually been used. The record of PCDF projects kept in PGSP offices shows little more than the overall number of projects by sector. There is little information in annual reports on trends year by year or types of projects funded, what sectors different provinces chose and why and whether the projects chosen contribute to the ultimate goals of the project, poverty reduction or achieving the MDGs. One wonders also how many projects have experienced time and cost overruns or to what extent community members have been consulted and whether this has made a difference.

This lacuna makes it difficult to examine carefully who benefited, how much of the skills in planning, procurement, implementing and reporting were used and whether given this, provincial citizenry might have increased their livelihood resources as well as their trust in government and whether the government in turn might have increased its legitimacy in the eyes of the population.

Planning and implementing PCDF projects involves stipulated procedures: three year rolling plans, annual plans, prioritization by a Provincial Planning Development Committee with stipulated membership, and approval by the Provincial Assembly. Adherence to the procedures is well document but once the individual projects leave the planning process, documentation tapers off. If a project stalls as many do, there is no assessment of why this occurs. Community engagement may be encouraged but not in a regular manner. In some cases, implementation is monitored and in some cases not. And once completed, very little effort is made to record the consequences or understand the outcomes in the context of how they were planned or implemented.

The impression is that PGSP is first and foremost an accountability initiative while the development outcomes of the programme are of secondary importance. The anomaly has not escaped notice. Both the PGSP Mid-Term Review and a recent World Bank review of development funds have observed that development planning in PGSP generally lacks clear linkages with communities and, by implication, with the impact on communities.¹⁷ The PGSP has invested considerably more effort in ensuring development funds are managed properly than in ensuring they have a development impact.

This is a concern not a criticism. The emphasis has been on making sure appropriate procedures and practices are in place. Strengthening Provincial Government capacity to manage funds and plan development must be at the foundation of delivering development services in the Solomon Islands. And yet accountability cannot stand alone. It is ultimately as important to account for development impact as it is for financial discipline.

LESSONS LEARNED/PROBLEMS OBSERVED

The imbalance between attention to accountability exercises and attention to development initiatives is a matter of concern and the problems observed here arise from the attention, or lack of attention, to factors that seem to have an important bearing on development outcomes.

Political interference. In a number of provinces, only a portion of projects funded from PCDF resources proceed through the normal channels specified by PGSP. The frequency of political interference depends greatly on the province since relations between provincial politicians and administrators vary from place to place. In a few provinces, most of the proposals go through normal channels. In others, politicians use their political influence to have some projects funded without full provincial administrative scrutiny.

¹⁷ World Bank Group Solomon Islands, Solomon Islands: Toward Better Investment in Rural Communities, January 2015, p. 34; see also Bernhard Weimer, Phillip Winchell Bottern and Paul Roughan, Mid-Term Evaluation of Provincial Government Strengthening Programme, February 2012

When they are funded in this way they tend to be commercial or small infrastructure projects and they go forward without being examined as other projects are. They also tend to have little community involvement.

These projects typically have little development impact apart from providing a group of constituents a water tank or some other small facility. Since they use valuable PCDF annual funding, they take away funds from those proposals which are approved through accepted planning procedures. And since they rarely receive approval through normal channel they are vulnerable to implementation difficulties and delays. They contribute to one of the most significant constraints in PCDF project delivery: delays in implementation and undisbursed funds.

Community involvement. If a community has been consulted and is on board, which is not always the case, community members will contribute labour and protect materials on site as they arrive. If not, the materials can disappear or suffer damage and the labour to be expected from communities may not be forthcoming.

These are practical considerations. The more principled consideration is that it makes little sense to proceed with projects that do not have community commitment. If there is a clear sense of community or collective ownership, engagement will be greater. The relative success of the World Bank's Rural Development Programme follows from its requirement that there should be real community participation in planning and implementation. This is not to say that PGSP should ground its planning for PCDF projects exclusively in community consultations; it can not lose sight of its principal purpose, to strengthen provincial administrations. But planners need to recognize that a cardinal rule of project success is the participation and a sense of ownership among beneficiaries.

Social sector projects work better. PGSP has so far encouraged a range of projects that contribute to a diversity of sectors. The majority of these are small infrastructure projects in support of the social sectors: education, health, social infrastructure, women and youth. There are also a large number of projects that support the construction of facilities for government administrators and also not surprisingly, Provincial Assembly members. Some projects support commercial ventures for private or para-provincial enterprises. There is nothing inherently problematic with this mix; if one looks closely at the record of projects, however, it is apparent that the provinces which perform better on Minimum Conditions and Performance Measures tend to provide more support for social sector projects, education and health, youth and women. The less performing provinces tend to spend more on administrative buildings,¹⁸ commercial facilities and other infrastructure. Column 1 in Table VI.3 lists the provinces in descending order according to their Performance Measure ranking averaged for 2012 and 2013. Their allocations for social sector projects (Column 2) and infrastructure/productive projects (Column 3) for the last three years are given as a proportion of the total allocation. The more conscientious

¹⁸ The PGSP Operations Manual for the Provincial Capacity Development Fund allows 25 per cent of total allocation for building administrative offices. This should be reduced for PGSP Phase II.

provinces (at the top of the list) regularly spend proportionately more on social sector projects.

