Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness Initiative – Phase II
Terminal Project Evaluation

Final Report

By Philipp Annawitt

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Project Information

Project title	Pacific Parliamentary Effective Initiative (PPEI) II
Atlas ID/Quantum ID	00129624/ 00115376
Corporate outcome and output	**CPD Outcome 3:** By 2022, people and communities in the Pacific will contribute to and benefit from inclusive, informed, and transparent decision-making processes; accountable and responsive institutions; and improved access to justice. **CPD Output 3.2:** Increased voice and more inclusive participation by women youth and marginalized groups in national and subnational decision-making bodies that are more representative.
Country	Fiji (Multi Country) 5 focus and 5 non focus countries
Region	Asia and the Pacific
Date project document signed	24/4/2019
Project dates	Start date 23/04/2019	Planned end 31/3/2023 extended to December 2023.
Project budget	USD 5,400,000
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	USD 5,150,000 (95% utilization) as of September 2023
Funding source	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)
Implementing party[1]	UNDP

UNDP, together with its development partners and sister UN agencies, have committed technical and financial resources to support Pacific Island Country Legislatures build up capacities and knowledge of legislators specifically around key issues of relevance to development, equality, and gender. In 2019, with the support of the Government of New Zealand UNDP implemented the "Pacific Parliamentary Enhancing Initiative Phase 2 (PPEI II)", in a portfolio approach with other projects addressing the needs of Pacific Island Countries Legislature. The development challenge that PPEI addresses is the limited effectiveness and capacity of national parliaments to engage on key development issues, contribute to national development goals and enhancing national planning processes in a participatory and transparent manner, expand parliamentary outreach and citizen engagement to include traditionally excluded groups such as women and youth, and increase the political participation of women. The second phase of the PPEI focused on a range of regional and country level initiatives and was implemented across 10 Pacific Island countries.

Evaluation information		
Evaluation type (project/ outcome/thematic/country Programme, etc.)	Project evaluation	
Final/midterm review/ other	Final evaluation	
Period under evaluation	Start	End
	April 2019	September 2023
Commissioning Organization	UNDP Pacific Office	
Evaluators	Philipp Annawitt	
Evaluator email address	philipp@pagovernance.com	
Evaluation dates	Start	Completion
	28 September 2023	6 March 2024

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[1] This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

Acknowledgements

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Acronyms & Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
COP	Conference of Parties
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FBO	Floating Budget Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPSP	Fiji Parliament Strengthening Project
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GRES	Gender Results Effectiveness Scale
HQ	Headquarters
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
ILO	International Labor Organization
IPU	Inter-parliamentary Union
IRRF	Integrated Results and Resources Framework
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand
MP	Member of Parliament
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
OECD DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee
PFM	Public Financial Management
PICT	Pacific Island Countries and Territories
PIF	Pacific Island Forum
PIPG	Pacific Islands Parliaments Group
PPEI	Pacific Parliaments Effectiveness Initiative
ROAR	Results-Oriented Annual Report
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SLIP	Strengthening Legislatures in Pacific Islands Projects
SRP	Sub-regional Programme Document for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories
ToR	Terms of Reference
TSM	Temporary Special Measures
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Executive Summary

1. The Context

The Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness Initiative – Phase II (PPEI II) project, implemented from 2019 to 2023, provided comprehensive parliamentary strengthening assistance to four Pacific Islands Countries and Territories – Tonga, Vanuatu, the Cook Islands, and the Solomon Islands, and more limited support to other parliaments – Nauru, Niue, and Tuvalu. Papua New Guinea was included as a focus country, but in practice no longer-term support was provided, and eventually a national strengthening project implemented by the UNDP country office was developed. The PPEI II project, funded by New Zealand's MFAT, followed on from PPEI I which had commenced in 2016. The UNDP Pacific Office's Democratic Governance team implemented the project as part of a portfolio alongside other Pacific parliamentary strengthening initiatives.

2. Purpose and Objective

The overall purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the results achieved so far and lessons learnt by the PPEI-II project. The final evaluation should assess the implementation approaches, results against output targets, contribution to higher level outcome, and issues/challenges encountered, as well as identify and document the lessons learnt and good practices and make specific recommendations for future course of actions. It seeks to answer several questions:

- What was the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of the project?
- What are the lessons learned and opportunities, and the good practices observed?
- To which degree has the project incorporated gender equality and women empowerment, social inclusion, and human rights into its approach and what were the relevant results?
- How effective and appropriate was the project's overall approach and structure in the Pacific context.
- How effective was the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) of the project?

3. Evaluation Methodology and Approach

In evaluating the project's performance, the evaluation applies the OECD DAC evaluation criteria: It reviews. The relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and the way it addressed important cross-cutting issues. The project's output two aimed at making progress in gender equality and women empowerment in the beneficiary parliaments. To review the gender results, the evaluation applied a Gender Results Effectiveness Analysis.

An important caveat of this evaluation concerns **the limited evaluability of the project**. Key documentation, including some annual progress reports, all work plans, most expenditure reports, and all MEL data was not available. The evaluator's planned field mission also had to be cancelled by the Pacific Office for political reasons, confining the evaluation to a remotely conducted review based on a limited documentation basis.

The evaluation relies on the review of the project documentation, and primary information about the focus and non-focus parliaments (strategic plans, procedural frameworks), and a set of semi-structured individual and group interviews with beneficiary parliaments, civil society representatives, development partners engaged with the beneficiary parliaments, the donor MFAT New Zealand, and the UNDP Pacific Office project and Programme teams. Three case studies review project performance across key results areas in individual focus beneficiary parliaments, tracing pathways to project results, and suggesting likely project impact.

4. Summary Principal Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The evaluator would categorize the project's **performance against the OECD DAC evaluation criteria** with a specific rating for the Gender Results Effectiveness as satisfactory overall, with some significant weaknesses as summarized in Figure 1.

Disclaimer: Human Rights, Project Structure, and MEL (as per the Terms of Reference) are not rated but are incorporated under findings from the relevant OECD criteria, for example, MEL findings are under Effectiveness criteria.

OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria	Rating (on a 4-tier scale: not satisfactory - excellent)	Findings	Recommendation
Relevance and Coherence	Partly Satisfactory (2/4)	The project design is relevant and broadly coherent with the priorities of all stakeholders. PPEI's results framework is relevant but unspecific and does not well reflect the interventions delivered by the project and their results. The indicator framework is not measurable. There is no formal role for beneficiaries in the project's strategic management. The project did well to identify relevant risks, but risk management was intermittent and incomplete.	1. Continue the overall strategic direction of the project but review UNDP's value proposition in selected areas. 5. Consider supporting the further development of the PIPG into the Pacific regional parliamentary forum, ensuring the activity of the group benefits all member parliaments. 6. Balance demand-based support with interventions that align with the project's strategic objectives, through developing and applying a comprehensive approach to MP and staff capacity-strengthening.
Effectiveness	Satisfactory (3/4)	The project has been largely effective in improving parliamentary accountability and openness, and flexible in reacting to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project did not achieve the desired results in women empowerment and public engagement. The project's implementation modalities have been largely appropriate to the situation and objectives.	2. Conduct a comprehensive stock-taking exercise of the progress made by the focus parliaments in their parliamentary practice in the areas of PPEI's current and prospective future engagement. 15. Enhance the team managing and delivering the parliamentary portfolio and assign adequate resources to project management, the provision of technical advice, and MEL. 16. Develop a comprehensive MEL Framework for the next project and invest resources into ongoing monitoring and evaluation of project interventions.

Efficiency	Satisfactory (3/4)	The project was efficient in delivering its available resources. The project's portfolio management approach ensures synergies are made across the parliamentary projects implemented by the governance team. The project's peer-learning approach, its cooperation with Australian and New Zealand legislatures, and its investment in parliamentary digitalization have created value for money. The project's lack of knowledge management. makes it likely that resources are wasted on "reinventing the wheel" in the future.	4. Invest in the design phase of the next project to develop a realistic results framework that is specific and relevant to the state of parliamentary development of the beneficiary parliaments. Manage risks more actively throughout project implementation. 7. Invest more time and resources in coordination and building strategic partnerships with the interventions of other development partners, in particular the IPU. 13. Invest in the further digitalization of focus parliaments to support productivity gains and increased transparency and public engagement.
Sustainability and Impact	Satisfactory (3/4)	The project's results, in procedural reform and regional integration, will have long-term impact. Its support to strategic planning, and MP induction are key to delivering and sustaining results across the parliaments' election cycles. The project is likely to have limited impact on gender equality in the beneficiary parliaments and in their engagement of civil society. The PPEI focus parliaments remain committed to long term institutional development that is aligned with PPEI's support. The main risk to sustainability lies in the donor dependency of capacity-building and parliamentary development.	3. Give project beneficiaries ownership and a say in the strategic management of the project. 14. Have an on-the-ground presence in all focus parliaments.
Cross-cutting issues: SDGs, climate change and social inclusion	Excellent (4/4)	The project did well in mainstreaming cross-cutting issues in its activities. It integrated a focus on the SDGs into its committee strengthening and its MP professional development, it advocated for and supported an SDG self-assessment exercise by the Tonga Parliament. It promoted the inclusion of climate change mitigation and adaptation in the regional parliamentary agenda through the PIPG. The project included a focus on social inclusion in its support to public consultation and outreach.	6. Consider expanding the LoA (Letter of Agreement) arrangements with focus parliaments to deliver procurement-intensive national-level activities in the focus PICTs. 11. Expand engagement of focus parliaments on the SDGs and climate change. 12. Develop a more comprehensive and strategic approach to outreach and engagement of vulnerable groups. Ensure disability inclusion is mainstreamed across the project.

Gender Results Effectiveness	Satisfactory (3/4)	Given the difficult gender-normative environment, the results achieved for the gender responsive rule changes and the gender budget analysis produced by the Floating Budget Office, which were mostly gender responsive, is a modest achievement. The project's work with political parties on voluntary measures for gender equality and women empowerment was not successful, but the initiative to reach beyond the parliamentary institution and support demand for gender equality reforms was appropriate.	9. Expand the support on gender equality and women empowerment in focus parliaments. 10. Support the demand-side of parliamentary governance to achieve better impact on gender equality and women empowerment and social inclusion.

Figure 1 Performance of the project against adapted OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria. Source: Authors Depiction.

1. Background

Parliaments in the Pacific face unique challenges due to their relatively small size and membership and limited resources in terms of staffing and funding, and the political environment in which they operate. Political parties in the Pacific, where they exist, tend to be weakly institutionalized and personalized.[2] Defections of MPs and party leaders are common. The presence of well-defined government and opposition groups is essential for scrutinizing legislation, ensuring adherence to the national budget throughout the cycle, and holding the government accountable for implementing its governance Programme. The weakness or absence of institutional and political party structures also provides challenges for the functioning of PICT parliaments. A fluid party system and frequent shifts in political coalitions lead to unstable government, where shifts of coalition occur frequently, including between elections.

This political instability also undermines the ability of committees to work as bipartisan instruments of legislative review and oversight, ensuring government policy, budgets and laws meet the needs of the citizens. The political instability has manifested itself in a tendency for short election cycles in some countries, notably in Vanuatu, where early elections bring challenges in terms of building and retaining knowledge and skill in the institutions as MPs turn over more frequently.

The effectiveness of government remains low in the Pacific region: Digitalization of governance has not far progressed.[3] Corruption is high, and includes vote-buying.[4] Environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change are significant challenges for PICTS, as is their vulnerability to natural disasters. Their relative geographical remoteness makes PICTS susceptible to economic and financial shocks. In fact, PICTS are the most structurally vulnerable countries in the world. [5]

The functioning of parliaments in the pacific was heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic which reached its peak in 2021 to mid-2022. In this challenging period, many PICTS closed their borders to non-nationals to stem the tide of infections. For the intermittent periods of lockdown, parliaments were not able to meet which causes a crisis in accountability at a time where governments take radical public health measures to stem the pandemic that affect the citizen's enjoyment of fundamental rights like freedom of movement and assembly.

Since 2018, UNDP with the financial support from; I) the Government of Japan and, II) the Government of New Zealand, developed 2 projects. The Japan funded "Strengthening Legislatures in the Pacific (SLIP)," and the New Zealand funded "Pacific Parliamentary Enhancing Initiative (PPEI)." The development challenge that these projects are addressing is the limited effectiveness and capacity of national parliaments to engage on key development issues, contribute to national development goals and enhancing national planning processes in a participatory and transparent manner, expand parliamentary outreach and citizen engagement to include traditionally excluded groups such as women and youth, and increase the political participation of women. In terms of regional and national coverage, the following table shows the geographic focus of the 2 projects. While the country demarcation is clear in terms of project allocation, the reality is that during implementation and considering both projects being implemented within the Parliamentary portfolio, there are some overlaps and joint funding of activities.

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[2] Roland Rich (ed.), *Political Parties in the Pacific*, Canberra, 2006, p.39ff

[3] UNDESA, E-Governance Survey, 2022. The Future of Digital Government, New York, 2022 p. 74

[4] Transparency International, Global Corruption Barometer – Pacific, 2021, https://www.transparency.org/en/gcb/pacific/pacific-2021

[5] Sustainable Development Solutions Network, *Sustainable Development Report for SIDS 2023*, September 2023, p. 28ff

The second phase of the PPEI focused on a range of regional and country level initiatives and was implemented in 11 Pacific Island countries. It followed the conclusion of PPEI-Phase I (May 2016 – March 2019). PPEI-II project focused its activities on achieving two specific outputs of Outcome 5 of the United Nations Development Programme Sub-Regional Programme Document (SRP) for the Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (2018-2022). The project is for four years and has 2 main outputs:

- Output 1: Increased transparency and accountability in governance institutions and formal and informal decision-making processes; and
- Output 2: Increased voice and more inclusive participation by women, youth and marginalized groups in national and subnational decision-making bodies that are more representative.

UNDP, in partnership with New Zealand, has been strengthening PICT parliaments since 2006. In 2016, the Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness Initiative, funded by New Zealand, was launched as a regional project, strengthen the Parliaments of the Cook Islands, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Papua New Guinea, and from 2018, Vanuatu. PPEI II was introduced as a follow-up project, which an expanded scope including the six so-called non-focus countries of Niue, Nauru, Tokelau, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and Palau. The project was implemented from April 2019 to March 2023, with an extension until December 2023. The project was not implemented in Papua New Guinea, except for the participation of New Guinea MPs and staff in an online seminar organized by the project.

PPEI II is embedded into the portfolio that is the UNDP Sub-regional Programme for the Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (SRP) 2018-2022.[6] In addition to the climate emergency and challenges in economic development, the SRP sought to address governance challenges including high corruption, low representation and participation of women, youth and marginalized groups in politics, a lack of transparency in governance and overall low accountability of governments.[7] The governance team of the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji implements the project in a portfolio approach alongside related parliamentary initiatives, such as the Strengthening Legislatures' Capacity in the Pacific Project and the Fiji Parliamentary Strengthening Project.

The implementation of PPEI II had not been reviewed at mid-term. The terminal evaluation of PPEI II was commissioned in October 2023.

Scope of the Evaluation

Unit of analysis (full project/Programme/ parts of the project/Programme; etc.)	Pacific Parliamentary Effective Initiative Project II
Time period of the project/Programme covered by the evaluation	24/4/2019 to 30/09/2023
Geographical coverage of the evaluation	All parliaments are covered under the project.

The final evaluation scope includes all aspects of the Pacific Parliamentary Effective Initiative Project II.

The PPEI 2 utilizes a wide range of strategies and pathways to achieve change, considering both technical and 'political' motivations and influences. It seeks to engage parliaments respectfully and effectively in different cultures and contexts, responding to their needs. Its activities are designed intentionally to maximize the likelihood of positive change in parliaments (i.e., structures and processes) to ensure long-term adoption and sustainability.

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[6] Available at https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1293890?ln=en
[7] UNDP *Subregional Programme document for the Pacific Island Countries (2018-2022)*, p. 5-7

PPEI has a very agile and flexible approach towards engagement, learning from past experiences including PPEI Phase I, the other regional parliamentary project and changing strategies as required. While its original theory of change presents a concise summary of its core assumptions, in practice PPEI understands the change it is seeking to achieve with parliaments is complex and that the connection between all these activities and outcomes is multifaceted, complex, and dynamic.

This terminal evaluation integrated gender-sensitive and socially inclusive and accommodate and give attention to assessment from these perspectives. The approach accommodated and identified differences in assessment, values, and understanding of impact for stakeholders, and provide methodological approaches that create dialogue and exchange between parliaments stakeholders and their different perspectives. It is sensitive to Pacific Island approaches, and respectful of the knowledge of Pacific Islanders.

Below are guiding question aligning to the OECD Principles:

Criteria	Guiding questions
Relevance/ Coherence	▪ How well does the project and its outcomes align with the priorities of parliaments in both focus and non-focus PPEI countries? ▪ How well does the project and its outcomes align with PPEI parliament's national development priorities and with regional development priorities? ▪ How well does the project align with national and regional gender equality and other social protection commitments? ▪ Does the project objective fit UNDP Pacific strategic priorities? ▪ How well does the project align with similar interventions in the region, especially those supported by its donor partners? ▪ In what ways has the project responded and adapted to maintain relevance and coherence for all stakeholders?
Effectiveness	▪ What have been the key results and changes achieved by the project to date? ▪ To what extent will the project meet its original outcomes within the current program phase? Do these remain practical and feasible? ▪ Do the project assumptions and project theory of change continue to address the key factors which are likely to enable or challenge the progress of this project? ▪ Has the project been able to respond effectively to new emerging opportunities? ▪ In what ways should the project theory of change be further developed, given progress to date and changes in project context? ▪ What implications do recommended changes to the project theory of change have for project strategies, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting?
Efficiency	● Has the project been efficient in leveraging resources and partnerships that are currently contributing to, or have contributed to achieving outcomes? ● In what way have changes in the context affected project cost effectiveness? ● What changes ought to be made in project strategies to ensure the most efficient approaches to project implementation?
Sustainability and Impact	▪ To what extent has the project laid the foundations of the results being sustainable and long term in general, particularly gender equality and social inclusion? ▪ Are there any social, institutional, financial, or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project results and the project contributions to country Programme outputs and outcomes?

	- What is the chance that the level of stakeholder ownership and institutional capacity will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained? - To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights, and human development? - To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?
Human rights	- To what extent does the project adhere to and further supports human rights principles? - To what extent does the project integrate or consider human rights-based approaches in the design and implementation of the project?
Gender Equality	PPEI proposes that it is impossible to risk-inform development without understanding and addressing the underlying vulnerabilities that arise due to structural inequalities that prevent women and marginalized groups from contributing to and benefitting from that development. To ensure that the process is equitable, and benefits reach marginalized groups, the development process must be informed by diverse voices. The TE will assess the quality and value of the PPEI gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) strategies, including how comprehensively and effectively the project has partnered with women, marginalized groups, including people living with a disability, and those marginalized by other intersecting social identities (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, living in rural or remote areas, etc.), in project activity planning, implementation and assessment.
Project Structure	- How should the project be structured to meet UNDP processes, respond to donor partner accountability and reporting requirements, and meet its intended outcomes? - Does the team have the required skills and experience, or technical partnerships in place to deliver the outcomes of the project? - Are there additional activities, relevant to project stakeholders and in line with project outcomes, which could be included in future development of this project?
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	- How comprehensively has the project collected, analyzed, and reported verifiable information about its progress? - Are there missing indicators that are cost-effective and more impactful to measure? - In what way could the project Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework be further developed and improved to ensure accountability to all stakeholders and support further project improvement? - How is the projects' learning being captured and shared, and are there ways to improve information capture and its communication to various audiences?

2. Approach and Methodology

The objective of the final PPEI-II terminal project evaluation is to assess the results and impact the project has achieved in a systematic way. The purpose is to draw lessons learned from project implementation that may inform future strengthening of Pacific Islands parliament but also contribute to UNDP's organizational learning. Lessons learned may be applied in parliamentary strengthening initiatives in other jurisdictions. This evaluation makes specific recommendations for a follow-up parliamentary strengthening initiative. The evaluation answers the following overarching questions (as per the ToR (Terms of Reference) (enclosed in Annex 3 of this report):

- What was the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of the project?
- To which degree has the project incorporated gender equality and women empowerment, social inclusion, and human rights into its approach and what were the relevant results?
- How effective and appropriate was the project's overall approach and structure in the Pacific context.
- What are the lessons learned and opportunities, and the good practices observed?
- How effective was the monitoring, evaluation, and learning of the project?

The evaluation's analytical framework is aligned with the UN EG and OECD DAC evaluation approaches and will look at the following dimensions of project performance:

The evaluation assesses the (1) relevance of the project and its theory of change and its coherence with national, regional and UNDP priorities, and the appropriateness of any changes made to the project's theory of change and strategy.

The evaluation assesses (2) the effectiveness of the project in achieving results in line with the objectives and desired results outlined in the project document. As requested by the country office, the evaluation reviews in particular detail the delivery modalities of the project, including the project structure and the MEL approach of the project. This is done with a view to addressing known challenges in preparation for the next project phase.

The evaluation assesses (3) the longer-term impact of the project for its beneficiaries and the sustainability of the project's results beyond the life cycle of the initiative.

The evaluation considers the mainstreaming of (4) crosscutting issues in the project: the focus on the engagement of marginalized groups, the sustainable development goals, and climate change.

The evaluation conducted (5) a Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES) analysis of project results in line with the UNDP recommended methodology[8].

The evaluation matrix with detailed questions guiding the evaluation of the project's performance is enclosed in Annex 1 of this report.

As noted in the evaluation's inception report, **the evaluation departs from the Terms of Reference** in one important aspect. The evaluation does not consider the integration of people with disabilities in the gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming approaches of the project,[9] as this element of mainstreaming was not implemented during the project. While the project document makes passing note of "disability" as one of several issues to be mainstreamed, any approach to mainstreaming is not

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[8] UNDP Independent Evaluation Office, *Assessing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*,
https://erc.undp.org/methods-center/methods/data-analysis-approaches-methods/accessing-gender-equality
[9] Based on interviews with former project staff.

described in the project document. The project Social and Environmental Screening likewise makes no reference to disability.