Table VI.3: Comparison of Commitments to Social Sector and Infrastructure/Productive Sectors by Provinces

Provinces listed by Performance Measure ranking averaged for 2012 and 2013	% PCDF social sector allocation ¹ of total averaged for 2012, 2013 and 2014	% PCDF infrastructure/productive ² sector allocation of total averaged for 2012, 2013 and 2014
Choiseul	47%	38%
Central	47%	29%
Western	40%	34%
Isabel	54%	39%
Makira	34%	36%
Temotu	27%	49%
Guadalcanal	22%	30%
Ren Bell	DNQ	DNQ
Malaita	DNQ	DNQ

Source: PGSP project files

DNQ: did not qualify for the relevant years

¹Social sector includes: education, health, youth and women

²Productive/infrastructure includes administration, infrastructure, works and commerce

Spending on social sector projects is attractive to planners in the more conscientious and democratically governed provinces while spending on infrastructure and commercial ventures occurs more in places where Provincial Assembly members as well as others influence the decisions of the PCDF planners and administrators. It appears there is less of an inclination for funds to be mis-handled in social sector projects than in commercial and infrastructure projects.

Participation by national ministries in provincial development planning. Provincial administrators seem to like very much the idea of increasing expenditures on social sector projects for a number of reasons, one in particular. This would provide an incentive for national line ministries to participate more in the planning and financing of provincial development priorities. It is not the case at present and this is a matter of serious concern. At present, national line ministries finance programmes in each of the provinces but do so with little or no collaboration with provincial planners and technical staff. A greater provincial commitment to social sector projects would encourage national ministries to cooperate more with provincial planners. National ministry representatives would discover that provincial planners are more adept than expected and that collaborative planning is essential if provinces are to benefit from a coherent development plan.

There is a further advantage. Greater engagement with administrators in provincial planning would serve to discourage provincial politicians from interfering inappropriately in provincial level planning. National ministries come with the weight of the central government; for them to directly support provincial administrators would serve as a caution to local politicians who are tempted to bend provincial planning to their own interests.

RECOMMENDATIONS/POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Accord balanced attention to accountability and development results. More information is needed on the development outcomes and constraints of projects implemented with PCDF resources. PGSP II presently relies on a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit which does very little and the little it does is not helpful. PGSP II may decide to invest in a viable Monitoring and Evaluation Cell. But whatever the decision this must not deter PGSP II from committing as much attention to understanding development effectiveness as to analyzing administrative accountability.

Prefer social sector projects. Social sector projects appear to have a better track record of implementation and have more development impact than infrastructure and productive sector projects. Provinces that decide to place greater emphasis on social sector projects are more likely to diminish the degree of political interference which favours greater support to the productive and infrastructure sectors.

Lobby for technical and financial collaboration by national ministries at the provincial level. National line ministries, especially those in the social sector, are strongly encouraged to increase their collaboration with provincial administrators in jointly planning and budgeting for development investments. Collaboration does not occur at present and perhaps for the reason that planners at the national level, like those at the provincial level, fear resources will be squandered. There is an opportunity, however, for national ministries to play a uniquely positive role in strengthening Provincial Governments. By joining forces with provincial planners both will have a greater chance of ensuring development efforts are well planned and well informed.

Section VII: Effectiveness - Capacity of Provincial Government Actors Developed

KEY ISSUES

PGSP has improved administrative practices in Provincial Governments primarily by introducing incentives for good performance and disincentives for unsatisfactory performance in managing the Provincial Capacity Development Fund. Provinces are assessed annually with two tests: (i) Minimum Conditions and (ii) Performance Measures. If a province passes both and does well, the Provincial Government receives its full development allocation. If a province does not meet each of the Minimum Conditions, it is disqualified from receiving any allocation at all. If it does not do well on the Performance Measures, some portion of the allocation is deducted.

All provinces are therefore strongly motivated to acquire management and accounting skills, and PGSP provides resources and training to assist the provincial administrators in doing so. There has been training in accounting, management, planning, tendering, implementing and tracking implementation. In some instances and for some Provincial Governments, an international advisor has been stationed in the provinces to work with the provincial administrators and ensure they follow procedures for tracking funds and ensuring implementation efficiency.

The original design also included training for Provincial Assembly members especially when newly elected members assumed office, but the programme decided after some reflection that the costs were high and the returns minimal. In late 2011 a decision was taken to remove this activity from PGSP.