The evaluability analysis of the project based on the supplied information and the requirements of the assignment, revealed **significant limitations in the project's evaluability.** These were noted in the inception report. It seems that a sizeable part of the essential project documentation is not on file at the Pacific Office: Documentation on the project's implementation strategies & modalities, implementation progress, results achieved, and the monitoring approach is incomplete, with semi-annual and annual progress reports being only partially available, and Programme management committee (the equivalent of a project board for this project) reports being entirely unavailable. There is also no information on the monitoring approach of the project. (Refer to the list of supporting documents reviewed for his evaluation in Annex 4 of this report). UNDP interviewees indicated that some project documentation was lost during an online system transition. Unfortunately, due to political and logistical challenges, **the evaluator was unable to visit** the UNDP team and beneficiary parliaments and all consultations were conducted remotely, which limited the choice of data collection methods. The evaluator has tried to compensate for the lack of data available through scheduling group interviews and through introducing case studies to identify results pathways (see explanations below). The project's results framework being unspecific and monitoring data not being collected against indicators, a definitive assessment of impact against the project objectives was not possible. These shortcomings are noted in the relevant sections '3.1 Relevance and Coherence,' '3.2 Effectiveness,' and '3.4 Sustainability and Impact' below: In reviewing the effectiveness of the project, the evaluator needed to depart from the project's unspecific result framework when reviewing results and focused instead on reviewing results in the seven priority intervention areas of the project which are identified and explained in detail in the project document as "leverage points" for the theory of change, building on the results of the PPEI phase I. These interventions align well with the PPEI II theory of change and its output structure.[10] Only one of the priorities, working with political parties on gender equality, was not considered as no activities took place with the political parties.

The timeline for the assignment was fairly compressed, with data collection starting in October and a first assessment report due in mid-November to accommodate programmatic requirements of the project donor.

During the **desk research phase**, the evaluator reviewed the UNDP Programme and project documentation, including essential project documentation of the PPEI sister projects in the parliamentary strengthening portfolio, and documentation of other relevant interventions such as the provided by the Pacific Office, and primary documentation available on the five focus and the non-focus parliaments' legal and procedural frameworks, as well as relevant research on the political economy of the Pacific Island countries. The evaluator identified the following stakeholders for the evaluation as presented in the Figure 2 below:

Stakeholder Mapping	
Parliamentary stakeholders	Speakers, leaders of government and opposition in parliament (party caucus leaders); Chairs or members of budget or public accounts committees, Clerks
Women leaders & gender champions	Women MPs, women leaders in political parties, women civil society leaders
Representatives of marginalized groups	Representatives of women and youth organizations, representatives of CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) and CBOs serving remote or hard to reach communities

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[10] PPEI Project Document, p. 7-8.

UNDP	UNDP Programme lead, PPEI project team members, included those members in the Fiji office, in the other relevant field offices, team members embedded in institutions, and technical advisors.
Development Partners	Representatives of MFAT, the Australian and New Zealand legislatures and other development partners active in parliamentary strengthening in the region

Figure 2 Summary of PPEI II Evaluation Stakeholders. Source: Author.

The field research opportunities were limited due to time restrictions and the assignment's fully remote nature. The field research for the evaluation was to take place over the course of two weeks in late October 2023 but could not take place.

Considering these limitations, and the lack of data on the activities, the evaluator agreed with the Pacific Office to focus field research on the focus parliaments of Vanuatu, Tonga, the Cook Islands, and the Solomon Islands, which benefitted from the support of the project across all project outputs. A geographical representation of these focus countries (except for Papua New Guinea, which never participated in the project) is included in Figure 3. The evaluator conducted more limited field research into those non-focus parliaments which benefitted from some limited support by the project - the parliaments of Niue, Nauru, and Tuvalu.

The evaluator requested meetings with Speakers or Deputy Speakers, the head of the parliamentary administration (Clerk), and key staff involved in the project, with women MPs as well as civil society representatives of the focus country parliaments. Except for Papua New Guinea, **both individual and group semi-structured interviews** with all four focus parliaments were organized. Interviews with the Speakers of Tonga and the Solomon Islands and group interviews with the Clerks and senior staff in all four focus parliaments took place, but only two interviews with women MPs of the Vanuatu and Cook Islands Parliaments and one meeting with a representative of a Pacific civil society network of Vanuatu could be organized. Interviews with leaders of the government majority and leaders of the opposition in parliament could not be organized.

The interviewees for the group interviews were those staff most engaged with the project in the project focus areas: procedural review, budget review and oversight, regional integration, and outreach and public participation. The main benefits of group interviews were that they provided a more wholistic picture of the support rendered by the project, their sequence and modality of delivery, and that they allowed the evaluator to elicit common opinions and understandings among the interviewees. Some limitations as interviewees were quite understandably often unable to recall details about activities they had implemented or participated in years earlier.

For the non-focus country parliaments, which participated in project activities on an ad hoc basis, the evaluator requested meetings with the heads of the administration of all those parliaments. Meetings took place with the Clerks of the Tuvalu, Niue, and Nauru parliaments, but not with the Clerk of the Kiribati parliament. These interviews focused on the interactions of the non-focus parliaments with the project, the opportunities to participate in peer exchanges, their understanding of the project and its intended support, and their influence on the project's programming and governance.

Where possible, the evaluator conducted group interviews with beneficiaries where the delivery of activities, and their sequence were reconstructed with the help of participants. Some information was gathered in this way and has been used to fill gaps in the documentation, but there are

Figure 3. Map of PPEI II focus beneficiary parliaments (except for Papua New Guinea)

The evaluator would have preferred to combine **semi-structured interviews** with focus group discussions (FGD), as suggested in the assignment ToR but this was not feasible to conduct online.[11]

The evaluator **sought to remedy the resulting lack of evidence** on project implementation by collecting additional data on the scope and delivery of activities in interviews with former project and Programme staff, with key long-term advisors to the project experts in procedural and ICT development. To understand the coherence and partnerships of the project, the evaluation included interviews with key development partners, the Parliament of Victoria, and the Australian Twinning Programme. Finally, the evaluator also interviewed the project donor, MFAT with a focus on project governance and project relations and with external partners.

To identify results and discern the possible impact of the interventions, overcoming the lack of results reporting, **the evaluation researched and produced three case studies** in key project intervention areas – procedural reform, budget review and oversight, and public engagement and participation. that the case studies demonstrate how the project engaged strategically with beneficiaries and stakeholders over time to produce results and longer-term impact. Case study 1 reviews the project's assistance to procedural reform to the Vanuatu parliament and the results and likely long-term impact received. Case study 2 reviews the results and likely impact of the project's Floating Budget Office initiative, and Case study 3 describes the engagement with civil society organizations in the parliament of Vanuatu's budget review process.

Each of the case studies is based on triangulated data derived from the project reporting, interviews with the beneficiaries, interviews with the project team, and interviews with the key long term technical advisors, and civil society organizations (the procedural advisor, the Parliament of Victoria's twinning project coordinator, and the Vanuatu civil society network DSE) the project employed to trace the process and identify the project's contributions to achieving the results.

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[11] Focus group discussion are particularly useful in both eliciting a variety of views on a matter and in identifying shared understandings of terms, concepts, and events among the group of respondents.

Finally, the case studies analyze and report individual parliamentary practice in useful detail and provide insight and illustration of good practice that the project and other initiatives may be able to learn from.

A list of interviews is annexed to this report in Annex 2. Where possible, the evaluation sought to triangulate the data, regarding the project's gender equality performance and the performance in integrating crosscutting issues. Unfortunately, on only one interview with a civil society representative could be organized.

The evaluator conducted a **qualitative analysis** of the data collected during the remote field work. The analysis against the evaluation criteria was performed at an aggregated level, focusing primarily on the support rendered to the four focus parliaments supported by the project. This allowed the evaluation to arrive at an overall picture of project performance. The project performance in supporting non-focus parliaments is also reported but the support provided was not comprehensive nor sustained enough to be a determinant of the project's overall performance.

A **GRES** was conducted to assess the gender responsiveness of the project results. Due to the weakness of the project's results framework, the analysis was conducted against the observed results in the seven priority areas of engagement identified in the project document and reviewed in the section on 'Effectiveness,' except for the work with political parties which did not take place. To analyze the project's overall performance the evaluation reviewed the gender effectiveness of results in the following priority areas: (1) procedure reform, (2) planning, (3) MP capacity-building, (4) staff capacity-building, (5) Committee development, (6) outreach and public participation (7) regional integration. Individual results were reviewed and scored on the GRES ordinal scale. For instance, the MP induction at the Vanuatu Parliament in 2023, which included a separate Programme for women MPs which was appreciated by the parliament, was scored as (4) gender responsive in the category of MP capacity-building. From all data points, median values for the project were calculated and reported by beneficiary parliament, and by project priority area.

The project performance against the main evaluation criteria of relevance/coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, as well as gender equality and cross-cutting issues is reported in the sections below. Performance was assessed based on a 4-tier rating scale that ranges from 'excellent' to 'not satisfactory'.[12] The rating scale is described in detail in Figure 4 below. Ratings for all evaluated categories are reported separately in the conclusion section of this report.

Performance Rating Scale	
Excellent (4)	Performance fully meets or exceeds expectations formulated in UNDP Programme or project results frameworks, Rules and Regulations or applied good practice
Satisfactory (3)	Performance meets overall expectations formulated in UNDP Programme, policies, or project results frameworks, Rules and Regulations or applied good practice, with only few weaknesses
Partly satisfactory (2)	Performance partially meets overall expectations formulated in UNDP Programme or project results frameworks, policies, Rules, and Regulations or applied good practice, but has significant weaknesses.

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[12] Four-tier rating scales are often preferable to five-tier scaling as they avoid centrality bias, i.e., the natural tendency to gravitate to the middle tier in evaluation. See for example. Jasmijn C. Bol, 'The Determinants and Performance Effects of Managers' Performance Evaluation Bias.', in: *The Accounting Review*, Vol. 86 Issue 5 September 2011 p. 1549-1575.

Not satisfactory (1)	Performance does not meet overall expectations formulated in UNDP Programme or project results frameworks, policies, Rules, and Regulations, or applied good practice.
Not evaluated (0)	Performance could not be evaluated. This may be due to a lack of data or unclear performance objectives or expectations.

Figure 4 PPEI II Evaluation Performance Rating Scale

Based on the findings, the evaluation makes specific recommendations for future support to parliamentary strengthening of pacific parliaments, addressing the scope of future interventions, topical priorities and the project's implementation strategies and modalities.

3. Findings

3.1. Relevance and Coherence

This section explores the **relevance** of the project's theory of change and the **coherence** of the project's objectives and outputs with the national priorities of Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTS), with regional, and UNDP priorities. It also reviews the project's approach in **managing project risks.**

3.1.1. Relevance and Coherence

PPEI II was designed in 2019 as a successor to the PPEI I project and was to expand on PPEI's successful approaches and operate at the regional level, extending the support from the PPEI focus parliaments of the Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu to non-focus parliaments of Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tokelau, and Tuvalu. The project was

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Rating: Partly Satisfactory (2)

Justification for rating: PPEI II' s theory of change and intervention is relevant and broadly coherent with the priorities of all the beneficiaries, UNDP's strategic priorities, and the regional Pacific development agenda. PPEI II, however, does not provide for a formal role of beneficiaries in the strategic management and oversight of the project. PPEI's results framework is relevant but unspecific and does not well reflect the interventions delivered by the project and their results. The project's indicator framework is weak. Indicators lack baselines, metadata, and are not measurable. The project did well to identify relevant risks, but risk management was intermittent and incomplete.

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implemented under the overarching framework of UNDP's SRP. The SRP, in turn, contributed to the outcomes of the Pacific Strategy, the UN's development assistance framework for the Pacific.[13] For the Parliament of Papua New Guinea, the relevant programmatic framework was UNDP's Papua New Guinea Country Programme and development assistance frameworks.[14] The UNDP Pacific Office governance team implemented PPEI II in a portfolio approach. In practice, the portfolio approach meant that the governance team would implement several projects with shared programming and technical human resources and a common strategic orientation. The portfolio included a number of projects in addition to PPEI II: its sister Strengthening Legislatures in the Pacific Islands Project (SLIP) with a very similar scope but different sub-regional focus than PPEI II – the project was implemented in Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, plus the PPEI II focus countries of Solomon Islands and Vanuatu,[15] the Fiji Parliament Support Project (FPSP),[16] and the Strengthening Public Finance and Management and Governance Action.[17] In addition, the governance team implemented a Pacific Regional Governance Programme, funded by Australia.

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[13] Available at: https://unsdg.un.org/resources/united-nations-pacific-strategy-2018-2022
[14] Available at: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1317360
[15] The location selection was driven by the priorities of SLIP's donor Japan. A project brochure is available at: https://www.undp.org/pacific/publications/strengthening-legislatures-capacity-pacific-island-countries-project-brochure
[16] Project Document available at: https://www.undp.org/pacific/projects/fiji-parliament-support-project
[17] Project Document available at: https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/FJI/Annex%201%20-%20Description%20of%20the%20Action.pdf

PPEI II's development challenge is that the Pacific parliaments are small, under-resourced, beset by fractured politics and weak or absent political parties. This absence of a stable constellation of government and opposition undermines effective parliamentary work across legislative review, budgeting, and oversight. Parliaments have weak procedures, untrained staff, and inexperienced MPs. Women remain under-represented in parliament. Where the PPEI I project document featured a

	Pathway from Problem Tree	Solution Pathway
Development Challenge	Parliaments with limited capacities to effectively discharge their mandates in relation to legislation, oversight and representation, and with low female representation in Parliament.	Parliaments with sufficient capacities undertake legislative, oversight & representation functions effectively
Immediate Causes	Committees not working effectively Lack of capacity amongst MPs and staff Low number of women	Committees working effectively, increased capacity of MPs and staff, increased number of women in Parliament
Underlying Causes	Unreformed rules of procedure New/untrained staff High turnover of MPs Perceptions of men/women in role of legislator	Effective structures and rule of procedures in place. Experienced staff and MPs. Increased perception that women can be legislators
Structural/ Root Causes	Low institutional capacity amongst staff and MPs Political instability Lack of understanding of role of legislature	Political stability and trust/understanding between political opponents

Figure 5. Transformation pathway in PPEI II project document. Source: reproduced from PPEI II project document

detailed description of the project baseline in the five focus countries, PPEI II does cite only some aggregate findings and recommendations of an external assessment conducted of the PPEI I project as the baseline for the design of the intervention.[18] As the project team explained, PPEI II was not to be a multi-country but a regional project.

The PPEI II project's theory of change is presented in brevity in the project document. It posits that the proposed interventions in the project will lead to the improved performance of parliaments in terms of their effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency. This improved performance will foster increased engagement by the public in political processes, lifting the quality of governance overall, and producing

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[18] Jacob Murphy, *External Assessment: Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness (PPEI) Initiative 2016-2019*, November 2018.

better development outcomes. The interventions proposed in the project are identified as those having yielded results in the past. They are 1) induction to raise the capacity of MPs, 2) support to parliamentary secretariats to improve the quality of services, 3) exposure of parliaments to international good practice, 4) support of committees in oversight, 5) strengthening parliaments' role in the budget process, 6) support to parliamentary outreach and dialogue, and 7) work with political parties to improve women's participation. This support's delivery will lead to transformative changes illustrated in Figure 5.

The theory of change is logically consistent and in line with established knowledge on the rationale and effects of parliamentary governance interventions. It is, however, presented at a generic level with no specifics regarding the different circumstances of the focus (and non-focus) parliaments and expectations for the transformation pathways in the supported parliaments. Given the lack of political stability in many focus countries, and the culture of contentious politics, it is questionable that reform to the parliamentary rules, professional development of the MPs that would include induction in to their roles and responsibility, the inclusion of more women and youth MPs, and more exposure of parliament to public participation would be sufficient to transform the political system (and parliament as one of its core institutions) towards more stability as suggested by the results pathway presented in the project document. The project document does not include a political economy analysis of the focus beneficiary countries that would justify this assumption. The risks and underlying assumptions of the theory of change are noted in a figure

The project's results framework is consistent with the results framework of UNDP's overall programmatic instrument for the Pacific region, the Sub-regional Programme Document for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (2018-2022).[19] PPEI II seeks to contribute to the SRP *Outcome 5: 'By 2022, people and communities in the Pacific contribute to and benefit from inclusive, informed, and transparent decision-making processes, accountable and responsive institutions and improving access to justice.'* The project uses as its outputs two of the SRP's output statements, with proposed activities grouped into five activity results. Progress against these outputs is measured by three of the SRP's Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF) indicators. These are qualitative aggregate indicators. The project's result framework is summarized in Figure 5 below.

Outputs	Activity Results	Activities (summarized)
SRP Output 1: Increased transparency and accountability in governance institutions and formal and informal decision-making processes	**Result 1.A** Members of Parliament are supported more effectively by the parliamentary Secretariat through the provision of training and induction for first time members, research, and briefing materials	induction to raise the capacity of MPs; procedural support to parliaments
1.1. IRRF Indicator 2.1.1b *Constitution-making Body (Parliament) with improved administrative and human resource capacities to undertake drafting, public outreach, and consultation and with mechanisms to ensure participation of women and marginalized groups* *1.2 IRRF indicator 2.1.1: Parliament with improved administrative and human resources to discharge its*	**Result 1.B:** Development of participatory and transparent national planning and budget process; cross cutting development issues mainstreamed in Pacific Parliaments	support to parliamentary secretariats to improve the quality of services; support of committees in legislative review and oversight, including applying a gender lens; strengthening parliaments' role in the budget process

[19] Available at https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1293890?ln=en

mandates in relation to law-making, oversight, and representation		support to parliamentary outreach and dialogue, including with women, youth, and marginalized groups;
SRP Output 2: Increased voice and more participation by women, youth and marginal groups in national and subnational decision-making bodies that are more representative. ***2.1 IRRF Indicator 2.4.2*** *Country with strengthened environments for civic engagement, including legal regulatory frameworks for civil society organizations to function in the public sphere and contribute to development, and effective mechanisms platforms to engage civil society (with a focus on women, youth or excluded groups)*	**Result 2.A:** Parliamentary Outreach and citizen engagement expanded to include traditionally excluded groups, such as women and youth, and reach remote areas	work with political parties to improve women's participation;
	Result 2.B: Capacity of potential women candidates increased through provision of training and capacity building activities	
	Result 2.C: Increased number of women candidates selected by political parties in selected Pacific countries	

Figure 6 Overview of the PPEI II Results Framework. Source: Author's tabulation

In UNDP's results-based management, outputs need to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.[20] In the case of PPEI II the outputs are not entirely specific. Outputs 1&2 aim at *increased* performance over the status quo, but the project did not produce a baseline for performance for any or all parliaments. Neither do the outputs describe which level of performance is sought for which parliament: The three output indicators are assigned ratings of performance on an ordinal scale (e.g., in the case of IRRF indicators 2.1.1b and 2.1.1 ratings ranged from "no capacity built / no progress made" to "significant capacity built / high progress made"). The project has not produced any indicator metadata that would outline how baselines would be established, what progress against the indicators would look like, and how this progress would be measured. The results framework being quite unspecific about the desired results to be achieved at the individual parliaments or by all parliaments as a group, and monitoring being poor, the project had significant difficulty to present evidence of progress made against the desired results.

The activity results statements do not well reflect the comprehensive interventions of the project across the seven priority intervention areas. Result 1A is broad asserting that MPs will be supported in their work through improved services, training, and induction. The project supported relevant interventions but did not monitor and report the results of these interventions in terms of an improvement of parliamentary services. Under Result 1B, the project was to support the "Development of a participatory and transparent national planning and budget process", which the project never attempted to do. The project supported budget review and oversight through parliamentary committees and the FBO. Result 2.B was to increase the capacity of potential women candidates through provision of training and capacity building activities. However, the project focused its support on sitting women MPs` political leadership and networking. The project never developed indicators at activity result levels so progress against these activity results would have been difficult to demonstrate for the project team. Important interventions such as the comprehensive ICT for parliament support, the support to regional integration, and the support to procedure reform are not at all reflected in the results framework.

In its progress reporting (for those periods where reports are available), the project did report at the activity level. Reporting lacked any analysis establishing progress against the results (output) statements. The reporting assigned ratings against the indicators for each individual parliament, but without

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[20] SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound. See UNDP, *Handbook for Panning, Monitoring and Evaluating Development Results,* 2009, p. 56f

evidence for the progress and without any analysis that would justify the ratings assigned. In reviewing the reports, and after interviews with former project team members, the evaluator can discern no specific methodology for how these ratings have been assigned.

Over the project, when the necessity of changes to the project's scope and results framework became obvious, the project was not adapted. The challenges posed by the unspecific results and indicator framework were understood during the project but not rectified. The donor requested changes and offered assistance in the form of M&E expertise, but this was never taken up. During the project, and because of the restructuring of UNDP's presence in the Pacific, it became clear that the project would not be able to implement its assistance in the focus parliament of Papua New Guinea. The governance team explained that a major driver of the change was the opportunity to set up a national project to also include Bougainville House of Representatives, which reduced PNG's need for support through the regional project. In both cases, however, the project was not adapted to reflect these emerging realities.

The project's theory of change and results framework are very well aligned with the results framework of SLIP which has very similar outputs focusing on different focus countries of the North Pacific region, with two overlapping countries, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands. The project's theory of change and results framework align with the Public Finance Project as well as with the Sub-regional Office's Regional Governance Programme, which features several interventions that are complementary to PPEI II's work, such as political party strengthening, anti-corruption, and government transparency work. In the core area of budget review and oversight assistance, PPEI II also benefited from synergies with the Strengthening Public Finance and Management and Governance Action. For instance, the project's flagship Floating Budget Office (FBO) activity benefited significantly from the technical assistance delivered under this public financial management strengthening action. PPEI II benefitted from a close integration of interventions across the governance portfolio. This close integration is evidenced by the project team's habit of developing joint activities across projects and programmes and co-financing activities from different projects.

The project aligns well with the priorities of its donor, New Zealand's MFAT who views the role of parliaments in providing accountability to public governance as central to the development of the region. The project's outputs align well with MFAT's specific programmatic focus on gender equality, sound public financial management, and anti-corruption. The project has cultivated relationships with other parliamentary strengthening initiatives in the pacific. This includes the twinning Programme of the Australian legislatures and New Zealand's parliamentary strengthening activities. This has benefited the project and its beneficiaries where the project has teamed up with legislatures in the region to deliver capacity-building. For instance, PPEI II partners up with Australia's Victoria Parliament to deliver the flagship FBO activity across the Pacific region. Some partners interviewed have noted, however, that coordination and information exchange with the project could be improved to lift further synergies in the work and avoid duplication of efforts. The project team highlights that it works closely with those parliaments participating in the Australian parliamentary twinning Programme, which engage intensively with their PICT twins, but less so with others. There may be room for closer coordination of interventions with the Commonwealth Association's parliamentary strengthening and interventions by other partners such as the Westminster Foundation for Democracy.

The project aligned well with the priorities of the focus beneficiary parliaments. All parliamentary representatives interviewed for this evaluation expressed their satisfaction with how the project responded to their institutions' needs, including on an ad hoc basis. The project supported beneficiary parliaments in strategic planning, helping them to identify and implement long-term institutional development priorities. One of the project's man strengths was its ability to support ad hoc requests within its overall broad scope. For instance, the project added significant value by providing ad hoc

support to legal and procedural reform in several focus beneficiary parliaments – in the Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga, as well as in the non-focus parliaments of Nauru, and Tuvalu. Likewise Floating Budget Office was a response to a lack of analytical capacity on budgeting expressed by focus beneficiary parliaments under PPEI I and remained relevant and appreciated by the parliaments in PPEI II. The project continued to accommodate many ad hoc requests by beneficiary parliaments to facilitate MP and staff participation in regional events. This responsiveness was highly valued by the beneficiaries (but, arguably, it is also related to the lack of a results orientation of the project).

The project has been **flexible in aligning its support priorities and delivery modalities** with the needs of the supported parliaments. For example, in 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out globally, the project repurposed USD 500,000, which was the lion share of the annual budget to supporting the readiness of the parliaments to deal with COVID-19 pandemic and the regular external shocks (often in the form of natural disasters) that affect pacific island states. The project supported parliament's development of business continuity plans and the fast-tracking of the parliament's digitalization path, to allow parliaments to not only reap the efficiency gains of digitalization but to also be technically ready for remote meetings. This was combined with procedural support in interested partner parliaments, such as the Cook Islands Parliament.

The project's regional approach has had several advantages. The project was able to strongly support regional parliamentary integration. Through its active support to the strengthening of the Pacific Islands Parliaments Group (PIPG), the project contributed to that group's positioning as a regional parliamentary forum that would complement the work of the inter-governmental Pacific Islands Forum. This initiative has the potential to contribute to building a Pacific regionalism across, sub-regional, linguistic, and ethnic divides. The regional approach allowed the project to smooth out support over the different parliaments' electoral cycles and avoid implementation downtimes. It also allowed the project to remain relevant in the face of political instability that might arrest development progress in any individual parliament and close the intervention space. The project could shift resources to other parliaments temporarily and re-engage with the troubled parliament once a new opportunity for engagement arose. On the other hand, several parliaments feel that the project's support was often too light touch, less hands-on, less adapted to their individual needs, and less strategic than they would have wished.

Learning from the experience of PPEI I, the project expanded its scope beyond the support of the parliamentary institutions to work with political parties in empowering women. It has also continued to focus on the parliaments' engagement of youth and marginalized groups. Across the duration of the project, activities in this area were introduced in all beneficiary PICTs.

Beneficiaries play no formal role in decision-making regarding the direction of the project. The project does not have a project board. The project document refers to a management committee that steered the implementation of the SRP as the project's management and oversight body. The SRP (as per its description in the project document) is a UNDP administrative arrangement and features no participation of beneficiaries. In 2019 and 2020, the governance team did convene annual planning meetings with the PPEI II beneficiary parliaments to agree work plans for the year, but this practice stopped during the COVID-19 pandemic and was not resumed after the PICT eased their travel restrictions in 2022. Several beneficiary parliaments expressed a desire to be better informed and better understand the project's overall objectives, strategy, and direction. Parliament's control and ownership of the development intervention is a key principle of UNDP's approach to development, and a key tenet of the globally accepted *Common Principles for Support of Parliaments*[21] which UNDP has co-developed

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[21] Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Common Principles for the Support of Parliament,* Geneva, 2014.

and subscribes to. It is also well-documented that national ownership is a prerequisite for the success, longer-term impact, and sustainability of a development intervention.[22]

There are challenges in designing a project steering mechanism for a project with such many beneficiaries. A project board meeting is a tripartite governance mechanism with representatives of the donor, the project executive and the beneficiaries deliberating and deciding on the strategic approach of the project and any course corrections in regular intervals (usually semi-annually and sometimes even quarterly). Crucially project boards make their decisions by consensus. Making such a mechanism work for a regional project with up to ten beneficiary institutions may pose problems of finding consensus. Options exist to limit the complexity. The project already differentiates between focus and non-focus beneficiary parliaments, with the distinction being that focus parliaments receive tailor-made support and non-focus parliaments receive the opportunity to participate in project activities on an opportunity basis. One option could be to have a project board involving only the four prospective focus PICT parliaments – Vanuatu, Tonga, the Cook Islands, and the Solomon Islands. Non-focus parliaments may receive the minutes of the project board meetings and be informed of the project board's decisions by the project management.

3.1.2. Risk Management

The project's performance of risk management was mixed. The project document foresees a risk management plan that would include risks identified in the Social Environmental and Screening of the project. The social and environmental screening of the project was conducted by the portfolio management team, and the report is very brief with minor details. Project risks were identified in the project risk log and were to be monitored on a quarterly basis. The risks identified in the project design phase were realistic and comprehensive with hindsight and included strategic, political, management, and social environmental risks, many of which did in fact affect the project's operations. The risk log underestimated the likelihood and impact of several risks. The only updated risk log available- for the year 2022, produced in the second half of that year- adjusted the risk assessment to be more realistic in terms of estimated likelihood and impact.

The project had identified a set of relevant risk mitigation measures but did not consistently apply them. These project progress reports available point to a practice of intermittent and incomplete risk management. A risk management log was produced only for the annual progress report of 2020-2021. This report describes risk management actions. Disruptions due to the COVID 19 pandemic and the associated travel restrictions were comprehensively countered through mitigation measures: 1) the investment in ICT and procedure development to ensure business continuity for parliaments during COVID-19 lockdowns, the appointment of local coordinators in beneficiary parliaments to deliver activities during the period of travel restrictions (2020-2022), and 3) supporting parliaments in holding their governments to account for their performance of emergency measures. In the following reports available, the annual report for 2021-2022, and the semi-annual progress report 2022, the management team noted that the risk logs had not changed. Only a separate risk log produced for 2022, adapted the original risk log, and

The project did not effectively manage several risks identified in the project risk log. Risk "(4) Reduction in engagement by respective Parliaments in project, results in delays in project implementation", materialized almost from the beginning of the project, when the project could not roll out is activities in Papua New Guinea. Risk "(3) Change in priority areas for parliaments resulting in challenges in implementing certain project activities," occurred when parties represented in parliament proved unwilling to work with the project on fostering greater women political leadership and promoting women candidates for elections. Mitigation measures identified included the ongoing review of the

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[22] UNDP Evaluation Office, *Development Effectiveness. Review of Evaluative Evidence*, New York, 2000, p.13

project's theory of change, which did not take place, and the project was never adapted (as discussed above). The project's risk management performance is summarized in Figure 7.

Risks (summarized)	Management Response identified in Prodoc and risk logs	Management Action
(1) Project impacted due to political events and instability	(1) build partnerships with champions across the political spectrum (2) regional project allows for focus elsewhere until situation stabilizes	None required
(2) Challenges in delivery of activities due to absorptive capacity to adopt change or resistance to reform.	(1) careful planning of activities, (2) stakeholder ownership of activities, (3) working with champions	None, despite the fact that work with parties in parliament (under SRP output 2) could never commence due to resistance to change
(3) Change in priority areas for parliaments resulting in challenges in implementing certain project activities. / (4) Reduction in engagement by the respective Parliaments in project, results in delays in project implementation.	(1) ongoing review and adjustment of theory of change (2) flexibility in project design, sequencing, work planning (3) inclusive annual planning processes	The project was flexible to provide support when windows of opportunity arose, for procedure reform. However, the project did not respond to the failure of the support to the Parliament of Papua New Guinea to commence.
(5) Natural disasters that impact directly on stakeholder priorities and ability to implement and participate in activities under the project.	(1) flexibility in implementation and scheduling, (2) readiness to adjust project implementation	The project responded comprehensively and well to the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting business continuity and continuity of the project operation by appointing field coordinators in parliaments
(6) Staff required by Project not in place to assist in implementation of the project within tight timeframes	Additional capacities required to be identified within UNDP and short-term Consultants to support project implementation	The project hired field coordinators for business continuity but did not respond to project management challenges in MEL by increasing available resources.

Figure 7 Project Risk Management Performance. Source: Author's tabulation.

3.2. Effectiveness

This section evaluates the effectiveness of the project in delivering its interventions and achieving tangible outputs. Given the unspecific nature of the results and indicator framework **it is impossible to do the work performed by the project justice by tallying achievements against the results framework**. It should be noted that the annual reports reported progress against the indicators by assigning a value either at the aggregate level or for each of the five focus countries – the practice varied over the years – but in all cases the reasoning for linking the

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Effectiveness- Rating: Satisfactory (3)

Justification for rating: The project has been largely effective in improving parliamentary accountability and openness, in improving the procedural basis for stronger parliaments, in strengthening the parliaments' ability to play their role in the budget process, and in regional parliamentary integration. The project has been flexible in reacting to the COVID-19 pandemic and building parliamentary capacity for digitalization. The project has faced several notable challenges, in achieving results in women empowerment and public engagement. The deployment of the different implementation modalities has been largely appropriate to the situation and objectives. The project has used strategic planning for comprehensive institutional development. One limitation is that an understanding and approach to adult learning for MPs and staff is not in evidence.

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results reported to the outputs and indicators was missing.[23] The evaluator has therefore chosen to review progress on the seven priority intervention areas of the project that are identified in the project document, while making reference to the results statements. These seven priority areas also align well with the PPEI II theory of change and its three outputs: Activity areas 1) induction to raise the capacity of MPs, 2) support to parliamentary secretariats to improve the quality of services, 3) exposure of parliaments to international good practice, 4) support of committees in oversight, 5) strengthening parliaments' role in the budget process contribute to PPEI II outputs 1 and 2. Activity areas 6) support to parliamentary outreach and dialogue, and 7) work with political parties to improve women's participation aligned with output 3 of the project. The section tallies the project's outputs against the results and the IRRF indicators to illustrate the progress made. However, it also reports progress made that is not reflected in the results framework but is strategic and demonstrates how the project added value in the priority intervention area. Finally, this section also reviews the effectiveness of project implementation modalities.

3.2.1. Results

Result 1.A Members of Parliament are supported more effectively by the parliamentary Secretariat through the provision of training and induction for first time members, research, and briefing materials

To build MP knowledge and skills, the project has supported the **induction of new MPs** in several PICT parliaments: in the Cook Islands in 2019, in Vanuatu in 2020 and 2023, in the Solomon Islands in 2021, in Kiribati in 2020, and in Nauru in 2023. The project has used induction as a significant opportunity to strengthen MPs' capacity to fulfill their parliamentary roles and ensure that good practice is retained and built on across election cycles. Importantly, a general MP induction was on occasion paired with a committee induction providing information that would go deeper into the MPs' core legislative review and oversight work, such as the Cook Islands and Vanuatu Parliament committee induction programmes

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[23] For example, in the 2021/2022 annual report, the project deemed that the progress across all beneficiary institutions under Output 1 was to be (3) – capacity partially improved. The report reported progress on activities and some results of activities at length. It failed, however, to link the reported activities and results to the output and indicator and supplied no justification for the rating.

held in 2019 and 2020. In the case of Vanuatu, the induction was co-designed and delivered with the Parliament secretariat, which is good practice and was noted as significant progress over previous induction programmes supported in PPEI I.

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Solomon Islands	Vanuatu Kiribati Niue Palau Tokelau	Tonga	Vanuatu Cook Islands Papua New Guinea Nauru	Niue Tokelau

Figure 8 Parliamentary elections in PPEI II supported PICTs during project implementation. Source: Author's tabulation

For induction in particular, UNDP joined up with other parliamentary strengthening organizations, like the New Zealand Parliament, and the Australian legislatures in the case of the 2023 Nauru MP induction, which was held in Fiji. UNDP also uses the opportunity to incorporate important issues into induction such as gender equality in parliament, or the SDGs, as was the case for the Nauru MP induction of 2023.

Beyond the valuable work on induction, there was limited project activity on MP professional development or the support of MPs with other services such as research and briefing support. The project supported individual capacity-building activities based on opportunities arising, such as the mini-induction of the only woman MP elected to the Solomon Islands Parliament in 2021, and the large number of peer-to-peer exchanges and political conferences that the project supported financially. COVID-19 complicated the delivery of MP professional development work significantly, as travel was not feasible from 2021 through the middle of 2022. A comprehensive approach to MP professional development is not in evidence, which is an opportunity missed in terms of addressing the limited interest of MPs in constituency work, and in engagement of civil society, empowerment of women, and marginalized groups, which some beneficiary counterparts interviewed for this evaluation have identified (see also below).

The project has supported parliaments and their Secretariats in their strategic development, their legal and procedural frameworks, and their improved service provision, to guide the overall institutional developments. PPEI II supported strategic plan development in the Solomon Islands and in Tuvalu in 2022, and in Nauru in 2023. Strategic planning is the basis for the results-based management and delivery of parliamentary services. Parliaments interviewed for this evaluation have appreciated the strategic planning support, and the Parliament of Niue has expressed a wish for more strategic support to its own parliamentary development in the future.

The project has supported the capacity-strengthening of key parliamentary service areas by facilitating many **peer exchanges, and attachments to peer services** in Australian and New Zealand Parliaments. All parliaments supported under PPEI II benefited from peer exchanges, both in the region and with Australia and New Zealand. In 2021/2022 alone PPEI II supported (mostly virtual) peer exchanges of 30 senior and technical parliamentary staff in the service areas of procedure, Hansard, committees, human resources, and ICT. In addition, the project financed the participation of ten staff in two programmes offered by Canada's McGill University. Peer exchanges and attachments are appreciated as useful by all parliaments interviewed for this evaluation, with only a few complaints about short-term notices and logistics problems where travel was involved. PPEI's staff capacity-strengthening does not extend beyond peer exchanges and attachments. Because of the limited monitoring activity and the absence of any monitoring data, it is difficult to finally determine the effectiveness of these programmes in delivering services to the MPs in alignment with the results statement.

A key intervention area where the project made tangible progress, but which is not adequately reflected in the results framework is the support to legal and procedural reform for beneficiary parliaments. The procedural support PPEI II has provided to beneficiary parliaments, often alongside the Australian Parliamentary Twinning Programme, is one of the areas of outstanding achievement of this project: The project has supported parliaments with **ongoing procedural advice** that has resulted in impactful legal and procedural reform, which in some cases had been pending for decades. The project supported the Cook Islands, Vanuatu, and Nauru Parliaments in redrafting their Standing Orders in 2020, 2022, and 2023 respectively, with a view to enhancing parliamentary effectiveness and independence. In the Vanuatu Parliament, the Standing Orders give the standing committees more power in oversight. In the Solomon Islands Parliament, a review of the committee rules and powers is ongoing.

The procedural advice has also extended to supporting parliaments in drafting parliamentary acts that would secure their independence from the executive. In Vanuatu, the project supported the drafting and a public consultation phase on the Vanuatu autonomy law in 2021, which remains pending approval after the fall of the government and the early elections of 2022. In all cases the project's capable long-term procedural advisor consultant developed relationships and managed to reach out beyond parliament to work with government institutions involved in law making, in the case of Vanuatu for example, the state law office. All project procedural support was available ad hoc and demand-based, for example in the form of legal advice provided to the Tonga Parliament over a court case over the unseating of two elected MPs for alleged election tampering, which threatened to violate parliamentary autonomy. A case study of PPEI II's successful support to procedural reform at the Parliament of Vanuatu illustrates the project's successful approach.

> **Case Study 1: PPEI II procedural and legal support to strengthen parliamentary effectiveness and autonomy in Vanuatu**
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> Procedural and parliamentary legal reform have been priorities for the PPEI project since the inception of its first phase. In the Pacific parliaments that the project supports, procedural frameworks - the rules by which parliaments operate - were often outdated and unsuited for modern digital governance. They often dated back to the post-independence period. Polarized politics would often prevent meaningful systemic reform that would benefit all sides of the political divide. PPEI, I had started engaging with parliaments on procedural reform. PPEI II continued the work benefitting in the process from excellent expertise contracted to the project and from a favorable eco-system. All PPEI II parliaments are twinned with Australian legislatures, and the exchanges between the Pacific parliaments' clerks and their Australian counterparts had in most parliaments become settled and routine, with opinion exchanges and advice on matters of parliamentary governance and procedure rendered regularly and consistently over time. PPEI II provided on-demand support to the parliaments of Tonga, the Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Nauru, and the Solomon Islands on procedure review, had built up trust and rapport and was able to respond quickly to emerging opportunities for procedural reform.
>
> In Vanuatu in 2021, a problem of legal harmonization between the duties described for the Public Accounts Committee in the public audit law and the provisions of the Standing Orders yielded the opportunity for systematic review. This was a technical problem acknowledged by all despite the parliament and its committees being deadlocked by government-opposition tensions at the time. Informal workshops with Standing Orders Committee members showed an appetite among members for wider reforms that would also strengthen committee powers. The project managed to engage the government in the process of what would be legal and procedural reform, building rapport with the state law office and the Auditor-General who agreed on the need for reform. After some back and forth between the institutional actors and several bills that were introduced but never passed cabinet review, a solution was found. The solution was a broad amendment of the standing orders and a parliamentary administration act that strengthened parliamentary autonomy. The gains for parliament were substantial: Amongst key reforms are: Parliamentary Standing Committees received

increased (and codified) scrutiny powers, especially in terms of their capacity to summon witnesses and gather evidence. Their mandate is clarified; their functioning, especially in terms of membership, work planning, meeting organization, quorum rules, sanctions against MPs for regular absence, among other things, is greatly improved. Importantly, the rules applying to the public accounts committee and the other standing committees were harmonized. This has also ameliorated the problem of committee deadlocks the Vanuatu Parliament has faced in its history of polarized politics. The case of the Vanuatu procedure reform highlights the value of PPEI's consistent long-term engagement with partners, and the use of high-quality advisors on a longer-term. A project that becomes a trusted partner can help parliaments find and seize opportunities for meaningful reform.

Result 1.B: Development of participatory and transparent national planning and budget process; cross cutting development issues mainstreamed in Pacific Parliaments

PPEI II has supported **strengthening of the committee system and parliament's role in the budget process**. Effective committee work is the basis for an effective performance of the parliament in the review of the budget and in budget oversight. Committee strengthening was implemented through induction, several standalone capacity-building activities, by way of procedural reform support, and through the FBO initiative. The project implemented two committee induction programmes in the Cook Islands in 2019 and in Vanuatu in 2020. In Vanuatu, the project followed up with a committee planning workshop to help the standing committees develop their annual business plans, make progress towards a committee guide and a committee staff training plan. The project also supported the development of guidelines for standing committees that will allow the committees to put their expanded powers under the parliament's recently revised Standing Orders into action.

The Floating Budget Office has been PPEI's instrument of choice for strengthening Parliament's role in the budget process and in budget oversight since phase one of the project.[24] The FBO is an ingenious solution to a resource problem. Parliaments operating on different budget calendars pool their analytical resources for their respective budget seasons. Researchers involved from all participating parliaments work together on the analysis of the budget of the country that has its budget season upcoming. They provide summaries of the budget in a user-friendly manner that allows MPs to better review the budget.[25] The initiative has been initiated by PPEI I and supported by parliamentary researchers from Australia and New Zealand. The initiative allows for peer-learning among researchers and the development of improved practices in budget analysis. In PPEI II, the FBO was continued with the participation of Fiji, Vanuatu, Tonga, and Solomon Islands researchers throughout the project implementation period. In 2021, when COVID-19-related travel restrictions were in place, the FBO operated virtually.

Over the project, the FBO has shown progress by moving beyond summary sectoral budget analysis to developing topical budget briefings. In Tonga, the FBO conducted a climate budget analysis. In Tonga and the Solomon Islands, the project supported the Parliament in conducting briefing sessions on the budget analysis for civil society organizations. All participating parliaments expressed their satisfaction with the services of the FBO. It should also be noted that involved researchers interviewed for this evaluation have raised concerns about the sharing of the workload among the international and the Pacific researchers in conducting the underlying analysis, and about the sustainability, and value for money of the initiative. After seven years of operation, the FBO could benefit from an evaluation, to

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[24] See Jacob Murphy, *External Assessment: Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness (PPEI) Initiative 2016-2019*, November 2018.
[25] For more detail see UNDP Pacific Office, *Fast Facts. The Pacific Floating Budget Office – Innovation in Action for SDG 16*, February 2019, https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/pacific/Fast-Facts-Pacific-Floating-Budget-Office_Feb2019.pdf

understand how its operation could be further improved and if its underlying principle of participating parliaments making development progress by pooling their scarce resources for improved parliamentary services could be applied to other fields.

The project has **supported regional exchanges of Members and staff of all beneficiary parliaments**. It has partnered extensively with the Australian legislatures and the New Zealand Parliament in these exchanges. The exact number of exchanges or visits is unclear due to the incomplete project documentation, but it is sizeable. Over most of the two-and-a-half-year period for which reports have been available – from mid-2020 to late 2022, travel was impossible, and the project supported many virtual exchanges. In the period of July to December 2022, when travel could be resumed, the project supported six activities that involved regional and global travel. As the project has gathered no monitoring data on facilitated activities, the relative effectiveness of virtual vs. real life exchanges in its strengthening work is unclear.

Another impactful activity that is covered in the seven priority intervention areas but not well reflected in the project's results framework is the project's support to the

> ### Case Study 2: The Floating Budget Office in the South Pacific
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> The Floating Budget Office (FBO) emerged as an innovative approach under UNDP's Fiji Parliament Support Project, in 2016. Consultants supported the project's initiation, developing guidance and briefing note templates for the International researchers played a crucial role in supporting the inaugural budget analysis in the Fiji Parliament., a trend that continued with the preparation for the 2017 Budget. The FBO concept expanded, with Fiji taking the lead by 2018. Staff from Fiji's Parliament Library and Research unit joined international researchers to form an FBO that supported the Solomon Islands Parliament in its first-ever budget analysis. This model extended to other regional parliaments in Tonga, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu later in the year under the PPEI project.
>
> The FBO provides budget analysis and sector-specific briefs to MPs, and Public Accounts Committees. Through its regional approach, the FBO also contributes to the capacity building of parliamentary staff. The FBO's impact on MPs' understanding of the budget and their contributions to budget debates has been substantial. Collaboration with Civil Society Organizations has also yielded positive engagement.
>
> In the course PPEI II the FBO continued to serve the Tonga, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu parliaments. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the FBO shifted to virtual operations, successfully adapting in several Pacific Parliaments. The FBO budget analysis reached a higher point of complexity extending to gender analysis of the budget and to topical analysis like the climate impact of budget produced by the virtual FBO in Tonga in 2021.
>
> The FBO has been recognized by the OECD as an innovative cost-effective model of several like-minded parliaments delivering critical services to their MPs through pooled resources. Despite the successes, the FBO has still ways to go to be fully sustainable. UNDP budget consultants and staff from twinned Australian legislatures continue to help in the development of improved practice and in quality-controlling products.
>
> The FBO promotes peer -learning and the model could be applied in other service areas in the future of Pacific parliamentary cooperation.

meetings of the Pacific Islands Parliaments Group (PIPG): Due in part to the leadership of PPEI II beneficiary parliament leaders, the group has been linked to the Pacific Islands Forum, with the potential to become the parliamentary dimension of Pacific integration, much like, for instance, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) Inter-parliamentary Assembly for the ASEAN region. The support to the PIPG was the main way by which the project mainstreamed climate change mitigation and adaptation as a priority for the region. The project identified the Speaker of the Tonga parliament as a

champion for addressing climate change and effectively supported the Speaker's agenda to address climate change at the regional level, through the PIPG:

"The PIPG crosses lines across francophone and anglophone countries, across US territory, and across the North and South Pacific. Through the PIPG we involve legislators in international fora such as the UN – in the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change) COPs and the SDG meeting – through the PIPG we have a role. The PIPG should be the regional legislature in a regional architecture that also includes the Pacific Island Forum."[26]

Result 2.A: Parliamentary Outreach and citizen engagement expanded to include traditionally excluded groups, such as women and youth, and reach remote areas

The project has supported **parliamentary engagement with civil society, youth, and marginalized groups**. PPEI II activities in this area of work are varied, but recurring interventions are youth parliament activities, civil society engagement activities, and support to institutional parliamentary outreach. The project supported the organization of youth parliament activities at several parliaments: in Tonga and Vanuatu in 2020. To ensure more sustainable engagement with the youth parliament graduates, the project organized youth parliament graduate events at the Tonga and Solomon Island parliaments also in 2020. The project supported the Parliament Open Day in Vanuatu in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic imposed a hiatus on practice parliament type of activities and these were not resumed after travel restrictions were lifted. In the Solomon Islands, the project supported CSO budget briefings based on the FBO budget briefs. The leader of the Solomon Islands Civil Society Network interviewed for this evaluation highlighted that this activity was beneficial in opening space for CSO participation but that more sustainable mechanisms need to be built. A similar initiative with the Ministry of Finance supported by UNDP's Public Financial Management project had faltered after 2021 when the project had ended its support. See the case study on parliamentary engagement of CSOs in the Solomon Islands for details.