Provincial administrators in most provinces have acquired a respectable level of competence in management and accounting. The *2014 Auditor General's Report* on Provincial Government accounts noted with pleasure that all nine Provincial Governments had prepared their annual financial statements using the Financial Reporting Under the Cash Basis of Accounting (IPSAS), one of the topics in PSGP training. The Auditor General further observed that “all nine provinces have matured from using manual cash book systems and spreadsheets and have adopted computerised accounting software to improve the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of financial reporting.” The report noted further that these developments “have been driven by the UNDP- led Provincial Government Strengthening Project.”¹⁹

At the same time, while the results of training and capacity building are evident in various degrees in five or perhaps six provinces, they are not so evident in the others. Even with the well-thought-out assessments that serve as incentives and disincentives, a certain number of provincial governments have not improved as much as expected. In the most recent assessments, three out of nine provinces failed to meet the Minimum

¹⁹ Ednal Palmer, “How the gov’t and state agencies performed,” *Solomon Star*, 14 January, 2015, p.12

Conditions and all the provinces experienced a reduction in their Performance Measures score. This is in spite of trainings and on-the-job learning and rather frequent imploring from the MPGIS.

MINIMUM CONDITIONS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Minimum Conditions were devised early on in the project to encourage provincial governments to adhere to basic principles in managing the PCDF grants. The provinces are required to have all core positions filled; in no case can those occupying these positions be dismissed without reason; they have to prove that PCDF monies have been used for PCDF projects only and only for the purposes intended; and this must be proven with reference to bank statements and cash books, ledgers and vouchers. The Provincial Government then has to contribute a minimum amount to the PCDF grants, an amount that has varied every year.

Increasing numbers of Provincial Governments have failed to meet the Minimum Conditions over the course of PGSP. Table VII.1 indicates the number of provinces, out of the nine total, which each year since 2009 have failed to meet the conditions.

Table VII.1: Name and Number of Provinces Failing to Meet Minimum Conditions during the 2013 Assessment

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of provinces not meeting	0	1	2	1	3
Provinces that did not meet		Gudalcanal	Malaita Ren Bell	Malaita	Guadalcanal Malaita Ren Bell

Source: PGSP files

On first reading, this does not speak very positively about the effectiveness of the programme. But this is only partially correct. The conditions have been changed twice over the tenure of the project, once early on to reduce the number of conditions and then again in 2013 when one of the Minimum Conditions was made more difficult to meet. The failure to meet Minimum Conditions in 2013 has been only in part an indication of the difficulty Provincial Governments have in meeting a minimum standard of accountability; it has also been the result of making the standards tougher.

In addition to the Minimum Conditions, there are the more technical and detailed set of standards, the Performance Measures, which score a Provincial Government on a large number of indicators for a more nuanced appreciation of the degree to which the principles and practices of accounting and transparency are being acquired and applied. Instead of passing or not passing the test as with the Minimum Conditions, the Performance Measures grades Provincial Governments on a scale between 1 and 100 on a large number of issues. When calculating the amount of the PCDF allocation a Provincial Government merits, the Performance Measures score is taken into consideration for 20

per cent²⁰ of the total allocation. Those who score highest on the Performance Measures will receive a higher allocation than they would otherwise and those scoring lower will receive a lower allocation.

The Performance Measures scoring has varied considerably province to province. For the purposes of this evaluation the scores (out of one hundred) for all the Provinces are added and the average taken to give a view of the overall trend in performance. Table VII.2 gives the total scores and averages for each of five years.

Table VII.2: Performance Measure Scoring Averaged for All Provinces 2009-2013

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total Score	363	534	565	575	413
Average	40	59	63	64	46

Source: Sawaneh, Momodou Lamin and Bishnu Puri, *Final Report: Baseline Studies on the Provincial Government Strengthening Programme*, September 2014

Like the Minimum Conditions, scoring on the Performance Measures indicates a drop in performance or at least an inability to maintain the same level of performance previously achieved. But this is only half the story. The Performance Measures, like the Minimum Conditions, have been “reinforced” in 2012 and “the assessment team was advised to ensure that there are evidences of good compliance before points are awarded.”²¹ The decline in scoring has as much to do with the increasingly stringent criteria as with the performance of Provincial Governments.

The initial upward trend in both the Performance Measures and the Minimum Conditions followed by a downward trend is due in part to the large variation in the provinces and how disposed they are, for cultural and political reasons, to embrace the integrity principles and practices. Three of the nine have been comparatively well disposed: Choiseul, Central and Western. Three much less so: Guadalcanal, Malaita and Renn Bell. And the three remaining - Makira Ulawa, Isabel, Temotu - fall somewhere in between; they recognize the value of making the effort to adopt the measures and conditions but they may be deterred for various reasons. These three Provincial Governments in the middle vary greatly year on year. When they were supported by international advisors, many did well. But when the international advisors departed and the first phase of the Programme came to an end, these middle-range performances did not do as well bringing the overall performance of the programme down.