The project supported parliaments in their institutional outreach and in civic education. This work featured support for one site visit each by the respective civic education teams of Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands Parliaments. The Vanuatu team visited to two regions to conduct consultations on the draft parliament bill and conducted a budget briefing for local CSOs. The Solomon Islands Parliament civic education team visited one remote constituency to provide information on the work of parliament and the role of MPs. The Parliament of Tonga highlighted that the support to its outreach Programme to communities and schools should be expanded in a future project

In 2023, UNDP partnered with the Ministry of Education of the Solomon Islands to release a parliamentary handbook for high schools and train social science teachers in select locations on its use. These activities are useful and have been identified as such by the corresponding parliaments. Beneficiary parliaments are committed to outreach and highlight the value of UNDP's support, but they acknowledge that outreach a remains challenge and that much more needs to be done in civic education and awareness raising and that disparate activities need to link up. Beneficiaries have also highlighted that MPs tend to have a limited interest and understanding of the value of engagement with constituencies and on supporting parliamentary outreach and that an innovative approach was needed:

"We have an outreach team that does activities for youth and women, for example women mock parliament and youth parliament activities that happen around elections, and in between UNDP supports the outreach, but we need a stock take on what we are doing. We need to revise how we are doing, who

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[26] Interview with Lord Fafuana, Speaker, Tonga Parliament, 02.11.2023

we engage, best practices. We try to visit each constituency, we try to do one or two each year, but it is snail's pace. We do not have the right messaging in our engagement with communities.[27]"

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Case Study 3. Parliamentary Engagement of CSOs in the Solomon Islands

In law-making, oversight, and in budgeting, parliaments safeguard the interests of the wider public and ensure that government policy aligns with that interest. To do this well parliaments need to verify government information, understand the government policy's impact.

Public engagement strengthens the relationship of parliament with the people, allows for public input into parliamentary proceedings and elevates the quality of parliamentary decisions on bills, budgets and in oversight.

Civil society organizations can be important social actors, acting as intermediaries between government and parliament and groups of citizens. Their value may lie in the pooling of the interests of groups of citizens and their expression of them in the public sphere. Their value may also lie in their specialized expertise in the policy area the work and advocate on. They can be an important source of support and information for parliaments. In some countries civil society organizations also monitor the performance of parliament and inform the public about it.

PPEI II has supported beneficiary parliaments in engaging with constituents and civil society. This has included outreach by the parliamentary institution to inform citizens about parliament's work, field visits and public consultations by parliamentary committees.

The project has used the FBO initiative to foster parliamentary engagement with civil society in the Solomon Islands. Following the development of the budget analysis by the FBO in 2022, the project has organized briefings for CSOs on this analysis to encourage CSOs input into the budget review process.

In the Solomon Islands this has been particularly effective. The Solomon Islands are a very geographically dispersed country with a lot of remote areas that are difficult to reach. There is an organized network of civil society organizations, led by the Development Services Exchange, which can convene stakeholders form the civic sector across the country and be a partner to government and parliament.

DSE has organized civil society participation in the budget briefings to everybody's advantage. During the briefings CSOs can ask questions and make suggestions. Members subsequently made inputs in the framework of hearings conducted in the 2022/23 budget process. This cooperation has led to CSOs in the network engaging more regularly with parliament. In 2022, DSE made a submission to the Parliament's Public Accounts Committee. They pulled together inputs from CSOs and CBOs in all sectors – from education to climate change. Many recommendations were taken up by the committee in their report that was adopted by parliament and put to government.

While the practice is useful the sustainability of these efforts is in question. UNDP's Public Financial Management Project had previously supported the government in conducting budget hearings with civil society during the budget development process. This practice ceased with the end of the project as the government claimed it lacked the funding to proceed. This points to the fact that public engagement support should be embedded in a wider political process that opens space for civil society to play its role in good governance.

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Overall, the project's activities in support of parliamentary engagement of civil society, youth, and marginalized group engagement have yielded limited results. The project's modalities of supporting outreach and engagement through the support of parliamentary outreach visit, committee consultations, such as the consultations across the country on Vanuatu's national health bill, the in-country women and youth practice parliament were all technically sound and reasonable interventions. The lack of results was primarily due to fluctuating interest from beneficiary institutions. The project could improve the effectiveness of its work by complementing supply-sided work with support to the demand side of engagement – capacity-building and support to women's groups, policy-minded CSOs,

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[27] Interview with PPEI II beneficiary parliament interlocutor, October 2023.

CSOs and CBOs representing marginalized groups, and social partners – trade unions and employers' representatives- to strengthen their ability to bring their concerns to the attention of parliaments. The project has a track record of working with national civil society networks such as Development Services Exchange, and could start engagement with these networks to review needs of the networks and their members in engaging with parliaments for the purpose of better inputs into parliamentary work, for more success in empowering aspiring women leaders, and also for more effective outreach where CSOs and CBOs could work with the parliamentary outreach and civic education teams in preparing outreach, delivering it better, and following up on visits.

Result 2.B: Capacity of potential women candidates increased through provision of training and capacity building activities.

The project had sought to support **women MPs, politicians, and leaders** with a view to increasing the women's descriptive and substantive representation[28] in parliament and support women political leadership. The relevant activities that benefitted primarily s*itting women MPs* in exerting political leadership through activities that are not well reflected in the project's results framework. The project did extremely limited work with potential women candidates: It supported a women practice parliament in Tonga in 2021.

The project supported mentoring by the Fiji Parliament Deputy Speaker of the sole elected women member in the Vanuatu Parliament. PPEI II has maintained an informal women MP network that exists in parallel to formal structures with membership of many PICTS parliaments such as the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Association. PPEI II sought to ensure that a gendered image of parliament and the role of women in politics was transported in the parliamentary outreach work it supported.

PPEI II had learned from the failed efforts by development partners over the last decade of securing in increase of descriptive women representation in PICT parliaments through temporary special measures. Still, with support of the project, several beneficiary parliaments anchored selected gender equality provisions in their revised Standing Orders.

Result 2.C: Increased number of women candidates selected by political parties in selected Pacific countries.

The project proposed to advance women's descriptive representation by working through political parties (in those beneficiary PICTs that have them), and to work on substantive representation by providing inputs into national policy development and legislation to promote reforms that increase representation. The project's efforts achieved limited results, but the governance team members insist that political party outreach has worked well in the Cook Islands, and that based on the model of Fiji, the implementation of voluntary measures by political parties have a higher chance of succeeding than any formal measures – given that TSM had been introduced in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands parliaments but failed to be adopted. Interlocutors from beneficiary parliaments have likewise expressed reservations about the introduction of TSM and asked for more support in awareness raising and outreach to women at community level.

The project achieved better results in mainstreaming gender equality across several of its interventions, notably in the FBO initiative and in the procedural review work (see Result 2A above).

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[28] The 'descriptive representation of women' (DRW) refers to whether the number of women in parliament reflects the population of women in a society (which is around 50%). 'Substantive Representation' refers to the actions that parliamentarians take to advance women's rights and gender equality.

The project's **response to the COVID-19 pandemic** has been flexible and on-demand support that has improved the **digitalization of beneficiary parliaments,** another successful intervention not covered by the results framework. The project has set aside significant resources for necessary infrastructure upgrades, and ICT policy support, and technical support in procedure review to ensure parliaments would be ready to meet during the pandemic or in the event of a natural disaster. Among the support, two success stories stand out: As a result of the support the ICT facilities and policy framework of Vanuatu Parliament were upgraded to a high-level of emergency readiness. In the Cook Islands Parliament, infrastructure, policy, and the procedural framework was readied to facilitate remote parliament meetings. In parallel to this digitalization support, the project also advised parliaments on the legal and human rights considerations around pandemic emergency measures that the PICT governments had put in place. Building on this investment into digitalization, the project organized a series of virtual exchanges in 2021 and 2022. All beneficiaries have identified further support in their parliaments' digitalization as a priority for the project's next phase. Overall, it is fair to say that the results of the activities implemented across the project's seven intervention areas **have contributed to the achievement of the project results and outcome** (the SRP output 1) as measured by the two SRP IRRF indicators, based on the feedback beneficiaries provided during the key information interviews. Though without more specific indicators and quality monitoring data, the evidence presented here remains circumstantial. Figure 9 summarizes the contributions made by the project's interventions.

Tentative Contributions of PPEII II Activities to Achieving the Project's Results and Objectives (based on beneficiary feedback)		
SRP Output 1: Increased transparency and accountability in governance institutions and formal and informal decision-making processes *1.1. IRRF Indicator 2.1.1b* *Constitution-making Body (Parliament) with improved administrative and human resource capacities to undertake drafting, public outreach, and consultation and with mechanisms to ensure participation of women and marginalized groups* *1.2 IRRF indicator 2.1.1:* *Parliament with improved administrative and human resources to discharge its mandates in relation to law-making, oversight, and representation*	**Result 1.A** Members of Parliament are supported more effectively by the parliamentary Secretariat through the provision of training and induction for first time members, research, and briefing materials **Result 1.B:** Development of participatory and transparent national planning and budget process; cross cutting development issues mainstreamed in Pacific Parliaments	Strategic planning support (provided in the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Nauru) allows parliament to improve service delivery to MPs; Procedural reform (provided in Cook Islands, Vanuatu, and Nauru) allowed parliament to be more effective in its functions, and in some instances to overcome gridlock (see also the case study). Peer exchanges with other parliaments have sought to build the skills of parliamentary staff in a variety of service areas, though the effectiveness of these activities is less clear. The Floating Budget Office (in Vanuatu, Tonga, and the Solomon Islands) has strengthened research departments so they can support MPs with reference materials that are useful in reviewing their respective national budgets. Through its support to the PIPG, the project effectively mainstreamed climate change, but the significance of this work goes beyond this. The project supported an SDG self-assessment by the Parliament of Tonga.

		Through its support to ICT development, the project improved the effectiveness of parliaments and laid the basis for improved parliamentary services.
SRP Output 2: Increased voice and more participation by women, youth and marginal groups in national and subnational decision-making bodies that are more representative. *1.2 IRRF indicator 2.1.1: Parliament with improved administrative and human resources to discharge its mandates in relation to law-making, oversight, and representation*	**Result 2.A:** Parliamentary Outreach and citizen engagement expanded to include traditionally excluded groups, such as women and youth, and reach remote areas **Result 2.B:** Capacity of potential women candidates increased through provision of training and capacity building activities **Result 2.C:** Increased number of women candidates selected by political parties in selected Pacific countries	Outreach and civic education activities (in Vanuatu, Tonga, and the Solomon Islands) raised awareness among marginalized groups about the role of parliaments and the opportunities for engagement. Women practice and youth parliaments (in Tonga and Vanuatu) educated and engaged women and young people in the work of the parliament. Induction of the Women MP in Vanuatu supported a sitting member in building essential knowledge and skills. The project also supported women MP networking activities. Engagement of CSOs during the budget process in the Solomon Islands allowed CSOs to engage with MPs and make their priorities heard.

Figure 9. Tentative Contributions of PPEII II Activities to Achieving the Project's Objectives. Source: Author's Tabulation

3.2.2. Implementation modalities

PPEI II's principal delivery modalities for assistance were: (1) PICT parliaments peer-learning, (2) support to twinning arrangements, principally with the legislatures of Australia and the New Zealand Parliament, (3) in country technical advice delivered by a group of technical advisors, (4) facilitation of in-country missions, (4) infrastructure support, and (5) limited financial support of national implementation through letters of agreement with selected beneficiary parliaments.

PPEI II's choice of implementation modalities needs to be understood in the light of the Programme implementation circumstances. The project proposed to deliver technical assistance to many institutions across a large physical space. The project did also have to share its limited in-house technical resources with SLIP, an equally expansive regional project, and the FPSP, implemented nationally in Fiji. Because all Programme roles were set up to be hybrid management and technical roles, there was no full-time technical advisor available to all these projects as a group – let alone to PPEI II individually. The project, from 2022 onwards, appointed several local project coordinators on a consultancy basis to provide both technical assistance and Programme support. Coordinators were appointed to be based in Vanuatu, Tonga, Tuvalu, the Solomon Islands and Kiribati.

The existence of an **underlying theoretical and practical framework** of how the project understands and seeks to facilitate *adult learning* for MP and staff beneficiaries is not in evidence.[29] There is no technical framework either in the project document, or in the available documentation. PPEI II sees *institutional strengthening* as best managed through the development of a comprehensive parliamentary development vision and implementation framework in the form of strategic plans, and the strategic planning work the project facilitated is seen as successful by all stakeholders. As per the project document, comprehensive assessments of needs of the beneficiary institutions were to be conducted but these are not in evidence. The fact that there is no monitoring data regarding the effectiveness of the implementation of activities adds to the paucity of data. The project was also not subject to a mid-term evaluation that could have taken stock of achievements and provided direction (as such an evaluation was not included in the project design).

Project beneficiaries were uniformly satisfied with the technical support provided by the project. During interviews, beneficiary representatives voiced high satisfaction with the technical advisor consultants the project used to deliver technical advice on the ground or through regional exchanges on strategic planning, procedure reform, digitalization, and public financial management. The choice of the project to work flexibly with high-quality technical advisors on a long-term basis is a good solution to the problem posed by the lack of availability of technical resources in the Programme team.

The project supported **peer exchanges and peer attachments** in support of all the project priorities – for institutional strengthening, regional parliamentary integration, and for women empowerment. The learning and advocacy results of peer exchanges rise considerably if such exchanges are embedded in a framework on their preparation, including an agreement on learning or advocacy objectives, and their follow-up, including support in applying learnings in the participants' regular duties or in the follow-up advocacy. A good example of how the project managed this well, is the support for regional parliamentary integration and the strengthening of the PIPG mechanism. On other occasions there is no evidence of such a strategic approach.

The facilitated **in-country missions** for outreach, public consultation, and community engagement, were rare – no doubt also due to high transaction costs – but were appreciated by the stakeholders, parliaments, and civil society stakeholders alike.

The **deployment of national coordinators in Tonga, Vanuatu and Kiribati** was appreciated in principle but of limited value to some beneficiaries in practice. All beneficiaries noted that the coordinators did not play any technical advisory role and did not deliver activities independently on the ground. Coordinators were delivering programmatic support. While this was satisfactory to some, other beneficiaries said that this led to confusion as they received differing information from the coordinators and the Fiji Programme office on the feasibility of ad hoc requests. These interlocutors preferred direct contact with the Programme team in Fiji.

The evaluation notes that beneficiaries focused their discussion of the project's value largely on the project's response to their (often ad hoc) requests and less on the longer-term objectives. The progress reports note that in absence of parliamentary calendars and a culture of long-term planning, the project continued to be regularly presented with such **ad hoc requests**. Acknowledging this, there is no escaping the fact that parliaments with limited knowledge and no control of the strategic direction of the project, will naturally be more inclined to approach their partner on an ad hoc basis.

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[29] There is a vast reservoir of knowledge on adult learning available on the internet. A useful hands-on summary of different approaches to adult learning can be found here: https://www.ispringsolutions.com/blog/adult-learning-theories.

The project procured a certain volume of **ICT equipment for the digitalization of parliaments**. This included end-user equipment, connectivity equipment, and audiovisual equipment for televising and streaming plenary and committee meetings. The equipment served the project well during virtual delivery, and the digitalization of parliament is a sensible investment given the geographic spread of many PICTs and given the proceeding expansion of mobile data network coverage, which may allow for practices of virtual engagement with and consultation of citizens.

3.3. Efficiency

This section reviews PPEI II's efficiency about (1) the use of financial resources allocated (2) the overall implementation approach for the project, and (3) the delivery modalities for the project's assistance.

3.3.1. Financial Delivery

Overall, the project's use of the financial resources available was comprehensive and appropriate. For those years where reports were available, financial delivery was consistently high, above 95%. The project had a single no-cost extension, by six months, until December 2023. The no-cost extension was agreed following significant savings made due to changes in delivery during the COVID 19 pandemic, which had restricted travel in 2021 and 2022. The project had delivered 5,150,000 or 97% of its project budget by September 2023, three months before the completion of the project. This amounts to a financial delivery rate of 97% and puts the project on target to achieve full financial delivery.

> **Rating: Partly satisfactory (2)**
>
> **Justification for rating:**
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> The project was efficient in delivering is available resources. The portfolio management approach is well conceived for ensuring that synergies are made across the parliamentary projects implemented by the governance team. However, the under-resourcing of the portfolio team has contributed significantly to the management failures, in particular the weak performance on MEL. The project's peer-learning approach and its in-depth cooperation with Australian and New Zealand legislatures has created a lot of value for money but there are significant synergies to be had in pursing these relationships more deliberately. The project's investment in parliamentary digitalization was particularly strategic given the broad regional nature of the project and the geographical spread of many of its small island beneficiaries' constituencies. The project's lack of knowledge mmanagement makes it likely that resources are wasted on "reinventing the wheel" in future

3.3.2. Implementation approach

The project was implemented through the direct implementation approach, implying that the procurement of all goods and services, and the provision of technical advice was administered by the project with the services of the UNDP Pacific Office. The project was implemented through a portfolio approach, meaning in this case, implemented in a bundle alongside the SLIP and FPSP by a democratic governance Programme team. The portfolio's human resources were shared across the three projects. Throughout much of the implementation period, the portfolio included no full-time technical specialist, nor an M&E specialist. The Pacific Office changed this in the most recently approved organogram of July 2023 and added a full-time technical parliamentary development specialist in addition to the project manager /specialist. It also added a M&E officer to be shared across the democratic governance team. The portfolio organogram is depicted in Figure 10 below.
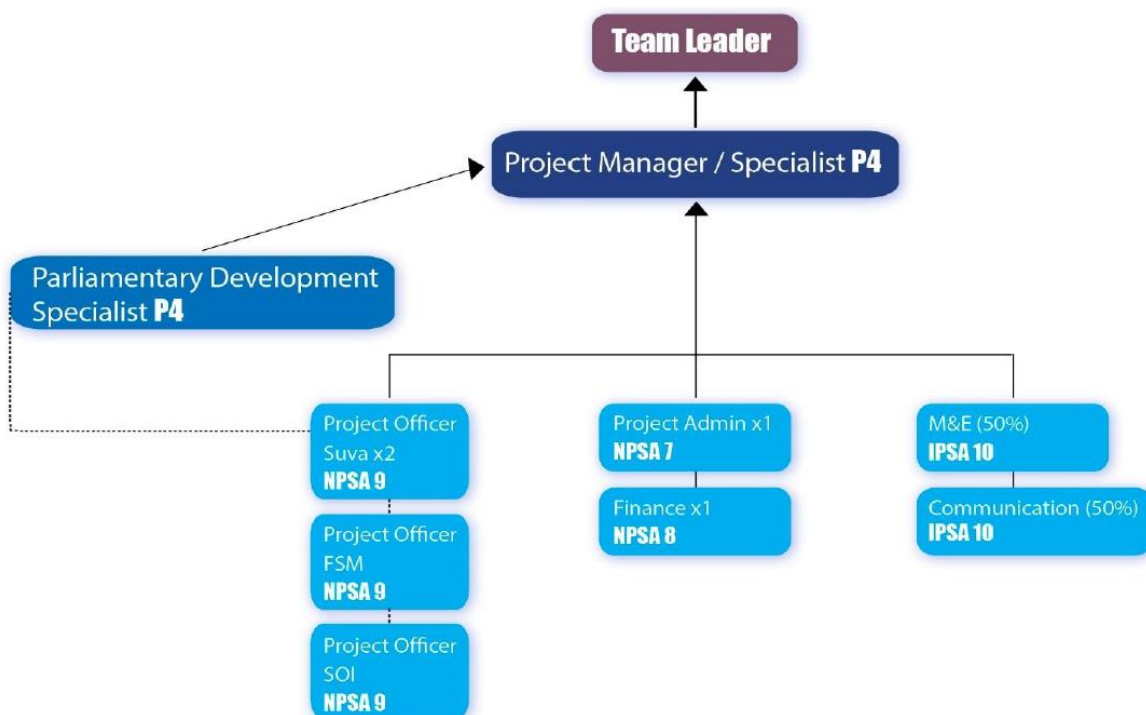
Figure 10. Parliamentary Strengthening Portfolio within UNDP Pacific Office's Democratic Governance Team. Source: UNDP Pacific Office.

The portfolio approach has had several benefits. Former portfolio staff report that activities were on occasion co-delivered by the projects and that there was learning from the Fiji project experience that benefitted the other projects in the portfolio. This is evident, for example, in the use of the Fiji Parliament Deputy Speaker for women MP mentoring activities under PPEI II. Shared strategic initiatives would also be co-funded by the projects, which allowed the portfolio team to adopt a pan-Pacific approach that helped the project push forward regional parliamentary integration.

The bulk of the project was delivered with **limited management and technical resources and virtually no MEL resources available.** This has no doubt contributed to the challenges the project faced in both more sustained engagement with beneficiary parliaments at the strategic level, in management, and in monitoring, evaluation and learning. Technical advisor consultants interviewed for this evaluation have reported an at times disjointed approach, where draft knowledge products were delivered and paid for but never completed, and follow-up was weak. These management deficits point to a lack of human resources assigned by the Pacific Office to manage the implementation of the project, which negatively affected the project's value for money in delivery. It is impossible for this project evaluation to finally determine the human resource needs of the entire portfolio, but it is highly advisable that the portfolio structure will be reviewed based on the strategic priorities that emerge across the portfolio in the planning of the work going forward.