It would be easy to judge the programme in its entirety by the performance of the three worst performers or by one or two in the middle group who did not do well in the final year. The two principal donors of the first phase, Australian Aid and the European Union, expressed concern about these poor performers and especially about allegations of fraud in the three Provincial Governments that did not meet the Minimum Conditions, and further in spite of ultimatums, perpetrators were never apprehended. They have every reason to be concerned. But this neglects the wide variation among Provincial

²⁰ The amount was increased to 30 per cent during the fiscal year 2012-2013.

²¹ Interview by correspondence with the previous Chief Technical Adviser, Momodou Sawaneh, 28 January 2015

Governments and discounts the five or six better performers that have laid the foundations for a more transparent regime and hence capable of managing resources adequately and using it to deliver services.

PGSP must take responsibility for these poor-performing provinces; on this there is no question. For a balanced evaluation PGSP must also be recognized for moving Provincial Governments reasonably far along the path of a radical change in how they manage funds and services. Everyone acknowledges in one way or another the improvement in the accountability of provinces, even if they do not meet international criteria.

Overall, the positive and negative incentives appear to have instilled an awareness within all Provincial Governments of the value of increasing the Provincial Government accountability. This is true even for those who have failed the Minimum Conditions and done poorly on the Performance Measures where administrators and politicians and even some of the population appreciate that Provincial Governments have been motivated by efforts to meet international and national standards and consequently are aware of the need to act more reputably.

LESSONS LEARNED/PROBLEMS OBSERVED

Trainings. Training records are not sufficiently detailed to examine the training regimen closely or to determine how well the events were received. Records do show, however, that the number of topics and attendees covered a lot of material and served numerous trainees. The large number who have participated is impressive since the cost of travel and entitlements and venues is considerable in the Solomon Islands, especially up to 2012 when the senior participants were paid international rates. Entitlements were reduced for Provincial Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries and this has resulted in a decline in participation.

Many of the courses were very general in order to appeal to all nine provinces and to ensure that all representatives got a smattering of the information required. A large number of interlocutors observed that they got the idea but not the techniques or the procedures they were supposed to learn or on which they would be judged. Many of the administrators interviewed said they needed more focused, in depth training if they were really to carry out the programme as it was envisioned.

Table VII.3 summarizes the topics, dates and numbers of trainees. For the most part, the subjects were standardized. What the training regimen clearly did not do was to customize training sessions to respond to the particular needs of non-performing Provincial Governments whose inadequacies were obvious in the annual assessments. None of the training programmes were designed to meet specific requirements.

Table VII.3: Training Topics, Dates and Numbers

Trainings	Number of participants	Provinces	Dates
Elected officials, clerks and speakers	239	9 provinces 11 training events	2009-2011
Accounting training for provincial accounting staff	85	9 provinces 2 training events	2010
Mind Your Own Business software training for Provincial Treasurers	27	9 provinces 1 training event	2010
Training for Public Accounts Committees	62	9 provinces 2 training events	2011-2012
Development planning and budgeting	100	9 provinces 3 training events	2011-2013
International Standards of Accounting	53	9 provinces 2 training events	2012 and 2013
Budget Review and Training	167	9 provinces 4 training events	2011-2014
PAC training	62	9 provinces 1 training per province	2011-2012
Budget review	162	9 provinces 4 training events	2010-2014
Website training	20	9 provinces 1 event	2013
Provincial Policy Development	67	2 provinces 2 events	2012 & 2014

Source: Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening, Provincial Government Strengthening Programme, *Annual (Multi-year) Progress Report, 1st July 2008 to 31st March 2014*, Submitted and Endorsed by UNDP, 2014

Independent Assessors. A team of independent assessors visits provinces regularly to review accounts. They are the same persons and members of the same firm year by year engaged by MPGIS. In all four provinces visited by the consultant, concerns have been raised that the review done by the assessors has been too rapid for the scope of material to be reviewed. In their haste, files have gone missing. Some files are not consulted. Provincial Treasurers worry that vouchers might have been assumed to be missing when in fact the assessors did not take the time to find them. More seriously, the assessors do not discuss their findings or review their concerns with Provincial Government staff who, when they receive the results, are unable to understand the basis for a report's conclusions.

Minimum Conditions, a blunt instrument. Minimum Conditions were originally effective since they provided a strong incentive for Provincial Governments to qualify for their PCDF allocation. In addition, there were the Performance Measures, which could also

affect allocations depending on the score received. At the beginning, having two incentive schemes and two annual assessments, was well justified. Presently, the Minimum Conditions appear to have outlived their usefulness. They are a particularly blunt instrument, especially when a province does not qualify for two or even three years in succession. The Performance Measures, by comparison, provide a more nuanced assessment, which may result in deductions from the allocations but do not result in blocking the allocations altogether. This may be the time to drop the Minimum Conditions and incorporate some of its critical elements into the Performance Measures that can continue to provide an effective incentive for Provincial Governments to mind their accounts and procedures but with less severe penalties if they do not receive a perfect score.

RECOMMENDATIONS/POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Customize training programmes to meet provincial needs. General training programmes should be used only for first-time Provincial Secretaries or Deputies and Treasurers. For the most part, training programmes should now be designed taking the past performance of specific Provincial Governments into consideration to focus on filling some obvious gaps. Customized training programmes should now replace general training courses.