A priority should be to ensure that the **portfolio has its own dedicated MEL specialist** to ensure that adequate time and attention can be put to not only developing an M&E framework and implementing it but also on project learning. There is no record of the project engaging in any knowledge management effort or in learning from implementation. Knowledge products were on occasion left unfinished and there is no evidence they were accounted for or filed. Despite the challenges in implementation of the project, there was no mid-term evaluation conducted. The value of a mid-term evaluation lies in the fact that it is a formal, independent exercise that takes a macro view of the project and provides guidance to project management and executives on the strategic direction of the project and any required adjustments. This could have benefited the project and should be planned for the next phase. The lack

of knowledge management is impeding learning from the PPEI II project for the next phase. For instance, concept notes, Programme arrangements, and delivery materials from induction can be re-purposed for future programming. The loss of these materials is a big loss in terms of investment and effectiveness to the project going forward.

The project was **flexible in delivering activities through national systems as appropriate** and agreed at least two limited direct implementation agreements with beneficiary institutions, through letters of agreement with the respective beneficiary institutions. One example of this is the LoA agreed with the Parliament of Tonga to organize youth and women's practice parliament events, an activity that involves a lot of procurement in travel and logistics and hospitality arrangements that are more effectively planned and procured on the ground, rather than by UNDP's procurement services in Suva. Limited national implementation modalities through LoA could be a cost-effective way of organizing in-country activities that are procurement heavy also in the future, depending on the readiness of beneficiary institutions to comply with UNDP's rules and regulations.

The project's **cooperation and partnerships with other parliamentary strengthening actors** in the Pacific region, the Australian legislatures, and the Parliament of New Zealand, contributed to the value for money in the delivery of project activities. Joint delivery does not only save costs but also creates synergies at both the activity and strategic levels. PPEI II's relations with parliamentary strengthening partners in the region have generally been positive and cooperation has traditionally been close. However, partners like the Australian Twinning Programme have raised concerns about a lack of coordination recently and the possibility of the duplication of efforts. This is important because the Programme includes twinning arrangements between Australian legislatures and all PPEI beneficiary

parliaments as illustrated in Figure 7. Seen more positively, closer coordination with the Twinning Programme and other new actors in the Pacific – such as the Westminster Foundation for Democracy could create new synergies that the

Australian Legislature	Twinned Pacific Parliament
Queensland	Vanuatu & Papa New Guinea
New South Wales	Solomon Islands & Bougainville
Victoria	Fiji, Tuvalu & Nauru
Tasmania	Samoa
Southern Australia	Tonga
Western Australia	Cook Islands
Northern Territories	Niue
Australian Capital Territory	Kiribati

Figure 11 Twinning Arrangements of Australian Legislatures with Pacific Parliaments. Source: Author's Tabulation

project could lift. For instance, the CPA is preparing a parliamentary bench-marking exercise in the Pacific, with the assistance of several twinned Australian legislatures – for the Fiji, Tonga, and Tuvalu parliaments. PPEI II would do well to consider the findings of these exercises in the stock-taking exercise that should precede the development of the next phase project. Figure 11 illustrates the twinning arrangements of the Australian Legislatures with the Pacific parliaments.

3.3.2. Delivery modalities

Much of the project's assistance was delivered through peer-learning activities, where technical assistance benefited several beneficiary parliaments, for example in the FBO initiative. This is a cost-effective modality of facilitating learning when embedded in a wider programmatic portfolio.

The use of long-term technical advisors on a consultancy basis is a good practice as it allows the project to draw on specialized technical assistance on a demand basis. Long-term advisors develop familiarity

and understanding of the project and develop relationships with beneficiaries that build trust with the project. All beneficiaries reported satisfaction with the technical advisors that the project employed in delivering specialized technical assistance on such diverse fields as digitalization and procedural advice. Long-term advisors should, however, be monitored and guided by a dedicated full-time technical specialist who can connect the dots between the different specialist portfolios and verify performance.

The **use of in-country project coordinators** assigned to select beneficiary parliaments from 2021onwards to augment the coordination, provide some technical assistance and support results reporting was a good initiative that yielded mixed results. The reporting produced by these coordinators is some of the best evidence the evaluator has reviewed, but the satisfaction of beneficiary parliaments with their coordinators is mixed. This could be a result of a mix of the individual performance of coordinators, the modalities of their assignment – at least one coordinator was assigned part-time and placed outside the parliament facilities, and their lack of availability was criticized by the host institution - and the lack of management and technical support for these coordinators.

The project invested heavily in the **digitalization of beneficiary parliaments** during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The investments into connectivity and into video-conferencing facilities are particularly important and should be further expanded to all beneficiary parliaments in alignment with the expansion of internet connectivity across the Pacific.

Depending on the available bandwidth and the current state of facilities at partner countries, virtual meetings, seminars, and mentoring sessions could be introduced to accompany travel and on-the ground technical assistance by technical advisors. PPEI II coordinators on the ground could have a valuable role in providing technical assistance in conjunction with these virtual programming which would lift some pressure from their shoulders of needing to deliver nationally and in isolation.

Virtual interaction could also complement the parliaments' public consultation and public engagement activities, where these are with stakeholders that are well versed in information technology. Virtual interaction will not likely be a suitable means for reaching marginal groups in society.

To implement such hybrid programming, the technical prerequisites need to be in place. Stable broadband internet connections inside parliamentary facilities, teleconferencing equipment, meeting software and the technical skill of support staff to operate this equipment. The IPU runs a center for Innovation in Parliament that could be of help in designing, developing, and implementing such a hybrid approach to parliamentary strengthening. The Centre maintains a Pacific Regional hub that is located within the New Zealand Parliament and could be a valuable partner in designing and delivering a next phase PPEI.[30]

The project's activities in support of women empowerment, youth, and marginalized groups engagement have yielded more limited results and hence delivered less value for money. A demand-sided approach complementing supply-sided interventions, despite requiring adequate resourcing, is likely to yield better results and deliver more value for money.

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[30] See the Centre for Innovation's Pacific Hub website at: https://www.ipu.org/innovation-hub/pacific-hub.

3.4. Sustainability and Impact

This section explores the sustainability of results achieved during project implementation and the overall longer-term impact the project is likely to have. Given the lack of a specific results framework noted in sections 3.1 and 3.2 above and the lack of comprehensive data available to the evaluation about project activities and results, this exploration of impact is tentative. The PPEI II project builds upon the intervention of PPEI I. The review of the sustainability of results is an assessment of the likely sustainability and impact of the project's results and the

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Rating: Satisfactory (3)

The project delivered several results that are likely to have sustainable positive impact on the quality of parliamentarism in PICTs, in particular procedural reform, and regional integration. The project's approaches of supporting strategic planning, and MP induction are key to delivering and sustaining results long term and across induction cycles. However, the project's lack of a comprehensive approach to staff and MP capacity-strengthening likely reduces the impact of the project's activities in this field. The project is likely to have very limited impact on gender equality in the beneficiary parliaments and in its engagement of civil society. A revised, more comprehensive approach to strengthening gender equality may yield better results in the future. The PPEI focus parliaments remain committed to long term institutional development that is aligned with PPEI's support. The main risk to sustainability lies in the donor dependency of capacity-building and parliamentary development.

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adequacy of project's approaches in achieving sustainable results and making impact. There is evidence that sustainability and impact of democratic governance interventions depends much on the intervention's flexibility and adaptiveness, the patience of its approach and the reliability of partnerships.[31] Adaptive programming is methodologically rigorous and implies that monitoring and learning are built into the approach in a consistent way, that all interventions are assessed for their impact, and that all interventions remain strategically aligned to the overall objective. Adaptive Programme is not ad hoc, and activity driven.

Several beneficiaries have acknowledged that the Pacific is a challenging environment for strengthening parliamentary institutions. PICTs tend to be politically unstable, with weak political parties, significant realignments of coalition between elections, and elections that lead to larger turnover in the composition of parliaments and governments. This environment is not the most conducive for strategic reform and development of parliaments.

The project has been a dependable partner to the beneficiary parliaments over the last two project cycles. While the project has been flexible in accommodating beneficiary parliaments' needs, including short-term ones, PPEI II has carried over the approaches of the previous project phase and has avoided a fundamental change of strategy. Overall, the project has remained flexible in its assistance to parliaments but has kept a strategic focus and has seized on opportunities to effect lasting change when they presented themselves.

In many instances, the project reached out beyond the parliamentary institutions to work with the government on effecting systemic change. The procedural review work is a case in point where on-demand procedural support presented an opportunity for effecting lasting procedural change, and

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[31] See David Booth, 'Achieving governance reforms under pressure to demonstrate results: Dilemma or new beginning?', in: OECD, *A Governance Practitioner's Handbook: Alternative Ideas and Approaches*, Paris 2015.

cooperation with the government ensured that associated legal reform could be implemented. With the project having successfully supported procedural reform in several beneficiary parliaments strengthening their mechanisms for legislative review and oversight, an emerging priority is securing greater parliamentary autonomy from government – not only in terms of legal autonomy, but also of funding parliament, and of managing parliamentary staff.[32] An achievement in this regard was the adoption of the parliamentary service act in Nauru in 2021.

The project's focus on regional integration has likewise produced results that may be impactful and sustainable. Not only did the project support the continued operation of the PIPG. It also supported key stakeholders like the Speaker of the Tonga Parliament in positioning the PIPG as the platform for the parliamentary dimension of Pacific Island regionalism, and it also supported the Speaker to put climate change mitigation and adaptation on the regional parliamentary agenda.

The project's focus on strategic planning is a valuable strategy to ensure that parliaments develop and progress their institutions and practices, deliberately and with longer-term objectives in mind. If done well and iteratively, strategic planning is an important way of institutionalizing progress and ensuring assistance is beneficiary-led and that change does not overly tax an institution's absorption capacity and ability to progress reform. The two phases of the project have encouraged the adoption of strategic plans at all interested beneficiary institutions but there is yet no evidence of how UNDP has supported the application of these strategic plans in helping the beneficiary parliaments in building result-based management systems.

Initiatives like the FBO have continued for at least eight years, have greatly improved the quality of budget documentation to MPs and on occasion to civil society, and are well-integrated into the beneficiary parliaments' budget calendars. Depending on the results of a review of the mechanism, the project in the next phase may consider reducing the technical support to this initiative and gradually phasing management support out to hand over a functioning mechanism to the beneficiaries.

One major limitation in terms of the likely impact of the development gains supported by the project is the absence of an approach to capacity-strengthening of MPs and parliamentary staff that would be strategic and based on an explicit understanding of how adults learn. Except for the FBO, the project's support to staff professional development was largely ad hoc. The project sponsored their participation in exchanges with parliaments in the region, with the New Zealand Parliament and the Australian legislatures and their participation in specialized training courses by institutions such as McGill University. The impact of these interventions would likely be higher if they were embedded in a Programme of support that aids in preparing participants for learning activities and supporting them with applying the knowledge and skills gained into their work. A few beneficiaries have highlighted staff capacity-building as a priority a next phase of the project.

For MPs, similarly, beyond induction the project offered few opportunities for professional development – though it must be acknowledged that in interviews several stakeholders highlighted that many MPs were often not interested in participating in professional development activities.

Regarding women empowerment, and the inclusion of marginalized groups, the project's interventions are less likely to have achieved longer-term impact. Despite the project's failed attempts to work with political parties on voluntary measures, an opportunity-based approach – implemented in those beneficiary countries where political parties are more stable, could still yield valuable results. Individual activities, like the introduction of a parliamentary learning book for school children the project

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[32] For an in-depth review parliamentary autonomy see Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Comparative Research Paper on Parliamentary Administration,* Geneva 2020.

introduced in the Solomon Islands may be a valuable exception. An approach that combines supply- and demand-sided approaches, linking civil society organizations to parliament and to the government will likely be more impactful.

The focus beneficiary parliaments remain committed to their further institutional development in the project's priority areas for support beyond the current phase: In their strategic development plans, the beneficiary parliaments of the Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu parliaments, commit to investment to strengthen financial oversight, procedural reform, gender equality, and outreach and civil education. Parliaments are also committed to developing their ICT infrastructure and e-parliament capacity.

The main risks to sustainability of the institutional development gains supported by PPEI stem from the aid dependency of parliamentary development across all PPEI beneficiary parliaments.[33] A next PPEI phase may need to address this by making contributions to building sustainable in-house capacity for routine training and knowledge building.

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[33] This aid dependency is not unique to parliament. Across all dimensions of development, the Pacific is among the most aid-dependent regions in the world. See Alexandre Dayant et al, *Lowy Institute Pacific Aid Map -2023 Key Findings Report,* https://pacificaidmap.lowyinstitute.org/Lowy-Institute-Pacific-Aid-Map-Key-Findings-Report-2023.pdf

3.5. Cross-cutting Issues: SDGs, climate change, and social inclusion

This section reviews the project's performance applying the cross-cutting issues identified in the project document across the project's work. Gender equality and women empowerment was the principal specific objective of the project output three, but the project also sought to mainstream gender equality in its procedural support, committee strengthening and induction work. The evaluation does not consider

> **Rating: Excellent (4)**
>
> Overall, the project did well in mainstreaming cross-cutting issues in its programming. The project sought to integrate a focus on the SDGs into its committee strengthening and its MP professional development work. More comprehensive programming around the SDGs was the exception but the project did advocate for and support an SDG self-assessment exercise by the Tonga Parliament. The project has been more successful in promoting the inclusion of climate change mitigation and adaptation in the regional parliamentary agenda through the PIPG. The project included a focus on social inclusion in its support to public consultation and outreach: No disability inclusion measures were planned under the project but need to be included for al outputs in the next project phase.

the implementation of a human rights-based approach in its rating as the project document does not introduce one.[34] However, the portfolio team explained that they did pay attention to respecting human rights in project activities and addressing human rights concerns where possible. Specifically, they sought to address all human rights issues through the lens of the SDGs. This meant approaching human rights issues from a development angle and linking them to the SDGs globally and to beneficiary PICTs' sustainable development plan.

The previous phase of the project, PPEI I, had introduced the five target parliaments to the SDGs and supported parliamentary committees in integrating the SDGs into their oversight work. PPEI II had planned to continue this work but in 2020 and 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic no SDG-themed activities took place at the beneficiary parliaments. Up until the end of 2022 the project reported some progress on SDG-relevant activities. In Tonga, in 2023, the project managed to re-engage on the topic and was initiating work to support the design of an SDG self-assessment toolkit for parliament that is based on a model toolkit developed for the Fiji Parliament. In UNDP supported inductions, the project included modules on parliaments and SDGs to introduce MPs to the topic and how it would apply to their work.

The project has been successful in promoting the inclusion of climate change mitigation and adaptation on the regional parliamentary agenda. The project supported parliamentary participation in the PIPG which in 2022 reviewed the progress of the region in the building of blue economies which had been set as a priority in 2019. The project had supported the PIPG in linking its work to regional initiatives, especially the vision of Pacific Island Leaders, expressed through the Forum Leaders' Meeting annual communique, and the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway (SAMOA Pathway). In the Speaker of the Parliament of Tonga, the project has found a vocal champion on climate change, and supported the development of his regional climate change agenda and its implementation through the PIPG. The Tongan Parliament has expressly endorsed the Report of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's 27th Conference of Parties (UNFCC COP 27). The Parliament's Environment and Climate change committee has introduced oversight of the government's implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the UNFCC. The committee raises public awareness on climate change and engages civil society through consultations. The

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beneficiary parliaments have interacted with the international dimension of parliamentary climate activism beyond the region, such as the Climate Parliament.[35]

PPEI II sought to foster social inclusion through its work with parliamentary beneficiaries on planning and implementing outreach activities that will include specific efforts to reach marginalized groups. This included supporting committee public consultations on draft legislation under review by committees in remote areas of the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Despite challenges in support to outreach as described in the section on 'Effectiveness' of this report, the PPEI II-supported outreach activities that had a consistent focus on social inclusion. These activities included support to outreach visits to remote areas, outreach to marginal groups, and a focus on youth and women engagement. PPEI II did not include disability inclusion in its mainstreaming approach, not having developed an approach in the project document.

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[35] The Climate Parliament is a global network of over 2000 legislators from 121 countries working to inform and mobilize MPs to take action on the climate emergency. 40% of participating MPs are women. See: https://www.climateparl.net/about-us.

3.6. Gender Results Effectiveness

The project, in its reporting consistently report the gender breakdown of participation at the activity level. The data indicates that the project paid attention to the inclusion of women participants in project activities and to measuring their participation. Beyond this monitoring, the project's monitoring did not report on the gender effectiveness of results achieved. To review the effectiveness of project results regarding

> **Rating: Satisfactory (3)**
>
> Overall, the gender effectiveness of the results the project achieved across the six priority areas was satisfactory. Given the difficult normative environment, the fact that the results achieved were mostly gender responsive, is a modest achievement. This is true for the gender responsive rule changes and the gender budget analysis produced by the Floating Budget Office. The project's had no success working with political parties on voluntary measures for gender equality and women empowerment, but the initiative was appropriate, and any successful intervention will need to reach beyond the parliamentary institution and support demand for gender equality reforms to be successful. The project's monitoring consistently reported gender-disaggregated activity participation data.

the overall impact on gender relations in the beneficiary parliaments, their countries and at the regional level, the evaluation conducted a GRES analysis of the results achieved by the project. GRES analysis assesses the gender effectiveness of individual project results based on a standardized methodology.[36] The analysis and assigns results scores on a five-part ordinal scale, ranging from one- 'gender negative' to five – 'gender transformative.' The scores are described in Figure 12 below.
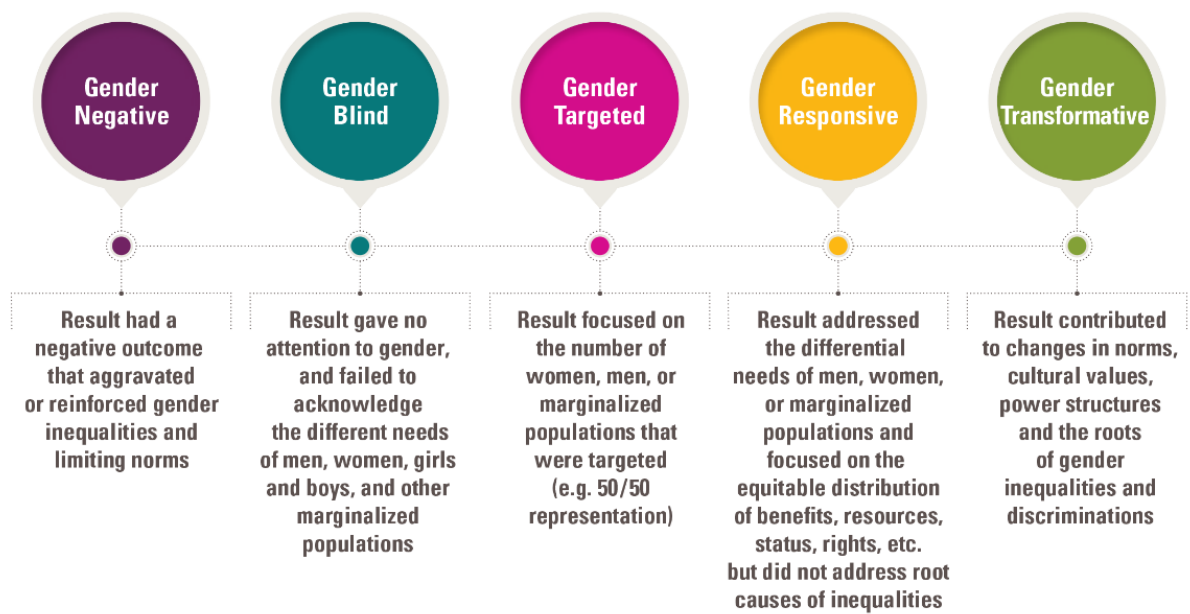
Figure 12. The Gender Results Effectiveness Scale, Source: UNDP Independent Evaluation Office Website

There are some caveats to the results of the GRES analysis. Due to the weakness of the project's results framework, the analysis was conducted against the observed results in the seven priority areas of

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[36] UNDP Independent Evaluation Office, *Assessing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, https://erc.undp.org/methods-center/methods/data-analysis-approaches-methods/accessing-gender-equality

engagement identified in the project document and reviewed in the section on 'Effectiveness,' except for the work with political parties which did not take place. Due to the missing monitoring information and missing progress reports, only the main deliverables reported in the available documentation were stored. There was no scoring for staff capacity-building. Despite having implemented many virtual and in-person exchange activities, no clear results were reported by the project nor the stakeholders, so scoring was not possible.

In assessing the gender effectiveness of results, the political and gender normative environment of the interventions was considered. In the PICTs, male domination, conservative views of gender relations, widespread gender-based violence, and weak social support networks for women make it hard for women to step into positions of leadership in their communities, the economy, and the political system, and to exercise transformative leadership.[37] Women's descriptive representation in PICT parliaments is among the lowest in the world at an average of 6%.[38] Some PICT parliaments have no elected female members. The project management team reported limited interest among some beneficiary parliaments for even softer-touch activities. One parliament manager said that gender was not a priority for their parliament. One of the elected stakeholders said that formal instruments such as TSM would be counterproductive and cause a backlash that would likely set back gender equality and women empowerment even further. They described gender equality as a generational task best to be addressed through civic education.

Despite the difficult environment in which the project conducted these interventions, the results were mostly gender-targeted or gender-responsive, which is reflected in scores that are almost consistently high. No result achieved could, however, be described as gender transformative. Interestingly, it was not the activities that had gender as its focus that yielded the most responsive results. As described in the section on 'Effectiveness' these gender-focused activities yielded limited results. The project's attempts to work with political parties on voluntary measures to increase gender equality turned out to be not practicable. Figure 13 provides an overview in reporting both average and median values for the results achieved across the project's intervention areas.