Review Performance Measure assessment teams. The performance of assessment teams needs to be reviewed. The assessments they undertake are useful only to the extent that they are used to improve the performance of Provincial Government financial staff in meeting a set of increasingly rigorous standards. They should be an integral part of this improvement process. They must also recognize that they need to exemplify the values of meticulousness in their own work in order to encourage it in their clients.

Discontinue Minimum Conditions. Minimum Conditions proved a strong incentive initially for Provincial Governments to adhere to a set of basic standards. When the conditions and their application were made more stringent, larger numbers of provinces failed and some have failed in a number of successive years. Disqualifications from accessing development allocations have shamed administrators and politicians, as they should, but they have also punished citizens who do not benefit from the allocation and this is not so justifiable. By all accounts, the disqualifications have done little to motivate the disqualified administrators and politicians in Provincial Governments to improve their performance. It has been suggested, and rightly so, that the Minimum Conditions are perhaps too blunt an instrument which are not succeeding in getting the non-performing Provincial Governments to mend their ways. They should be discontinued. Incentives are still needed and will continue to be needed, but the Performance Measures can be amended to incorporate critical features of the Minimum Conditions and the Performance Measures should continue to be used to reward or punish performing and non-performing Provincial Governments.

Section VIII: Effectiveness - Monitoring and Evaluation

KEY ISSUES

For the most part, the programme followed the project document's guidelines in implementing the suggested assessment and monitoring activities. Assessment instruments were drafted and administered on a yearly basis. Results were tabulated and used to track the public expenditure management performance of Provincial Governments. The results were used further to incentivize Provincial Governments to perform better and generally, these yearly assessments have been effective.

There were, in addition, supervision missions conducted by UNDP and other international donors conducted for most of the years and annual reviews were conducted by the PGSP under the authority of the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening.

A Baseline Study was undertaken, though instead of being completed in the first year of implementation, it was conducted more than half-way through programme completion. It is a useful compendium of information, attitudes and perspectives of stakeholders. It is, however, more of a final wrap-up of programme outcomes than a resource of pre-programme data and perspectives to which comparable post-programme data and perspectives can be compared.

Overall, monitoring exercises and assessments did take place. But they focused only on one aspect of the programme, the accountability aspect, and for the most part neglected another equally critical aspect of the programme: project implementation and impact of projects funded with PCDF resources.

A total of 654 projects were financed under PCDF. It was perhaps the job of the Provincial Governments to keep track of them since it was the Provincial Governments that executed the projects, but the expenditures were programme expenditures and in comparison with the attention given to meeting accountability standards, the attention given these development efforts is comparatively modest. The programme reported quarterly and annually on the number of projects implemented by sector, little more. Actual expenditures by sector must be found by looking year-by-year at archived accounting records. Project status is available only in the provinces where typically one finds only records of the current year except in exceptional cases. There is no easy access to such matters as: project status, budgeted amounts, amounts expended, adherence to programme directives, time to completion, community engagement, numbers of beneficiaries, community satisfaction, risks and difficulties.

Monitoring and assessment of PCDF projects implemented with programme funds is absent for the most part. It may have been that this function fell through the cracks of a complex endeavour. The monitoring and evaluation matrix originally included in the

project document seems to expect that the Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC) were expected to develop a monitoring and evaluation system to be used to track all aspects of programme performance, but as of 2014 this unit in MDPAC was still not fully operational. It may also have been assumed that the Chief Planning Office in Provincial Governments where there was usually a computer and staff and a room to keep records, had the job of monitoring projects. In fact Chief Planning Officers did undertake monitoring missions and some of them were useful but they were few and far between. There was no common monitoring template for Chief Planning Officers to follow for their monitoring visits, no standard for community engagement and little concern with outcome information.

LESSONS LEARNED/PROBLEMS OBSERVED

Keeping track of PCDF projects. Large numbers of projects have been implemented by Provincial Governments making use of the programme's Provincial Capacity Development Fund. The programme has prepared guidelines for selecting and implementing these projects. But there has been little follow-up apart from summarizing the number of projects by sector. The planning offices at the provincial level keep records of current projects but there is very little on PCDF-funded projects overall, how they were implemented, the constraints and lessons learned and what have been the outcomes. Virtually no information is kept in the MPGIS programme office with the result that relatively little is known about the efforts to deliver public services at the provincial level.

There was an expectation that a monitoring and evaluation cell was to be established within the MPGIS. One monitoring and evaluation officer did in fact have a desk at the time of this evaluation but his understanding of the functions to be performed was minimal. Another was to be engaged and there had been an intention at one point to engage a specialist who could put a system in place that these two could follow. This has not been done.

RECOMMENDATIONS/POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Establish a functioning monitoring and evaluation cell. The programme is without a dedicated monitoring and evaluation staff. Programme officers in MPGIS have intended to engage competent researchers with an agreed-upon approach to collecting information on the projects the programme has financed. At present, MPGIS has engaged only one person, and this person lacks the requisite knowledge or experience. If PGSP and MPGIS are to have any understanding of programme outcomes, experienced monitoring and evaluation researchers need to be in the field.

Section IX: Cross Cutting Issue – Gender

KEY ISSUES

PGSP expects Provincial Governments to endorse projects that serve the interests of women in a rolling three-year plan and annually in the planning for each fiscal year. Assessors check planning documents on a yearly basis and provinces are liable to receive deductions from their performance assessment if assessors do not find explicit instances of projects designed with women in mind. In fact, while provinces may be aware of this requirement, few adhere. In 2013, only three out of the nine provinces have actually fulfilled this requirement. In 2014, it increased to five. Programme efforts have encountered a significant lack of concern in Provincial Governments for gender issues.

It is perhaps to be expected. The project document acknowledges that while there are no formal barriers to improving women's involvement in formal and informal decision-making and to women's participation in the economy, there is a strong cultural resistance. Only one woman has been elected to the National Assembly since independence. Out of 150 seats in Provincial Assemblies, very few have gone to women. And PGSP's mandate only marginally addresses matters relevant to gender equity. There was the suggestion early-on that provincial administrators would, as part of the programme, urge consultations with Provincial Assemblies to address gender issues and ask Provincial Assemblies to encourage more female representation. In many of the provinces, however, Provincial Assemblies regard provincial administrators, the programme's key actors, as impediments to their own political ambitions and therefore unlikely allies in paying greater attention to women.

Results have been modest. Out of 654 projects approved by Provincial Governments only 24 have had a gender connexion, less than 1 per cent. The cumulative total of all expenditures on projects with gender connexions is 3.4 per cent.

Over time, things have improved somewhat. The number of provinces supporting projects for women has increased marginally as has the amount of expenditures allocated to projects with a connection to women. Table IX.1 provides evidence of modest increases in the number of provinces endorsing projects for women as well as the amount of expenditures.

Table IX.1: Attention to Women in PCDF Project Selection

Year	# Provinces with projects for women	Total Expenditures	
		\$ US	Per cent of total
2012/13	1	133,000	.5%
2013/14	2	1,137,000	3%
2014/15	3	2,030,000	6%

Source: PGSP project files

LESSONS LEARNED/PROBLEMS OBSERVED

Limitations of infrastructure. PGSP has seen itself as a programme that primarily supports small infrastructure typically including small clinics, classrooms, special pedagogical facilities, storehouses, fisheries facilities and so on. It is quite likely that planning officers are challenged to think of infrastructure projects of particular benefit to women. One of the preferred choices has been women's resource centres even though these resource centres find it difficult to design programming that will benefit women.

Politics and development planning. Provincial Assemblies are reluctant to approve resources for women when, from their perspective, supporting projects for women seems to have little political value. It has been frustrating for members of Provincial Councils of Women whose appeals have been ignored or whose requests have been compromised in order to allow politicians to support projects that serve their own political ambitions.

RECOMMENDATIONS/POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Alter programme procedures to encourage support services for women. However well-disposed PGSP staff may be to assisting women, and they are, the structure of the programme makes it difficult. The emphasis on infrastructure on the one hand and the requisite approval of provincial politicians on the other, make it difficult for even the most well-disposed gender advocate to support more projects to benefit women. Changes should be made to programme procedures to encourage Provincial Governments to focus less on infrastructure and more on facilities or initiatives that are likely to address the particular needs of women. And measures should be taken to achieve a better balance of power between Provincial Assembly members and provincial administrators so that development planners have as much say in planning for services – ones that assist women, for example - as politicians.

Section X: Sustainability

KEY ISSUES

PGSP has all of the markings of a sustainable programme. Many of those who participate in it as provincial government administrators speak of PGSP less as a project than as a set of practices which have become part of their job. The challenge that remains is to complete the transition from a project's practices to accepted government procedures.

Two prominent features of PGSP have brought PGSP relatively close to making the transition from project to routine governance.

The first is that PGSP has focused significantly on the means of implementing public services and not simply on the services themselves. The programme has put in place administrative practices first and drawn on these skills for managing the building of social infrastructure second. The practices have been widely integrated into routine practice.

Secondly, the practices are anchored in on-going functioning government institutions. In many of the provinces, PGSP has very nearly become part of administrators' job descriptions. There are the ever present manuals which administrators have to read, the trainings which many have attended and will presumably continue to attend and the persistent reviews administrators undergo to measure their performance. They are responsible for preparing three-year plans, annual plans, project priorities, project implementation and completion. It seems rather likely that these will continue as Provincial Government responsibilities when external support is discontinued. Even in Provincial Governments where PGSP procedures have not become standard practice and where PGSP is a project in progress, there is an awareness of the importance of making them so.