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[37] See Haley, N & Zubrinich, K. 'Women's political and administrative leadership in the Pacific,' in: *State, Society & Governance in Melanesia*, January 2016.
[38] UNWOMEN, Facts and figures: Women's leadership and political participation, https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures
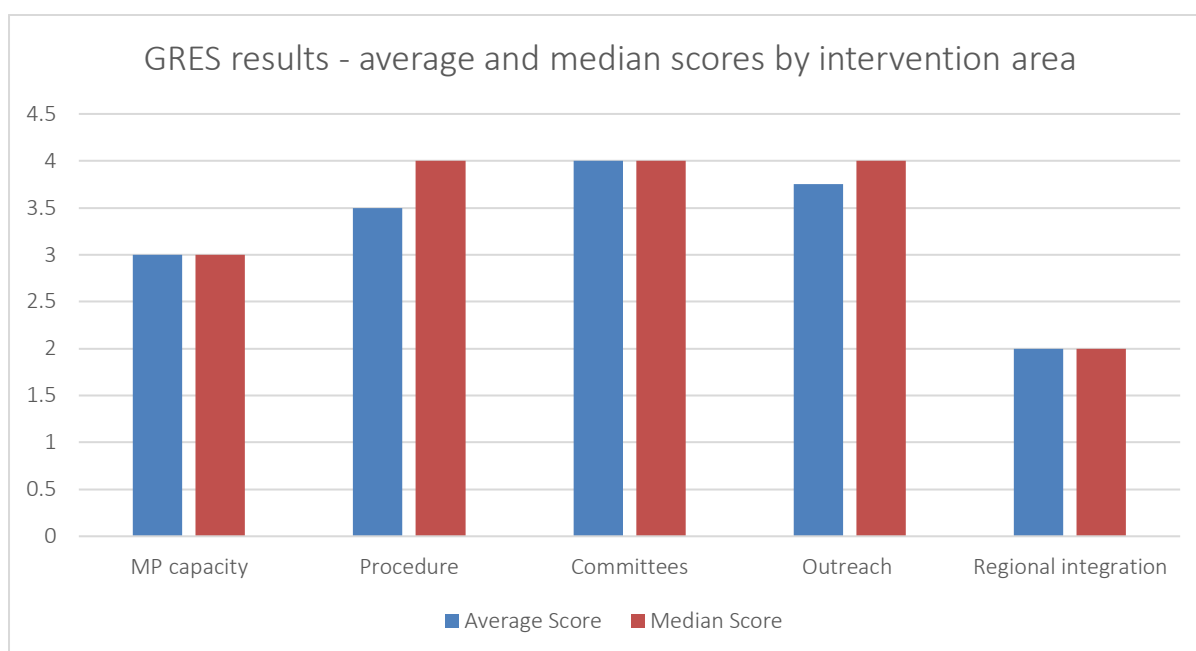
Figure 13. Average and Median GRES Scores by Intervention Area. Source: Author's tabulation

Committee activities - committee induction and the FBO - have yielded the most gender-responsive results, through consistent mainstreaming. Committee inductions introduced new MPs to established practice as well as best practice in mainstreaming a gender lens into committee work to ensure that inquiries consider the differential impact of policy on women and men. The FBO produced gender budget analysis throughout the project period for all participating parliaments, making visible for MPs the differential impact of budgets on women and men. Similarly, outreach activities, such as women practice parliaments (where they took place) and community outreach were consistent in being gender-responsive or at least gender-targeted, in that the project took care to involve women and girls in field visits and consultations.

In the beneficiary parliaments, the Standing Orders and parliamentary legislation that the parliaments developed with the support of the project, replaced decades-old rules that often stemmed from the post-independence period. In processes that spanned years, the project's procedure consultant not only reformed but updated these rules to be more in line with modern parliamentary norms. The reforms ranged from mundane things such as a making the dress code gender-neutral to introducing soft gender targets: For example, the Vanuatu Parliament strives to ensure gender-balanced representation on parliamentary committees, an effort that, however, remains hampered by the low representation of women in parliament.

Induction has been the major tool of MP capacity-building in the project and has been mostly gender-responsive or gender-targeted. A highlight of this was the mini induction conducted for the only elected female MP in Tonga (and interested male peers) with the participation of the Deputy Speaker of the Fiji Parliament. The only result area that falls significantly short and may be qualified as gender-blind was the regional integration work. Regional work in both fora supported by the project – the PIPG regional parliamentary process and the more technical Presiding Officers' Conference proceedings were both gender-blind.

Figure 14 represents a breakdown of gender results by focus country. The main observation to make is that the results in PPEI II focus countries that had received substantially more support, and over a longer period (dating back to PPEI I) yielded results that were more gender responsive.

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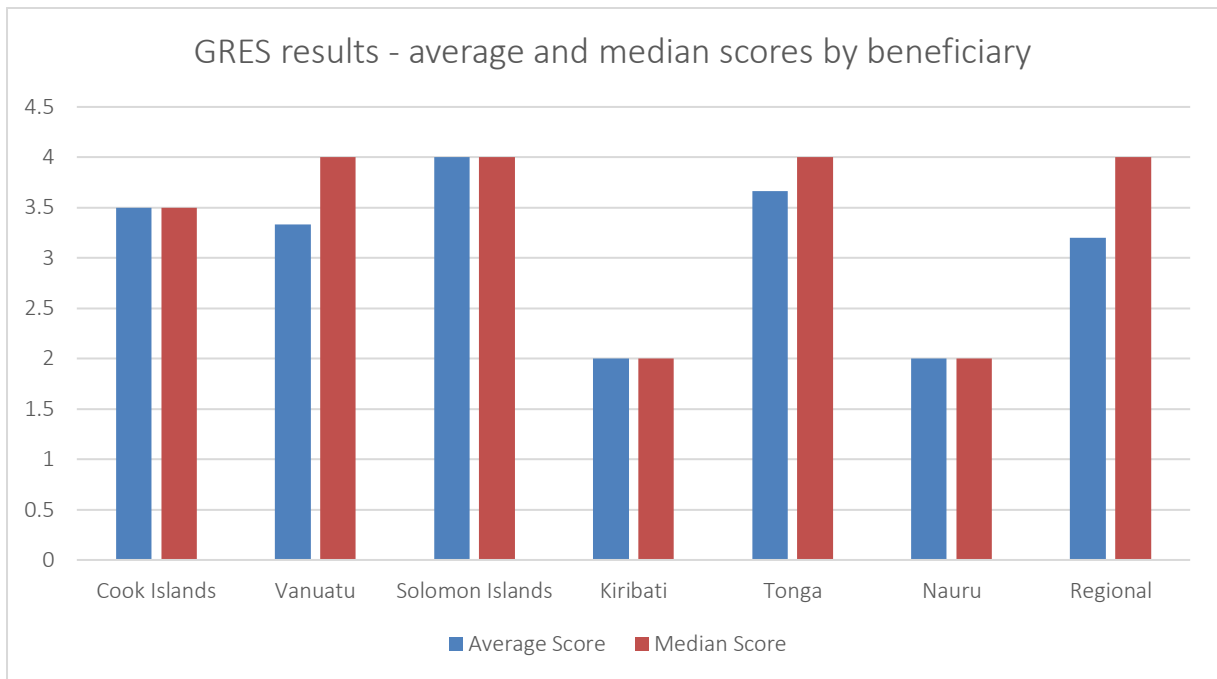
Figure 14. Average and Media GRES Scores by Beneficiary. Source: Author's tabulation

The project's approach to gender equality and women empowerment yielded limited results, but as the GRES analysis shows this is due in part to the difficult environment, and limitations to the approach and not for a lack of trying. The reasoning for expanding the focus of the project beyond parliament and work with political parties was sound as TSM and other formal measures will not likely be an option in most current Pacific parliaments. An expanded focus on outreach and a focus on supporting the demand side- women's groups and youth groups – in addition to the supply side intervention are likely to yield more gender-effective results in the future.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusion section provides answers to the main evaluation questions, draws lessons learned, and lays out recommendations for a follow-up project

- **What was the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of the project?**

Overall, the performance of the project against the evaluation criteria was satisfactory, but with weaknesses in the results framework and in project governance, which has resulted in lower ratings regarding project relevance and coherence. Broadly speaking the strategic direction of the project, with a focus on strengthening MPs, and staff, parliaments' roles in budgeting and budget oversight, promoting women representation and women political action and social inclusion, and regional integration, was adequate, as the high satisfaction of the beneficiaries with the project, and their request for more in-depth support in the project's core areas of operation, indicates. The implication for the next phase of the project is to maintain the overall strategic framework, but to adapt and improve on it, and address its weaknesses.

UNDP's value proposition remains strong in 2023. The project can deliver support in strategic areas, like fostering regional parliamentary integration that other partners cannot. It can draw on its broad programming in the region to design interventions that focus beyond the parliamentary institution. But after two periods of implementation, PPEI needs to review the progress of its beneficiaries and the needs for support which have likely changed since 2016.

Since 2016, the project's environment has changed, however: new development partners such as the Westminster Foundation for Democracy are active in the Pacific. The project could improve how it collaborates with partners such as the Australian Twinning Programme and the New Zealand Parliament's Taia Kiwa project and explore new partnerships with the IPU and MP-led organizations such as Climate Parliament.

The fact that PPEI II, and the SRP, did by design, not provide for a formal role of beneficiaries in the strategic management and oversight of the project, has led to a lack of information and a lack of buy-in that beneficiaries had into the project's overall objectives and has possibly reinforced the tendency of beneficiaries to approach the project with ad hoc requests for support.

PPEI II delivered sound and relevant parliamentary strengthening support to the beneficiary parliaments, often on an on-demand basis. The project's strengths lie in its long-term approach to its priorities, in the use of consistently high-quality technical expertise, and in its ability to capitalize on opportunities to support meaningful reform where they presented themselves.

The project implementation modalities were appropriate, and the project tried to balance its spread thin on the ground with the appointment of local coordinators. While local coordinators did not always perform to the satisfaction of the host parliaments, there is value in having coordinators in place. The investment in digitalization of beneficiary parliaments was astute and offers up the opportunities to employ new ways of delivering assistance in the future, where local coordinators are on the ground.

The governance team's portfolio approach, while appropriate overall, needs to be adapted. The portfolio team was under-resourced and needs more in-house technical expertise in the form of a dedicated full-time Chief Technical Advisor, in addition to the project manager, and a dedicated MEL officer to develop M&E and knowledge management frameworks.

A more comprehensive approach to MP and staff capacity strengthening that includes adequate preparation, monitoring and follow-up initiatives like workshops or peer exchanges will likely yield more sustainable results. This will be more expensive, and the project may do better in focusing its support

more narrowly on what parliaments need to improve on to be more effective and accessible, rather than addressing demands for assistance across all areas: procedure, the committee system, core services like research and committee support, and public engagement.

The broad strategic direction of the project is likely to remain relevant for the next four years, and UNDP has a clear comparative advantage in delivering support in some areas, for instance in fostering further regional parliamentary integration through the PIPG, in the digitalization of parliaments, in comprehensive staff and MP capacity-strengthening.

PPEII's results framework was weak and poor MEL led to a lack of documentation of project progress and results. In the next phase, UNDP must invest in the project development process to produce a stronger project document with a more realistic results framework. After two phases and eight years of implementation, a comprehensive stock-taking exercise of the progress made by the focus parliaments in their parliamentary practice and performance should inform the next project. Such an analysis could also show where UNDP's core priorities of support should lie, and where other partners may add value.

UNDP does not need to do this all by itself. With the support of the CPA, several PICT parliaments, including Fiji, Tonga and Tuvalu are conducting parliamentary benchmarking exercises the results of which UNDP can draw on for its project design.

Where the project has had sustainable impact on the quality of parliamentarism in PICTs, in particular procedural reform, digitalization, and regional integration, is where it had engaged strategically, and provided in-depth support to beneficiary institutions, relying on the support of long-term advisors. The next phase can build on these successes, in regional integration support.

The project's approaches of supporting strategic planning, and MP induction are key to delivering and sustaining results long term and across induction cycles. However, the project's lack of a comprehensive approach to staff and MP capacity-strengthening likely reduces the impact of the project's activities in this field and needs to be addressed.

UNDP's portfolio management approach is well conceived for ensuring that synergies are made across the parliamentary projects implemented by the governance team. The project's peer-learning approach and its in-depth cooperation with Australian and New Zealand legislatures has created a lot of value for money but there are significant synergies to be had in pursing these relationships more deliberately, and expanding other relationships, including with the IPU.

The project's investment in parliamentary digitalization was particularly strategic given the broad regional nature of the project and the geographical spread of many of its small island beneficiaries' constituencies. The project's lack of knowledge management makes it likely that resources are wasted on "reinventing the wheel" in future initiatives.

The project has at times used LoA arrangements with focus parliaments allowing these parliaments to deliver activities with high transaction costs in terms of procurement or travel nationally – such as the support to committee field visits or outreach work. This could lower the project's transaction costs considerably.

> **Recommendation 1. Continue the overall strategic direction of the project but review UNDP's value proposition in selected areas**. Continue the project's strategic direction in areas of success: digitalization, procedural reform, and regional integration. However, review UNDP's value proposition and its comparative advantage in delivering assistance in some project areas, such as the facilitation of peer exchanges in the Pacific region.

Recommendation 2. Conduct a comprehensive stock-taking exercise of the progress made by the focus parliaments in their parliamentary practice in the areas of PPEI's current and prospective future engagement.

After eight years of PPEI implementation, and given the poor monitoring of PPEI II, a stock-taking exercise of the progress made and challenges that the focus parliaments face is overdue as a baseline for the next project. The stock-taking exercise should be conducted with the strategic framework for the next project phase and UNDP's comparative advantage in mind. It should also study the established successful practices like the FBO to ascertain its continued effectiveness and identify opportunities for applying the intervention modality to other parliamentary service areas, such as research. UNDP does not need to collect all the evidence for the exercise entirely by itself. With the support of the CPA, several PICT parliaments, including Fiji, Tonga and Tuvalu are conducting parliamentary benchmarking exercises the results of which UNDP can draw on for the exercise and in developing the design of the project.

Recommendation 3. Give project beneficiaries ownership and a say in the project's strategic management.

The project should give beneficiaries of focus parliaments ownership of the project through a project board mechanism. A project board is a tripartite governance mechanism with representatives of the donor, the project executive and the beneficiaries deliberating and deciding on the strategic approach of the project any course corrections in regular intervals (usually semi-annually and sometimes even quarterly). Crucially project boards make their decisions by consensus. Making such a mechanism work for a regional project with up to ten beneficiary institutions may pose problems of finding consensus. Options exist to limit the complexity. The project already differentiates between "focus" and "non"-focus beneficiary parliaments, with the distinction being that focus parliaments receive tailor-made support and non-focus parliaments receive the opportunity to participate in project activities on an opportunity basis. One option could be to have a project board involving only the four prospective focus PICT parliaments – Vanuatu, Tonga, the Cook Islands, and the Solomon Islands. Non-focus parliaments may receive the minutes of the project board meetings to be informed of the project board's decisions by the project management. Such an approach would ensure that the focus parliament beneficiaries understand and buy into the project's strategic objectives.

Recommendation 4. Invest in the design phase of the next project to develop a realistic results framework that is specific and relevant to the state of parliamentary development of the beneficiary parliaments.

The results framework should be designed based on the results of the stock-taking exercise which will yield country specific baselines for the project's result framework. The project should also conduct a mid-term evaluation half-way through implementation of the next project phase to ensure that course corrections can be made in time and the project results framework can be adapted to any changing realities. The project should manage risks more actively throughout project implementation.

Recommendation 5. Consider supporting the further development of the PIPG into the Pacific regional parliamentary forum.

UNDP should during the next project consider supporting the further development of the PIPG into the regional parliamentary forum of the Pacific, providing the parliamentary dimension to Pacific regional integration in the framework of the Pacific Islands Forum. UNDP may provide support to putting in place a permanent Secretariat service for the PIPG to institutionalize it further. UNDP needs to take care that the strengthening of the PIPG benefits all parliaments, and the investments does not come at the expense of other priorities.

Recommendation 6. Balance demand-based support with interventions that align with the project's strategic objectives, through developing and applying a comprehensive approach to MP and staff capacity-strengthening.

In the next phase the project could find a better balance in supporting activities – such as attachments and facilitating travel to inter-parliamentary events with more strategic support to MP and staff capacity strengthening. A strategic approach would be based on an understanding how adults learn, and what knowledge and skills are required for effectiveness across the roles that MPs and staff perform, and how to best build this knowledge and skills in a such a way that MPs and staff can implement it in their jobs. For MPs in particular, an offer of knowledge, skills, and tools may contribute to addressing the limited interest of MPs in constituency work, and in engagement of civil society, in the empowerment of women, and marginalized groups that some beneficiary counterparts interviewed for this evaluation have identified. Similarly, the project could "go deeper" in supporting the beneficiary parliaments in strategic and deliberate management of their parliamentary development by supporting the implementation of strategic plans through strengthening their result-based management capacities.

Recommendation 7. Invest more time and resources in coordination and building strategic partnerships with other development partners, particularly the IPU.
The portfolio team should make a stronger effort to coordinate the project's interventions – from its design phase – with the Australian Legislatures Twinning Programme and the Tai Kiva project. There are likely considerable gains to be made in closer coordination and cooperation with these partners. UNDP should also reach out to the IPU Center for Innovation in Parliament which maintains a Pacific Hub in the New Zealand Parliament. Facilitated by a global MoU between UNDP and IPU on cooperation in strengthening parliaments[39], IPU is a natural partner for PPEI going forward on innovation but potentially also in other areas of the project. Given the considerable number of counterparts and the broad needs in the region, there is significant opportunity for synergies and joint delivery in several project areas.

Recommendation 8. Consider expanding the LoA arrangements with focus parliaments to deliver procurement-intensive national-level activities in the focus PICTs. In parliaments where project coordinators are in place LoA, these may render advice in delivering activities under LoA and in monitoring and reporting against the agreed activities.

- **To which degree has the project incorporated gender equality and women empowerment, SDGs, climate change, and social inclusion into its approach and what were the relevant results?**

The project has been consistent in incorporating gender equality, women empowerment, and inclusion, as well as a focus on climate change and the SDGs into its approach through mainstreaming, e.g., in key interventions such as induction programmes. The gender effectiveness analysis of the results the project achieved across the six priority areas was satisfactory: Given the difficult normative environment, the fact that the results achieved were mostly gender responsive, is a modest achievement. This is true for the gender responsive rule changes and the gender budget analysis produced by the Floating Budget Office.

The project's activities under output 2 had gender equality and women empowerment as their main objectives. These activities were implemented in a challenging environment, often on an opportunity basis, and remained overall activity-based, and yielded modest results. The project had no success collaborating with political parties on voluntary measures for gender equality and women

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[39] See the IPU news item https://www.ipu.org/ar/node/8912 and the full text of the MoU: https://www.ipu.org/ar/node/8912.

empowerment, but the initiative to address gender equality and women empowerment by broadening the support beyond the parliamentary institution was valuable.

The instances, where the project was able to combine support to parliaments with demand-sided inputs, as in the case of the budget briefings for CSOs in the Solomon Islands, it achieved results. This suggests that there could be value in including women and civil society organizations to support the demand side of parliamentary governance.

Overall, however the project is likely to have limited impact on gender equality and women empowerment in the beneficiary parliaments.

The project sought to integrate a focus on the SDGs into its committee strengthening and its MP professional development work. More comprehensive programming around the SDGs was the exception but the project did advocate for and support an SDG self-assessment exercise by the Tonga Parliament. The project has been more successful in promoting the inclusion of climate change mitigation and adaptation in the regional parliamentary agenda through the PIPG.

The project included a focus on social inclusion in its support to public consultation and outreach, and supported outreach to remote areas, but overall, the activities were not embedded in a strategic framework that would strengthen outreach and will have limited long-term impact.

Recommendation 9. Expand the support on gender equality and women empowerment in focus parliaments.
The next phase of the project should advocate with and support the institutions in conducting gender situation analyses to derive a roadmap for activity. The project should also support regional and international networking and peer exchanges among women MPs, where possible within existing structures such as the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians.[40]

Recommendation 10. Support the demand-side of parliamentary governance to achieve better impact on gender equality and women empowerment and social inclusion.
The project's focus on supply-side only interventions, TSM, women's and youth parliaments, support to outreach missions have led to limited results and impact. These interventions should be complemented by demand-sided support. UNDP may work with civil society networks, and with women's organizations, youth organizations, and political parties in strengthening their capacity to participate in parliamentary governance and in formulating a demand for reform and inclusion.

Recommendation 11. Expand engagement of focus parliaments on the SDGs and climate change.
The project should further invest in engaging focus parliaments on the SDGs and on climate change. Regarding climate change in particular, beneficiaries could benefit from exchanges that reach beyond the Pacific region. The region's parliamentary climate champions would benefit from engagement with global initiatives of like-minded MPs, particularly Climate Parliament.

Recommendation 12. Develop a more comprehensive and strategic approach to outreach and engagement, particularly of vulnerable groups.
The ad hoc approach to supporting outreach and engagement of vulnerable groups the project has implemented is unlikely to lead to sustainable results. A new approach should be more strategic, building on the stock-taking exercise and could support a mix of civic education, missions to remote areas, digital outreach, and demand-based support of civil society networks where they exist. In the next phase of the project, the project should also develop an approach to disability inclusion and implement it consistently across all project outputs.

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[40] See Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, *Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Leaflet*, 2022
https://www.cpahq.org/media/em5nnsqk/cwp-general-information-leaflet_2022_final.pdf

- **How effective and appropriate was the project's overall approach and structure in the Pacific context?**

PPEI II was designed as a regional project that works flexibly with several focus and non-focus countries and allows beneficiaries to learn from each other, and in the case of the FBO, pool scarce resources to deliver better services to their MPs. It was implemented alongside its sister projects SLIP and FPSP and there were synergies from implementing the project in this way. The main benefit of this regional project approach was clearly the flexibility it allowed the project to seize opportunities as they arose – as illustrated by the successful long-term and demand-based procedure reform support, and to adjust (geographical) focus when the project hit roadblocks, as it did in Papua New Guinea. The focus parliament approach is one solution to the problem of scope – whereby it would be impossible for a project of the size of PPEI II to support ten parliaments intensively.

The focus country approach was managed very flexibly in PPEI II: Towards the end of the project support to some non-focus countries, such as Nauru appeared to be as intensive as the support to focus parliaments. This degree of flexibility was useful in the Pacific context of political instability, but it is hard to pair with achieving results against a specific results framework. As such, PPEI II functioned more like a parliamentary strengthening facility that offered demand-based support to its focus and non-focus beneficiaries rather than a conventional parliamentary strengthening project.

For many beneficiaries, the project was too light touch and did not deliver assistance in a consistent strategic manner. The lack of an explicit technical approach and substantial programming for MP and staff capacity-building, and outreach, meant that delivery was sometimes ad hoc. Arguably, the COVID-19 pandemic and the following border closures in PICTs made in depth on the ground support very difficult to supply.

The project reacted well to changing circumstances, as indicated with the project's shift to support digitalization of parliaments and business continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Digitalization has huge benefits for parliaments, not only in terms of productivity but also in terms of transparency and allowing public participation in parliamentary work.

The project also appointed project coordinators in selected parliaments to deliver activities in person. Even though coordinators were not successful in all parliaments under the project's specific circumstances, the practice may allow the project to provide more in-depth support, where project coordinators in those beneficiary parliaments that are digitalized could deliver hybrid support.

The project team was under-resourced, sharing a single international role for technical assistance and project management with SLIP and FPSP. This contributed to the project's management failures and to the lack of depth the project beneficiaries cited.

Recommendation 13. Invest in the further digitalization of focus parliaments to support productivity gains and increased transparency and public engagement. Digitalization of beneficiary parliaments represents an investment but will yield potentially large productivity gains across the parliamentary functions. It will also allow additional channels for public engagement and better provision of information to the public.

Recommendation 14. Have an on-the-ground presence in all focus parliaments.
To implement a more comprehensive approach to MP and staff capacity-strengthening, a presence on the ground in the focus parliaments will likely be required. The experience the project had with having local coordinators embedded in partner parliaments to support delivery was good. Coordinators have been used exclusively for programmatic and logistical purposes, but the

investments in digitalization allowing for hybrid delivery of activities where local coordinators can be supported by out of country technical advisors, are an opportunity in involving local coordinators more deeply in technical assistance.