LESSONS LEARNED/PROBLEMS OBSERVED

Transitioning from project to national governance status. It is not clear what the next step is in transitioning from project practice to government procedures. But the transition is in sight. The Joint Oversight Committee remains the ultimate governing body and it should continue to meet though with a changed membership. Structural changes may be necessary within MPGIS when PGSP is fully merged with the ministry. The remit of its training division will require rethinking. A gender advisor would be a good idea. These are among the topics that require consideration.

A diversity of community engagement strategies. At present, there is no accepted and acknowledged practice for ensuring community ownership of projects financed with programme funds. Although community engagement is an important feature of sustainability, there is as yet no clear policy for engaging beneficiaries. Most of the provinces visited have a different approach. Makira Ulawa Province prefers forming project site committees. Central Province puts in place community monitoring

committees. Guadalcanal, as far as the evaluation was able to observe, does neither. A few are concerned with upkeep and maintenance, and others are not. The long-term viability of projects as well as the efficient functioning of a sustainable national governance practice, needs to have an understanding that community engagement is a necessary part of the process.

Present funding cannot guarantee an effective transition. The procedures are in place and there are guide manuals, operational manuals and systems in place. But they need to be updated as the project transitions to a national governance programme. The Performance Measures manual needs to be updated with guidelines on scoring and assessment. The accounting modalities, while already part of the government accounting protocol, need another few seasons of application. Training programmes need to be devised for targeting problem provinces and areas. More funding is needed for supplement the funding from the Solomon Islands Government for keeping the PCDF resources at their present level. This is not starting from scratch but a modest amount of continuing international funding is required.

RECOMMENDATIONS/POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Chart the course from project practices to routine government procedures. When PGSP transitions to a fully nationalized programme, programme structures will need to merge with existing governing institutions and this will entail changes within the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening and perhaps to the Ministry of Public Services. An operational plan should be prepared to chart the trajectory for a fully nationalized programme.

Continue international funding. If the government is prepared to address some of the obstacles to achieving greater PGSP impact, i.e. provide greater protection and tenure for core provincial administrators, revise the Provincial Government Act and urge national ministries to work closely with provincial administrators in planning and financing, then international donors are urged to support the commitment of the Solomon Islands government with a modest financial commitment of their own.

Section XI: Conclusion

Decentralization programmes are uncertain endeavours. Unless a central government genuinely recognizes the necessity of transferring resources and responsibilities to sub-national entities, decentralization will stall. The central government and its allies need to support the transfer of necessary skills and help to make sure that local elites do not capture the benefits.

During the first phase of PGSP there have been strong expressions of support given by the central government, testimony that the government recognizes the necessity of strengthening Provincial Governments. The central government in this instance does appear prepared perhaps to learn from the first phase of PGSP and take specific measures that include reinforcing the position of Provincial Secretaries, rethinking the structure of Provincial Governments and potentially encouraging national ministries to devolve some programmes and some resources. These are positive signs.

This is in some significant measure due to the successes of the PGSP. The successes are not uniform and this report is clear about this. The successes have not been consistent either in all aspects of the programme or in all provinces. There are significant differences in the performance of Provincial Governments with some moving quickly toward managing their own development initiatives while others have been unusually slow. The programme has focused on conveying management and accounting skills and has focused much less on following the development impact of projects that Provincial Governments have funded in the process of acquiring these skills. Some changes need to be made to the programme.

It is clear, nevertheless, that there have been achievements. Some Provincial Governments have now reached the stage that their books can be professionally audited. A relatively strict regimen is in place for measuring management and accounting skills and it works in some provinces to push administrators to improve their skills. In others, whether one agrees or not, low-performing provinces are held accountable. Some provinces have increased the amount of own-source revenue. There is growing awareness that the present structure of Provincial Governments impedes efforts to plan coherently for development spending and, while in some provinces things may take a while to change, there is generally an awareness that administrators and politicians have somehow to work more in concert.

As PGSP proceeded through Phase I and as Provincial Governments had, for the first time, their own source of revenue for managing development activities, the value in many places became obvious. Even when there was considerable government interference, clinics and schools were proposed, some were built, some productive services were constructed with mixed success, some communities began to regard the Provincial Governments as credible partners in providing services. Provincial governments may not soon be professional developers but they are permanent and on site and this sets them uniquely apart from NGOs and international organizations. PGSP showed that some of the Provincial Governments could rise to the occasion in the short term, others were

likely to improve their performance as executors of development more slowly and improve their functioning in the medium term, and others may take longer. But it is possible and unquestionably more sustainable than other approaches.

This evaluation is confident in concluding that a foundation for strengthening Provincial Governments has been laid and that the edifice now in place, however partial, can be built on and if this is done, Provincial Governments will soon be an imperfect but functioning mechanism for delivering public services to a degree that otherwise would not be possible. PGSP is a promising candidate for continued development investment.

Annex I: Individuals Consulted

MINISTRY OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

Stanley Pirione	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening
Nancy Rose Legua	Undersecretary, Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening
Robert Kaua	Director of Provincial Governance
Melanie Phillips	Legal Officer, Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening
Geoffrey Vakolevae	Chief Accountant, Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening
Priscilla Cheka	Accountant, Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening
Joe Rausi	Previously consultant to Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening on PGSP
Charles Konai	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening

NATIONAL MINISTRIES AND GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

Franco Rodie	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Human Resources
Nego Sisiolo	Permanent Secretary Ministry of Public Service
Lennis Rukale	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace
Robert Cohen	Deputy Auditor General, Office of the Auditor General
Chris Hunuparuo	Deputy Secretary, Prime Minister's Office
Nelson Ari	Assistant Director, National Planning, Ministry of Planning and Aid Coordination

Roy Mai	Technical Officer, National Planning, Ministry of Planning and Aid Coordination
Gilbert Tabihau	Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Makira Ulawa Province
Fred Wasui	Minister of Education, Executive, Makira Ulawa Province
Alphonsus Punia	Chief Agricultural Officer, Ministry of Agriculture, Makira Ulawa Province
Fred Naphtali	Chief Health Officer, Western Province
Freedom Tozaka	Chief Education Officer, Western Province

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

Charles Sisimia	Deputy Provincial Secretary, Guadalcanal Province
Timothy Ngele	Provincial Secretary, Guadalcanal Province
Ambrose Siau	Provincial Chief Planning Officer, Guadalcanal Province
Tomas Weape	Premier, Makira Ulawa Province
Silas Sitai	Acting Provincial Secretary, Makira Ulawa Province
Eddie Waga	Projects Officer, Makira Ulawa Province
Cicilia Sinedile	Acting Chief Planning Officer, Makira Ulawa Province
George Gabara	Minister of Works, Executive, Makira Ulawa Province
Francis Asru	Provincial Assembly Member, Makira Ulawa Province
Kevin Haga	Minister of Planning, Executive, Makira Ulawa Province
Jerry Haga	Speaker, Provincial Assembly, Makira Ulawa Province
Patrick Taorau	Treasurer, Makira Ulawa Province
Eunice Bwea	Assistant Provincial Treasurer, Makira Ulawa Province

Nelson Fanongamua	Chief, Ward Development Committee, Nukukaisi, Central Makira, Makira Ulawa Province
Commins Ikioa	Past Provincial Secretary, Makira Ulawa Province
Patrick Toirena	Deputy Provincial Secretary, Western Province
Pye Robert Kuve	Premier, Western Province
Richard Tekefune	Speaker of the Provincial Assembly, Western Province
Gideon Tuke	Clerk of the Provincial Assembly, Western Province
Andrickson Maqu	Deputy Clerk of the Provincial Assembly, Western Province
Joshua Simbe	Treasurer, Western Province
Margaret Moveli	Chief Planning Officer, Western Province
William Zorivo	Senior Planning Officer, Western Province
James Taeburi	Provincial Secretary, Central Province
Ken Lin	Finance Minister, Provincial Assembly Executive, Central Province
Michael Anofa	Minister of Education, Provincial Assembly Executive, Central Province
James Galina	Provincial Assembly Member, Ngella Ward, Central Province
Jim Planet	Provincial Assembly Member, South Savo Ward, Central Province
Polycarp Galaigu	Provincial Assembly Member, N.W. Gela Ward, Central Province
George S. Mapuli	Premier Provincial Assembly Executive, Central Province
John Rapemora	Chief Planning Officer, Central Province
Danny Waneoroa	Deputy Planning Officer, Central Province
Gabriel Agutuzepo	Treasurer, Central Province
John Bosamata	Speaker, Provincial Assembly, Central Province
Selwyn Vasoni	Provincial Secretary, Isabel Province

Adrian Tuhanuko	Deputy Provincial Secretary, Rennell Bellona Province
Solomon Palusi	Past Provincial Secretary, Temotu Province
Randy Solomon	President, Provincial Council of Women, Western Province

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Lorena Elvira Ayusa	Attaché Cooperation, European Union Delegation to the Solomon Islands
Anne Tully	Country Representative, World Bank
Erik C. Johnson	Programme Officer, World Bank
Philippa Venning	Development Officer, Justice for the Poor Project, World Bank
Silke Speier	First Secretary, Economics and Governance, Australian High Commission
Skyneck Opepiko	Programme Manager, Australian High Commission
Sheryl Scott	HRMIS Project Manager, Public Sector Governance Programme, Ministry of Public Service

UNITED NATIONS

Akiko Suzaki	Joint Presence Manager and UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
Barbel Riti	Programme Officer, Governance Programme, UNDP
John Misite'e	Governance Analyst, UNDP
Momodou Sawaneh	Previously Chief Technical Advisor, PGSP (by correspondence)
Atanesai Wasuka	Programme Officer, UN Women (previously project officer with AusAID with responsibility for PGSP)

Annex II: Documents Consulted

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