Recommendation 15. Enhance the team managing and delivering the parliamentary portfolio and assign adequate resources to project management, the provision of technical advice, and MEL.
UNDP should urgently assess the lack of workforce in the portfolio team, which has had adverse effects on the project's management and delivery. The Democratic Governance Programme team should assign a Chief Technical Specialist whose full-time support is dedicated to the projects in the portfolio. The Specialist role should be separate from the full-time project manager role. The portfolio also urgently needs the support of a dedicated full-time MEL Specialist to develop and implement the project's M&E approach, to put in place a system of knowledge management, and to facilitate organizational learning from the project.

- **How effective was the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) of the project?**

The MEL performance is a major weakness of the project. While the project's overall theory of change was sound, the results framework remained unspecific – both regarding the path of change by which results were to be delivered and regarding which results were expected to be delivered in which focus parliaments. The project's indicator framework was drawn directly from the SRP. The two project indicators were high-level and unspecific. The project has not produced any indicator metadata that would outline how baselines would be established, what progress against the indicators would look like, and how this progress would be measured. Over the course of the project, when the necessity of changes to the project's scope and results framework were becoming obvious, the project was not adapted. No project mid-term review was foreseen in the project document, and so no organized review of challenges was ever conducted during the four years of project implementation. The project conducted no knowledge management. Given the poor record management, a lot of the knowledge and resources produced by the project are likely lost.

Recommendation 16. Develop a comprehensive MEL Framework for the next project and invest resources into ongoing monitoring and evaluation of project interventions.
 The project should develop a comprehensive MEL framework for the next phase. The design of the indicator framework could take inspiration from the IPU Indicators for Democratic Parliament.[41] Assign specific human resources for MEL in the project and ensure that learning and knowledge management are practiced.

5. Lessons Learnt

I.   There is a balance to find between flexibility to accommodate demands and a strategic orientation based on a well-developed results framework.

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[41] IPU, *Indicators for Democratic Parliaments,* available at: https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/

The regional parliamentary project approach yields flexibility and the opportunity for peer-learning and for support to beneficiary parliaments in pooling resources, such as in the case of the FBO, and in effectively supporting regional integration. The drawback of the approach as implemented by the PPEI II was that flexibility came at the expense of a rigorous results and project management framework. This opened the project up to being demand driven, operating more as a facility for demand-based assistance. If this type of flexible support is to be continued, perhaps PPEI III would need to be designed as a parliamentary strengthening facility with a results framework that is targeted more at the availability of parliamentary inputs, and an ability to quickly supply support covering urgent needs and crises (which was one major achievement of the procedural work under PPEI II).

II. **It is likely possible to find a good balance between providing support across the region and specific support addressing the strategic priorities of beneficiary parliaments.**

For a parliamentary strengthening project seeking to produce specific long-term results, PPEI II's support was often too light touch, less hands-on, and less strategic than the many beneficiaries interviewed for this evaluation would have wished. Until the appointment of the national coordinators, which was meant to bridge implementation gaps when COVID-19 made travel from Suva to the PICTS impossible for the technical team and consultants, the project had limited presence on the ground in the beneficiary parliaments. This made a strategic approach to institutional strengthening specific to the individual beneficiary parliaments very difficult to implement. Coordinators were not effective in providing on the ground technical assistance, but the modality can work in the right conditions. Coordinators will only be effective in their technical roles if they can work within a clear programmatic framework, agreed work plans, and with access to specialized technical resources from the project where they are required. Investment into digitalization makes such hybrid delivery possible in the future, provided the project technical team in Suva is adequately resourced, and coordinators selected have the confidence and ability to co-deliver technical assistance.

III. **For parliamentary governance interventions adequate resourcing of the project and technical teams is key – under-resourcing core teams ends up being a waste of money.**

Effective resourcing of project teams is key to achieving desired outcomes. The parliamentary portfolio team was severely under-resourced without a specific full-time technical advisor, a specific full-time project manager and a specific full- time MEL specialist running a portfolio that supported almost twenty parliaments. The lack of monitoring and the paucity of adequate record-keeping surely owes at least in part to the fact that the team was under-resourced throughout implementation of the project. A badly monitored project that does not properly learn, and monitor results is a waste of money.

IV. **Demand-based support yields limited results without an overarching strategic framework for capacity strengthening it is embedded in.**

Demand-based support for regional exchanges and peer-learning is unlikely to yield the best value for money in terms of long-term institutional development of beneficiary parliaments in the absence of an overall framework for capacity strengthening that includes preparation and follow-on support to learners in applying learnings in their work. Where parliamentary exchanges and diplomacy are embedded in a strategic approach and guided by beneficiary champions, such as the project's facilitation and support to the development of the PIPG into a regional parliamentary forum, they are, however, effective. With national coordinators in place, and a more developed strategic framework, a follow-up project will be in a good position to use peer exchanges more strategically and improve their results.

V. **The FBO modality of parliaments pooling resources to tackle common challenges can be a model for other service areas in the Pacific and beyond.**

In addition to its opportunity-based procedure review support, and the regional parliamentary diplomacy support, FBO modality is the most instructive good practice case. The FBO is a good example of how a regional project adds value by supporting beneficiary parliaments in pooling resources to solve an issue, in the case of PPEI II, the lack of capacity to conduct budget analysis. The FBO should be evaluated to see if the same logic may be applied to other areas of service delivery in the future. It may also provide instructions for how parliaments can cooperate and pool resources in other regions of the world.

VI. **In a difficult gender-normative environment, supply-sided approaches to strengthening gender equality and women empowerment in parliamentary institutions alone are likely not sufficient to effect change.**

In supporting gender equality and women empowerment, in a difficult gender-normative environment, a supply sided approach focusing on supporting MPs and the parliamentary institution in reforming rules, and providing resources, is not enough. The project laudably went beyond the parliamentary institutions to work with political parties on the supply of opportunities for women empowerment and gender equality. However, the project will need to broaden its approach, and work on the demand side of parliamentary governance – with communities, women's groups and CSOs on creating awareness and demand for change. Given the breadth of UNDP's portfolio in the Pacific region, and its record of working with civil society, a follow-up intervention will be well-positioned to do this.

Annex 1. Additional Methodology related Documentation

1.1 Evaluation Matrix

Criterium	Lead question	Data Required	Source
Relevance	How well do the project and its outcomes align with the priorities of parliaments in both focus and non-focus PPEI countries?	Information about focus parliament needs & long-term priorities	Parliament strategic plans, semi-structured interviews with focus parliament representatives
	How well does the project align with national and regional gender equality and other social protection commitments?	Information about focus countries' commitments and priorities,	focus countries' NSDS, gender equality strategies, interview with UNDP Programme team
	Does the project objective fit UNDP Pacific strategic priorities?	Information on UNDP pacific strategies	Regional Programme, UNDP Pacific strategies project document
	Are the projects objectives and outputs clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?	Information on project ToC and results and resources, and monitoring framework	Progress reports, interviews with focus parliament representatives
	Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?	Information about results and activities	Progress reports, interviews with focus parliament representatives
	Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with its desired impacts and effects?	Information about results	Interviews with UNDP Programme team and donor representative
	How well does the project align with similar interventions in the region, especially those supported by its donor partners?	Information about similar initiatives in the region	Progress reports, interviews with UNDP project team interview with focus parliament representatives

	To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country?	Information about project alignment with national developments and responses to changes	
Effectiveness (including monitoring, evaluation, and learning)	What have been the key results and changes achieved by the project to date?	Information on results	Progress reports, interviews with focus & non-focus parliament representatives, women, youth CSO and CBO representatives
	To what extent will the project meet its original outcomes within the current program phase? Do these remain practical and feasible?	Information on results vs. Planned outcomes.	Review of results framework, project board reports, interview with project team
	In which areas does the project have its biggest achievements?	Information on results	Progress reports, interviews with focus & non-focus parliament representatives, women, youth CSO and CBO representatives, interviews with technical advisors
	In which areas does the project have the least achievements and why? How could this be overcome?	Information on results	Progress reports, interviews with focus & non-focus parliament representatives, women, youth CSO and CBO representatives, interviews with technical advisors
	Do the project assumptions and project theory of change continue to address the key factors which are likely to enable or challenge the progress of this project?	Information on project results and strategies vs. Evolving challenges and situations in focus parliaments	Project document, Progress reports, interviews with focus & non-focus parliament representatives, women, youth CSO and CBO representatives
	Has the project been able to respond effectively to new emerging opportunities?	Information on project adjustments	Progress reports, project board reports, interview with project team

	In what ways should the project theory of change be further developed, given progress to date and changes in project context?	Analysis of information received from answering above questions	
	What implications do recommended changes to the project theory of change have for project strategies, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting?	Analysis of information received from answering above questions	
	How comprehensively has the project collected, analyzed, and reported verifiable information about its progress?	Information on project monitoring and evaluation	Review of monitoring and evaluation and learning framework, interviews with project team
	Are there missing indicators that are cost-effective and more impactful to measure?	Information on indicator framework and methodology	Review of results framework, Review of monitoring and evaluation and learning framework, interviews with project team
	In what way could the project Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework be further developed and improved to ensure accountability to all stakeholders and support further project improvement?	Information on project monitoring and evaluation	Review of results framework, Review of monitoring and evaluation and learning framework, interviews with project team, interviews with Programme team
	How is the projects' learning being captured and shared, and are there ways to improve information capture and its communication to various audiences?	Information on project	
Efficiency	What has been the value achieved from the project's strategies?	Information on project strategies and implementation approach	interviews with focus & non-focus parliament representatives, women, youth CSO and CBO representatives, interviews with project team
	Have project activities been cost-efficient?	Information on activity implementation	

	Has the project been effective in leveraging resources and partnerships that are currently contributing to, or have contributed to achieving outcomes?	Information on project partnership strategies and activities	Review of progress reports, financial reports, interviews with project team
	Was the Programme or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?	Analysis of information acquired in answering questions above	Interviews with Programme team, project team, and donors.
	In what way have changes in the context affected project cost-effectiveness?	Information about external cost-influencing factors	
	What changes ought to be made in project strategies to ensure the most efficient approaches to project implementation?		Interviews with project team
Impact and sustainability	To what extent the project has laid the foundations of the results being sustainable and long term in general, particularly gender equality and social inclusion?	Information on sustainability of results	interviews with focus & non-focus parliament representatives, women, youth CSO and CBO representatives,
	Are there any social, institutional, financial, or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project results and the project contributions to country Programme outputs and outcomes?	Information about risks	project risk log, interviews with Programme and project teams
	What is the chance that the level of stakeholder ownership and institutional capacity will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?	Information on sustainability of results	interviews with focus & non-focus parliament representatives, women, youth CSO and CBO representatives,

	To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights, and human development?	Review of arrangements within focus country parliaments and political parties	progress reports, interviews with focus & non-focus parliament representatives, women, youth CSO and CBO representatives,
	How much are lessons learned continually documented by the project team and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?	Information about monitoring and learning approach & knowledge products	review of learning approach and knowledge products
Human Rights Gender, Equality and Social Inclusion	To what extent does the project adhere to and further support human rights principles?	Information about human rights-based approach of project	Progress reports, interviews with focus & non-focus parliament representatives, women, youth CSO and CBO representatives, interviews with project team
	To what extent does the project integrate or consider human rights-based approaches in the design and implementation of the project?	Information about human rights-based approach of project	Progress reports, interviews with focus & non-focus parliament representatives, women, youth CSO and CBO representatives, interviews with project team
	How comprehensively and effectively has the project partnered with women, marginalized groups, including people living with a disability, and those marginalized by other intersecting social identities (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, living in rural or remote areas, etc.), in project activity planning, implementation and assessment?	Information on project mainstreaming approaches & activities partnering with women, youth, and marginalized groups	progress reports, interviews with focus & non-focus parliament representatives, women, youth CSO and CBO representatives, interviews with project team
	How have gender and power relationships changed as a result of the project?	Gender Results effectiveness analysis	progress reports, interviews with focus & non-focus parliament representatives, women, youth CSO and CBO representatives, interviews with project team

1.2. List of Interviews (Individuals and Groups Interviewed)

1. Interview with Gloria Pole'o, Clerk & with senior staff members of Parliament of Tonga, 17.10.2023 (2 female / 1 male participant)
2. Interview with Anne-Marie Caine, Clerk of Nauru Parliament, 19.10.2023 (1f)
3. Interview with Maxime Banga, Clerk & with senior staff members of Parliament of Vanuatu, 19.10.2023 (1f/3m)
4. Interview with Tangata Vainerere, Clerk & with senior staff members of Cook Islands Parliament, 16.10.2023 (1f /2m)
5. Interview with Tina Browne, MP of Cook Island Parliament, 16.10.2023 (1f)
6. Interview with Raymond Kalpeau Manuake, Former Clerk, Vanuatu Parliament, 19.10.2023 (1m)
7. Interview with Julia King, MP of Vanuatu Parliament, 25.10.2023 (1f)
8. Interview with Andrew Semili, Clerk of Tuvalu Parliament, 23.10.2023 (1m)
9. Interview with David Kusilifu, Clerk of Solomon Islands Parliament, 24.10.2023 (1m)
10. Interview with Galokale, Speaker of Solomon Islands Parliament, 23.10.2023 (1m)
11. Interview with Cherie Morris-Tafatu, Clerk of Niue Parliament, 25.10.2023
12. Interview with Lord Fafuana, Speaker, Tonga Parliament, 02.11.2023 (1m)
13. Interview with Jennifer Wate, Secretary-General of Development Services Exchange, Solomon Islands, 24.10.2023 (1f)
14. Interview with Sally West, Twinning Coordinator, Victoria Parliament, 24.10.2023 (1f)
15. Interview with Tom Duncan, Manager of Australian Legislatures Twinning Programme, 27.10.2023 (1m)
16. Interview with Amber Walters, Project Manager Tai a Kiwa Project, Parliament of New Zealand, 16.11.2023 (1f)
17. Interview with Charlotte Laing & Leonard Chan, programme managers at MFAT New Zealand, 24.10.2023 (1f/1m)
18. Interview with Revai Makanje Aalbaek, Former Team Leader Effective Governance, UNDP Pacific Office, 1.11.2023 (1f)
19. Interview with Rustam Pulatov, Democratic Governance Team Leader, UNDP Pacific Office, 25.10.2023 (1m)
20. Interview with Nanise Saune, former parliamentary portfolio advisor, UNDP Pacific Office, 24.10.2023 (1f)
21. Interview with Jean-Raphael Giuliani, former project manager, parliamentary portfolio, UNDP Pacific Office (1m)
22. Interview with Debra Angus, UNDP Procedure Advisor Consultant, 10.11.2023 (1f)
23. Interview with Avinash Bikha, UNDP ICT in Parliament Advisor Consultant, 25.10.2023 (1m)

Total number of interviewees:

33, of which 16 were female.

1. 3: Generic Questionnaire for focus beneficiary parliaments

This questionnaire was used for guiding questions in semi-structured interviews with focus beneficiary parliament representatives. The questionnaire was adapted for each specific parliament:

A. Relevance

1. What support did the Parliament receive from UNDP through the PPEI 2 project and how satisfied are you overall?

2. How did UNDP consult your institution in the programming & planning of the support? Are you satisfied with this?

3. How adequate was interaction during implementation? Are you satisfied with the information flow?

4. Did the support provided meet your Parliament's needs (align with your strategic plan, where applicable)? Was UNDP flexible in adapting to any changing needs?

5. How useful were the annual planning meetings with all PPEI parliaments?

B. Effectiveness / Efficiency / Gender /Impact

6. How was the PPEI support mostly implemented (e.g., visits, in-house embedded, remote)?

7. How useful have regional exchanges and peer-learning with other parliaments in the region been for you?

8. What have been the successes of PPEI support? What have been challenges?

9. Question regarding the outputs of specific priority areas [depending on activities implemented with the counterparts], including success stories and challenges flagged by UNDP

10. PPEI 2 has a specific output on empowering women in parliament, women candidates, and women in political parties. What support did UNDP provide and what were the results?

11. PPEI 2 focuses on youth and marginal group engagement. What support did UNDP provide and what were the results?

12. Did PPEI support address any topics of importance to your parliament, in particular climate change? How useful was this support? What could be improved?

13. What lasting change do you see (or expect to see) in your parliament as a result of PPEI II?

Sustainability, follow-up support

14. IfPPEI2 support were to stop at the end of the year, what would this mean for the Parliament?

15. What are your needs and expectations for support beyond the current phase of PPEI?

Annex 2: Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

Terms of Reference (TOR)

Terminal Evaluation of Pacific Parliamentary Effective Initiative- II (PPEI II)
Suva, Fiji

Duty station: Home-based with at least one mission to Fiji and/or neighboring Pacific Island Country
Duration: 40 days over a time of 2 months

1. Background and context

The strengthening of Parliaments and Legislatures within the overall accountable and effective governance agenda also contributes in parallel, to enhancing platforms for sustainable development and the achievement of 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP, together with its development partners and sister UN agencies, have committed technical and financial resources to support Pacific Legislatures build up capacities and knowledge of legislators specifically around key issues of relevance to development, equality, and gender. The support by UNDP is multi-dimensional as it includes direct funding for improvement of equipment and infrastructure direct training of Parliamentarians and secretariat staff, webinars and other online training conducted by experts, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic and in some cases, co-facilitated with other UN agencies or development partners. These support and training are targeted towards helping legislators access information on development frameworks such as the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals as they debate and approve new legislation around environment, violence against women, human rights implementation, and gender equality. Technical experts are also provided in some instances to support legislators when debating new laws or revamping parliamentary procedures and processes.

Since 2018, UNDP with the financial support from; I) the Government of Japan and, II) the Government of New Zealand, developed 2 projects. The Japan funded "Strengthening Legislatures in the Pacific (SLIP)," and the New Zealand funded "Pacific Parliamentary Enhancing Initiative (PPEI)." The development challenge that these projects are addressing is the limited effectiveness and capacity of national parliaments to engage on key development issues, contribute to national development goals and enhancing national planning processes in a participatory and transparent manner, expand parliamentary outreach and citizen engagement to include traditionally excluded groups such as women and youth, and increase the political participation of women. In terms of regional and national coverage, the following table shows the geographic focus of the 2 projects. While the country demarcation is clear in terms of project allocation, the reality is that during implementation and considering both projects being implemented within the Parliamentary portfolio, there are some overlaps and joint funding of activities.

The second phase of the PPEI focused on a range of regional and country level initiatives and was implemented in 11 Pacific Island countries. It followed the conclusion of PPEI-Phase I (May 2016 – March 2019). PPEI-II project focused its activities on achieving two specific outputs of Outcome 5 of the United Nations Development Programme Sub-Regional Programme Document (SRP) for the Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (2018-2022). The project is for four years and has 2 main outputs:

- Output 1: Increased transparency and accountability in governance institutions and formal and informal decision-making processes; and
- Output 2: Increased voice and more inclusive participation by women, youth and marginalized groups in national and subnational decision-making bodies that are more representative.

PPEI-II collaborates with a range of national, regional, and international partners in project implementation. These include some ongoing or recently completed UNDP projects such as the Public Financial Management (PFM), Nauru Accountable and Inclusive Governance (NAIG) and the Governance for Resilience (Gov4Res) project. Amongst the UN Agencies, the project works with UNOCHR, ILO, UNICEF, UNFPA amongst other sister UN agencies. In the region, PPEI-II works with partner parliaments like New Zealand and the Australian Federal and State parliaments, some of whom have twinning arrangements with Pacific Island Parliaments. Other regional and national partner organizations such as Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO) have also worked with PPEI. At the international level, PPEI also works closely with international parliamentary and democratic organizations like the International Parliamentary Union (IPU), International IDEA, National Democratic Institute (NDI) and Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).

This project ran from April 2019 to March 2023, with an approved extension to December 2023.

PROJECT INFORMATION	
Project title	Pacific Parliamentary Effective Initiative (PPEI) II
Atlas ID	00129624
Corporate outcome and output	**CPD Outcome**: By 2022, people and communities in the Pacific will contribute to and benefit from inclusive, informed, and transparent decision-making processes; accountable and responsive institutions; and improved access to justice. **CPD Output:** Increased voice and more inclusive participation by women youth and marginalized groups in national and subnational decision-making bodies that are more representative.
Country	Fiji (Multi Country) 5 focus and 5 non focus countries
Region	Asia and the Pacific
Date project document signed	24/4/2019
Project dates	Start date 23/04/2019 — Planned end 31/3/2023 extended to December 2023.
Project budget	USD 5,400,000
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	USD 5,150,000 as of September 2023
Funding source	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)
Implementing party[42]	UNDP

Key achievements of the project:

The project has achieved some critical milestones so far. The key achievements include:

Key achievements of the project:

The project has achieved some critical milestones so far. The key achievements include:

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[42] This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

- MPs received initial training after each election that took place in Tonga, Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, as well as continuous training during the parliamentary term, especially on key development issues, core parliamentary roles and functions, role and functioning of parliamentary committees.
- Adoption of completely re-drafted parliamentary procedure in Vanuatu (2020) and Cook Islands (2022); partial procedural amendments adopted in Solomon Islands and Tonga; further assistance on strategic legal-procedural matters provided in Niue, Cook Islands and Tonga.
- Strengthening of the parliamentary committees' mandate and powers, especially regarding their capacity to exert oversight, in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Cook Islands,
- Substantial improvement of focus parliaments' capacity to develop and implement engagement activities with women (women practice parliaments) and youth (youth parliaments); development and implementation of parliamentary outreach and communication strategies with remote communities in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Tonga.
- Critical assistance provided during COVID-19 to PICs parliaments to remain operational, esp. through accelerated digitization (hardware and software provided for virtual operation), development of SOPs on working during crises, high-level TA on role of parliaments during emergencies (esp. on exerting scrutiny in period of emergency powers granted to the Executive), etc.
- Key contribution to strengthening regional parliamentary networks: recognition of the regional group of parliaments created with support from PPEI (the Pacific Islands Parliaments Group of PIPG) as the main representation of parliaments at regional level by the regional umbrella organization, the Pacific Islands Forum.

Impact of Covid-19 in project implementation:

COVID-19 had a major impact on project implementation since travel to and from Pacific countries went to a complete halt between February 2020 and November 2022.

Since a substantial part of the intervention planned was based on exchanges between Pacific parliaments, in agreement with the donor, the project went through a quick strategic re-allocation of funds in early 2020, focusing on providing support to the digitization of parliaments, that would support parliaments to remain operational and continue exerting their constitutional roles during the crisis.

The digitization of parliaments has, in turn, allowed the project team to develop an alternative implementation modality for other activities: once the ICT capacity of legislatures has been developed (mostly during 2021), a larger part of the technical assistance could be provided in a hybrid manner or fully remotely for the remaining of the pandemic.

2. Evaluation purpose, scope, and objectives

In line with the mandatory threshold for project evaluation provisioned in UNDP Evaluation Guidelines 2019, a final evaluation of the PPEI-II was planned in the project design to be commissioned through an independent evaluator. As such, a final evaluation is scheduled for September-December 2023 to evaluate the relevancy and effectiveness of the UNDP's implementation of the PPEI-II and provide specific recommendations for the future course of action.

The overall purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the results achieved so far and lessons learnt by the PPEI-II project. The final evaluation should assess the implementation approaches, results against output targets, contribution to higher level outcome, and issues/challenges encountered, as well as identify and document the lessons learnt and good practices and make specific recommendations for future course of actions.

The final evaluation is expected to identify: i) areas for further improvement, ii) new opportunities given the

changing governance context in the Pacific, and iii) specific target areas or work streams which a successor project can be formulated to address.

Specifically, the TE will assess the following:
1. Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of the project
2. Risks and opportunities, document key learnings and good practices.
3. Extent to which gender equality and social inclusion and human rights aspects have been considered in implementation and document the GESI related results and learnings.
4. Appropriateness of the project approaches and structure in pacific context
5. Monitoring and evaluation approaches of the project

Scope of the Evaluation:

Unit of analysis (full project/programme/ parts of the project/programme; etc.)	Pacific Parliamentary Effective Initiative Project II
Time period of the project/programme covered by the evaluation	24/4/2019 to 30/09/2023
Geographical coverage of the evaluation	All parliaments are covered under the project.

The final evaluation scope includes all aspects of the Pacific Parliamentary Effective Initiative Project II.

The PPEI 2 utilizes a wide range of strategies and pathways to achieve change, considering both technical and 'political' motivations and influences. It seeks to engage parliaments respectfully and effectively in different cultures and contexts, responding to their needs. Its activities are designed intentionally to maximize the likelihood of positive change in parliaments (i.e., structures and processes) to ensure long-term adoption and sustainability.

PPEI has a very agile and flexible approach towards engagement, learning from past experiences including PPEI Phase I, the other regional parliamentary project and changing strategies as required. While its original theory of change presents a concise summary of its core assumptions, in practice PPEI understands the change it is seeking to achieve with parliaments is complex and that the connection between all these activities and outcomes is multifaceted, complex, and dynamic.

The TE needs to be gender-sensitive and socially inclusive, able to accommodate and give attention to assessment from these perspectives. The TE approach will accommodate and identify differences in assessment, values, and understanding of impact for stakeholders, and provide methodological approaches that create dialogue and exchange between parliaments stakeholders and their different perspectives. The approach should be sensitive to Pacific Island approaches, and respectful of the knowledge of Pacific Islanders.

Please refer to Annex 1 for detailed scope of work for the TE in line with UNDP Evaluation Guidelines.

3. Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions

The final evaluation will adopt the six revised evaluation criteria by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) - Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. Moreover, additional cross-cutting criteria such as Human Rights, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, women's empowerment, and climate change action should also be assessed and included wherever relevant.

The evaluation will address the following main evaluation questions:

i. To what extent has the PPEI II project achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives? What factors contributed to or hindered the project's performance and sustainability of the results?
ii. To what extent was the PPEI II project relevant and effective in mainstreaming international human rights standards, gender equality and women's empowerment issues and national sustainable development priorities into electoral framework and processes.
iii. How much has PPEI II helped strengthen parliaments' work in the ever-changing social, political and climate context? To what extent are the parliamentary practices gender responsive and/or gender transformative?
iv. What improvements and changes should be made when designing the next phase?

A set of more detailed guiding questions that could be used to inform this evaluation's scope is included in the table below. The guiding questions outlined below should be further refined by the evaluation team and agreed with UNDP prior to commencing the evaluation.

Criteria	Sample guiding questions
<u>Relevance/ Coherence</u>	The TE will assess the ongoing relevance of PPEI. This will require examination of the initial project analysis and strategy development, how adequately this has been updated in response to changing context, wider examination of key contextual influences (both enabling and disabling), and how adequately the project has responded to or is positioning to respond to these conditions. The relevance of PPEI should be considered from the perspective of the beneficiary parliaments, national stakeholders including civil society organizations, and regional and international partners. The projects coherence with other interventions, especially those of the donor partners, regional organizations and UNDP should also be reviewed. The TE will recommend options to support ongoing project relevance and coherence, giving due attention to these different perspectives. To assess relevance and coherence, the following should be considered (but should not limit the evaluation): ▪ How well does the project and its outcomes align with the priorities of parliaments in both focus and non-focus PPEI countries? ▪ How well does the project and its outcomes align with PPEI parliament's national development priorities and with regional development priorities? ▪ How well does the project align with national and regional gender equality and other social protection commitments? ▪ Does the project objective fit UNDP Pacific strategic priorities? ▪ How well does the project align with similar interventions in the region, especially those supported by its donor partners? ▪ In what ways has the project responded and adapted to maintain relevance and coherence for all stakeholders?
<u>Effectiveness</u>	The TE will verify project effectiveness utilizing available information (see discussion around methodology below), together with additional evidence collected as required. The TE will consider how effectively the PPEI project has progressed against its original outcomes and outputs as outlined in the original project theory of change. As required, the TE will examine core assumptions under the original theory of change and test how well these have been held throughout project implementation to date. The TE will recommend options for further development and maturing of the project theory of change that will support increased project effectiveness. To assess effectiveness, the following should be considered (but should not limit the evaluation): ▪ What have been the key results and changes achieved by the project to date? ▪ To what extent will the project meet its original outcomes within the current program phase? Do these remain practical and feasible?

	- Do the project assumptions and project theory of change continue to address the key factors which are likely to enable or challenge the progress of this project? - Has the project been able to respond effectively to new emerging opportunities? - In what ways should the project theory of change be further developed, given progress to date and changes in project context? - What implications do recommended changes to the project theory of change have for project strategies, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting? -
<u>Efficiency</u>	PPEI operates through a range of strategies and pathways to achieve change. The TE is an opportunity to review the efficiency of the major project strategies. That is, given the resources available, which of these strategies most efficiently contributes to project implementation? The TE will examine the value being achieved from the following strategies: • "From within" approach of embedding focal points within government. • Agile/adaptive programming • Demonstration of risk-informed development through community infrastructure and development program • Regional policy support and research to achieve scale. • Portfolio approach of interventions, which integrate across difference governance levels. • The TE will recommend options to further develop the current project strategies and/or expand or change strategies, to support efficient progress towards project outcomes. To assess efficiency, the following should also be considered (but should not limit the evaluation): • Has the project been efficient in leveraging resources and partnerships that are currently contributing to, or have contributed to achieving outcomes? • In what way have changes in the context affected project cost effectiveness? • What changes ought to be made in project strategies to ensure the most efficient approaches to project implementation?
<u>Sustainability and Impact</u>	- To what extent has the project laid the foundations of the results being sustainable and long term in general, particularly gender equality and social inclusion? - Are there any social, institutional, financial, or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project results and the project contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes? - What is the chance that the level of stakeholder ownership and institutional capacity will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained? - To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights, and human development? - How much are lessons learned continually documented by the project team and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?
<u>Human rights</u>	In line with UNDP principles, the TE should assess to what extent human rights considerations are included in the project design and implementation. - To what extent does the project adhere to and further support human rights principles? - To what extent does the project integrate or consider human rights-based approaches in the design and implementation of the project?
Gender Equality and	PPEI proposes that it is impossible to risk-inform development without understanding and addressing the underlying vulnerabilities that arise due to structural inequalities that

Social Inclusion	prevent women and marginalized groups from contributing to and benefitting from that development. To ensure that the process is equitable, and benefits reach marginalized groups, the development process must be informed by diverse voices. The TE will assess the quality and value of the PPEI gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) strategies, including how comprehensively and effectively the project has partnered with women, marginalized groups, including people living with a disability, and those marginalized by other intersecting social identities (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, living in rural or remote areas, etc.), in project activity planning, implementation and assessment.
Project Structure	PPEI is currently designed as a project under the UNDP Effective Governance Unit. It receives funding from the New Zealand Government. Going forward, the project seeks to make the most efficient use of donor funds and provide maximum accountability for them. The TE will explore options for the project structure going forward, considering future phases of the project, and identify options for how the project can be most efficiently structured to meet UNDP processes and respond to donor partner accountability and reporting requirements. To assess the appropriateness of the project structure, the following should be considered (but should not limit the evaluation): ▪ How should the project be structured to meet UNDP processes, respond to donor partner accountability and reporting requirements, and meet its intended outcomes? ▪ Does the team have the required skills and experience, or technical partnerships, to deliver the project's outcomes? ▪ Are there additional activities, relevant to project stakeholders and in line with project outcomes, which could be included in future development of this project?
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	To assess the appropriateness of the project monitoring and evaluation, the following should be considered (but should not limit the evaluation): ▪ How comprehensively has the project collected, analyzed, and reported verifiable information about its progress? ▪ Are there missing indicators that are cost-effective and more impactful to measure? ▪ In what way could the project Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework be further developed and improved to ensure accountability to all stakeholders and support further project improvement? ▪ How is the projects' learning being captured and shared, and are there ways to improve information capture and its communication to various audiences?

4. Methodology

The evaluation approach and methodology proposed here is indicative only. The evaluation team should review the methodology and propose the final methods and data collection tools in the inception report, following review of the project related documents and reports and agreed with UNDP as part of the evaluation plan prior to commencement of the TE. However, it is anticipated that the team will demonstrate considerable skill in analysis and sense making that is inclusive of project stakeholders and provides opportunities for women, marginalized groups, and Pacific country stakeholders to engage with and assist in data analysis and recommendation development.

The methodologies proposed by the team should also support and facilitate active dialogue with parliaments and between stakeholders and their different perspectives. The methodologies and approach need to consider that this is a regional project, covering all PPEI countries (except Papua New Guinea[43]) in a

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[43] During the implementation of PPEI II, management of UNDP PNG made a decision to cover the National Parliament in its governance support programme.

geographically scattered region. In all cases, the evaluator is expected to analyze all relevant information sources, such as reports, programme documents, thematic programmes, programme files, financial reports and any other documents that may provide further evidence for triangulation, on which his/her conclusions will be based. The evaluation team is also expected to use relevant quantitative and/or qualitative tools to collect relevant data for the evaluation.

The evaluation will rely on multiple sources of information for analysis, validation, and triangulation of evidence against the evaluation questions. Sources of data and methods of collection could include:

Desk Review
- Synthesis Reports
- Mission Reports
- Feedback from stakeholders
- Project Board documents and minutes
- Quality Assurance
- Global corporate reporting (i.e., ROAR and Global Programme Results Framework)

Key Informants Interview (KII)
- In person and virtual interviews with key people from Country Office, Regional Bureau, HQ, may include UNDP, UN Agency, Government, CSO, Academia, Private Sector, and others.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)
- In person and virtual focus group discussion with beneficiaries (parliamentarians, secretariat staff, communities, project staff etc.)

Field visit
- on-site validation of key tangible outputs and interventions.

Other methods
- such as observational visits, photos, stories, case studies

It is expected that the TE will make use of this existing evidence base and, where appropriate, develop additional methodologies for data collection, analysis and examination that complement rather than duplicate the existing information. The team will be expected to have extensive expertise in qualitative and quantitative methodologies including, as indicated, the capacity to use data collection, analysis and engagement techniques that are appropriate to different stakeholders.

The method and tools should be context-sensitive and adequately address the issues of human rights, gender equality and social inclusion.

5. Evaluation products (deliverables)

The evaluation team is expected to prepare, discuss, and finalize the following deliverables:

Evaluation inception report— The inception report should be prepared by the TE team before going into the full-fledged TE exercise. It should include full review of the country and regional project briefs (to be provided on contract signing), initial observations of the proposed evaluation objectives, proposed evaluation approach and methodology with detail around evaluation questions, data collection, analysis and dissemination processes, sampling strategy, and detailed examination of any limitations to the evaluation. The plan should be in line with the scope as outlined in the terms of reference and in line with UNDP evaluation norms, standards, guidelines, and templates.

Debriefing- A presentation of the initial findings from the evaluation will be made to key stakeholders, particularly the evaluation reference group, to provide opportunity to identify where further data collection and analysis may be required and/or to provide stakeholders with an indication of the likely scope and areas covered by the TE. This presentation is expected to be made in person or by the evaluation team to the identified stakeholder group before report drafting. This will be one of the opportunities for dialogue between stakeholders to explore their different perspectives and assessments about change and project outcomes.

Draft evaluation report-The draft evaluation report should be prepared in line with UNDP evaluation norms, standards, guidelines, and templates, including an analysis of the performance of the project to adequately address gender equality as well as human rights issues, with evidence-based findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The report will be distributed to stakeholders and the evaluation reference group and feedback from stakeholders will be collated for further consideration by the TE team

Evaluation report audit trail- Comments provided on draft report and changes made by the evaluator should be retained by the evaluation team to show how they have addressed comments.

Final evaluation report- The final report will be produced by the team based on feedback received on the draft report. The final report will be shared with all stakeholders and other interested parties. The final evaluation report and an Evaluation Brief (2- pager) should be prepared in line with UNDP evaluation norms, standards, guidelines, and templates.

Final payment is dependent on the approval of the report by the UNDP. If needed, multiple drafts may be required until the final approval.

6. Evaluation team composition and required competencies

The evaluation should be conducted by an independent international evaluator with logistical support from the project team. Team members involved in the design, management or implementation or advising any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation will not be qualified. UNDP MCO will select the evaluation team.

The evaluator is expected to possess the following qualifications, skills, and experiences:

Roles and responsibilities: Responsible for overall lead and conduction of the final evaluation. S/he should be responsible for the overall quality and timely submission of the evaluation report and briefing to the UNDP, and for ensuring a gender equality and social inclusion perspective is incorporated throughout the evaluation work and report.

- Takes overall leadership of organization and execution of the evaluation adhering to the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines ensuring its independence.
- Review of relevant documents and finalize the inception report including evaluation matrix, questions, methods, data collection and analysis instruments.
- Coordinates field missions and key consultation meetings for in-depth interviews and discussions with all relevant stakeholders
- Supervises the work of other team members and assures high quality of work.
- Leads the sharing and de-briefing meetings with UNDP and other stakeholders as appropriate.
- Takes overall responsibility of producing the report and its quality assurance process including contribution to the major sections of the report as agreed among the team members Acts as the main point of contact for UNDP (and stakeholders as appropriate)
- Prepares the report and submits it to UNDP on behalf of the team.

Qualifications and competencies:

- Minimum master's degree in evaluation, international development, public policy, governance, or other closely related field
- Relevant experience (minimum 4 years) to conduct evaluations from a critical research perspective making use of diverse and culturally appropriate methodologies.
- Experience in Theory of Change for complex systems programs
- Experience in monitoring evaluation or research with Pacific Island governments and/or parliaments
- High quality monitoring and evaluation experience with demonstrated expertise in effective engagement with diverse groups of people including women, and people marginalized because of disability, geography, and other factors. Demonstrated knowledge and experience in monitoring evaluation or research with parliaments.
- Experience in supporting and assessing strategies for inclusion of people including women and people marginalized by disability, age, geography, sexuality, and other factors–
- Demonstrated ability to conduct evaluations from a critical research perspective making use of diverse and culturally appropriate methodologies. Experience in evaluating adaptive programs and complex governance projects will be looked upon favorably.
- Current experience in parliamentary development and/or governance and development work,
- Technical expertise and experience in a range of governance work, including parliamentary development.
- Demonstrated experience in supporting and assessing strategies for inclusion of women and marginalized groups, including people living with a disability, and those marginalized by other intersecting social identities (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, living in rural or remote areas, etc.)

An evaluator's independence is compulsory. Individual consultants involved in designing, executing, or advising any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation will not be qualified.[44]

7. Evaluation ethics

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.' The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners. Consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and must sign a Code of Conduct upon acceptance of the assignment."

8. Implementation arrangements

The evaluation team will work under the Management, Performance and Oversight Unit (MPO). The PPEI Team will provide the logistical arrangements of TE travel and stakeholder consultations. PPEI Team will not interfere with analysis and reporting, except when requested and at opportunities for comments/feedback.

The TE will be supported by an Evaluation Reference Group comprising government partners. The purpose of the Evaluation Reference Group will be to ensure transparency in the evaluation process and support stakeholder engagement with evaluation findings and recommendations.

After signing the contract, UNDP will brief the evaluation team upon commencing the assignment to establish the evaluations objectives, purpose and expected outputs. Key project documents will be shared with the

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[44] For this reason, UNDP staff members based in other country offices, regional centers and headquarters units should not be part of the evaluation team.

evaluator, who will review the relevant documents and share the draft inception report before the commencement of the filed mission or information gathering. The final methodology and instruments should be proposed in the inception report, including the evaluation schedule and evaluation matrix that guides the final evaluations overall implementation. The inception report submitted by the evaluator should be approved by the evaluation manager ERG before the evaluation process begins.

The consultant will maintain all communication through the evaluation manager (in this case Oversight Specialist). The Evaluation manager should clear each step of the evaluation.

The consultant will be responsible for updating the Evaluation manager on the evaluation's progress regularly, and deliverables must be approved as satisfactory by the Evaluation Manager.

9. Time frame for the evaluation process

The total duration of the evaluation will be 40 working days between September-November 2023. This includes desk reviews, primary data collection, field work, and report writing. The assignment is home-based; however, travel is required to Fiji and may be undertaken to other one or two Pacific locations.

The below table provides a tentative timeframe for the assignment with deliverables and associated payments.

S.N.	Deliverables	Estimated number of days	Timeframe	Payment
1.	Submission of an **Inception Report** with a detailed methodology and a time bound work plan with key deliverables in consultation with UNDP	7 days	Within 10 days of signing the contract	**20 percent** of the contract amount upon approval of inception report
2.	**Interviews, meetings, discussions, field visits for data collection**	20 days	Right after approval of the inception report	**None**
3.	**Evaluation de-briefing meeting to UNDP after completion of the field mission**	1 days	Within 40 days of signing the contract (right after the field missions)	**None**
4.	Submission of **Draft Evaluation Report to UNDP** for its review	7 days	Within 50 days of signing the contract	**40 percent** of the contract amount upon approval of the draft report
56.	Submission of **Final Evaluation Report** incorporating comments/feedback from the presentation and approval of the report by UNDP	5 days	Within 60 days of signing the contract	**40 percent** of the contract amount upon approval of the final report

10. Use of final evaluation results

The findings of this final evaluation will be used to analyze the lessons learned and the way forward for the future design of the next phase of this project (if necessary) and similar projects. Therefore, the final evaluation report is expected to provide critical and constructive findings and recommendations for future interventions.

11. Application / submission process and criteria for selection

It will be mentioned in the advertisement with selection criteria.

12. Annexes [45]

a. **Relevant Documents:** Project Document, Contribution agreement, Theory of Change and Results framework, Annual Work Plan and Annual Reports, Monitoring Report, Project board minutes, Audit report, knowledge products etc.
b. **Tentative list of key stakeholders** and partners to be engaged during evaluation process:
c. Inception Report content/outline template with evaluation matrix
d. Evaluation report template
e. Evaluation audit trail form
f. UNEG Code of Conduct

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[45] These will be provided to the selected candidate during briefing meeting.

Annex 1: Tentative Tasks division matrix

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED # OF PERSONS DAYS	DATE OF COMPLETION	PLACE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Phase One: Desk review and inception report				
Meeting briefing with UNDP (programme managers and project staff as needed)	-	After signing of contract	UNDP or remote	Evaluation manager and commissioner
Sharing of the relevant documentation with the evaluation team	-	At the time of contract signing	Via email	Evaluation manager and commissioner
Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed	7 days	Within 10 days of contract signing	Home-based	Evaluator
Submission of the inception report (15 pages maximum)	-	Within 10 days of contract signing		Evaluator
Comments and approval of inception report	-	Within one week of submission of the inception report	UNDP	Evaluation manager
Phase Two: Data-collection mission				
Consultations and field visits, in-depth interviews, and focus groups	20 days	Within 35 days of contract signing	In country With field visits	UNDP to organize with local project partners, project staff
Debriefing to UNDP and key stakeholders	1 day	Within 40 days of contract signing	Remotely UNDP	Evaluation team
Phase Three: Evaluation report writing				
Preparation of draft evaluation report (50 pages maximum excluding annexes), executive summary (4-5 pages)	7 days	Within 40 days of the contract signing	Home-based	Evaluator
Draft report submission and comments provided by UNDP and stakeholders	-	Within 10 days of completion of de-briefing meeting		Evaluator
Consolidated UNDP and stakeholder comments to the draft report	-	Within 10 working of submission of the draft evaluation report	UNDP	Evaluation manager and evaluation reference group
Finalization of the evaluation report incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff and UNDP country office	5 days	Within 60 days of the contract signing	Home-based	Evaluator
Estimated total days for the evaluation	40			

Annex 3: List of Supporting Documents Reviewed

1. Project Document
2. Social and Environmental Screening Document
3. Minutes of Meeting of the LPAC
4. Funding Agreement and Project Award Documentation
5. Project Extension
6. ATLAS Annual Work Plan 2019-2023 (NB. this is a financial planning document not a narrative document that provides no insight into activity planning or implementation)
7. Annual Work Plan 2022
8. Letter of Agreement with the Tonga Parliament, and amendment to the LoA
9. Parliament Portfolio Organigram as of August 2023
10. Description of Governance and Management Arrangements (Excerpt from Project document)
11. PPEI II M&E Plan 2023 (NB this is an excel sheet depicting the project RRF with annual indicator targets, not a plan per se)
12. Selected monthly progress reports of National Coordinators appointed in Kiribati and Tonga.
13. Financial Spot Check Report for nationally implemented activities at the National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
14. Project Progress Reports: (1) Semi Annual Progress Report April – Sept 2020 (Draft); (2) Annual Progress Report Apr 2020 – Mar 2021; (3) Annual Progress Report Jul 2021- Jun 2022; (4) Progress Report Jul-Dec 2022 (Draft).
15. Project Risk Log for the year of 2023
16. Selected field visit reports from 2023
17. Project Procurement Plan 2023
18. Combined Delivery Reports for the Year 2022
19. Human Resource Plan for 2022
20. Implementation Stage Quality Insurance Report
21. SRP, SLIP, FPSP project documents
22. Selected policy papers produced by the parliamentary portfolio on (1) political parties in the Pacific, (2) constituency development funds in the Pacific, (3) background paper on government responses to COVID-19 in the Pacific
23. Constitutions, Standing Orders, manuals, and guidebooks available from the PPEI beneficiary parliaments
24. Websites of PPEI II beneficiary parliaments
25. Relevant reports and specialized literature (referenced in the body of this report).

Annex 4: UNEG Code of Conduct for TE consultant

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings, and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.
8. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained, and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
9. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing, or advising on the project being evaluated and did not carry out the project's Mid-Term Review.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form
Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system:

Name of Evaluator:
Name of Consultancy/organization:

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United national Code of Conduct for Evaluators:

Signed at:

Signature: