

Terminal Evaluation of the Samoa MDGs Acceleration Initiative

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Final Report

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Disclaimer

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Abbreviations	
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPIER	Climate Public Expenditure Institutional Review
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EQ	Evaluation Question
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
GoS	Government of Samoa
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MCO	Multi-Country Office
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoWCSD	Ministry of Women, Communities and Social Development
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NSA	Non-State Actor
PB	Project Board
ProDoc	Project Document
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDS	Strategy for the Development of Samoa
ToRs	Terms of Reference
TSP	Trade Sector Plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Projects and Services

VAW	Violence Against Women
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Samoa MDGs Acceleration Initiative aimed to develop a holistic framework of strategic initiatives for the acceleration of MDGs achievement in Samoa through a number of areas, ranging from pro-poor policy advice to support to development and implementation of trade policies, gender equality and youth actions, streamlining of climate change related expenditures, and strengthening of the Parliament. These initiatives were rolled out from 2011 to 2015. The main purpose of this evaluation is to determine how effective the programmatic elements of the Acceleration Initiative have been in achieving real development changes.

Relevance

The Project has been highly relevant to UNDP policies and priorities, and is aligned with the overall strategies and outcomes indicated in the UNDP Strategic Plans at global, regional and country level. The initiative has also been relevant to country policies, to which envisaged actions have provided substantial contributions. The project formulation, although quite 'spontaneous', is an example of how a project based on the expressed priorities and wishes of a country government can promote and favour commitment, participation and ultimately durable results. This has been in actual terms a demand-driven project, where all actions were conceived on the basis of what the GoS proposed, and were then integrated into the UN strategic frameworks. The articulation of the outcomes is well structured and it is balanced with regard to the distribution of resources across the different expected outputs. Finally, the project has been implemented in close cooperation with the UNDP Pacific Centre and the Bangkok Regional Centre, thus demonstrating that joint implementation can produce very good results, and it enabled UNDP to bring its expertise to the fore in meeting the demands of the government in the project

Efficiency

From the available documentation it seems that project implementation has been smooth and that no major issues are to be reported in this sense. Delays occurred throughout the project period were not due to UNDP shortcomings, but to external circumstances (Cyclone Evan) and to divergences occurred between the UNDP and some stakeholders (i.e. the OCLA); the latter were however settled and the initial delays did not limit the effectiveness of the project. Finally, the use of resources has been good, with reasonable unit costs and timely disbursements.

Effectiveness

The expected objectives were achieved in a very satisfactory way. Continuous dialogue with partners and quality of expertise were undoubtedly appreciated by beneficiaries. In many cases, the Initiative has enhanced cooperation among relevant stakeholders (e.g. in the

gender related actions) and has introduced new tools which – when properly adapted and divulged –will effectively contribute to expanding awareness of citizens and changes in attitudes. The actions on trade, parliament and environment have stimulated further reflection and streamlining of policies. The pro-poor option papers have strongly contributed to the development of strategic thinking about the conditions of the most vulnerable groups and have offered a solid basis for streamlining this cross-cutting issue across various sectors.

Sustainability

This is one of the rare cases when a project has achieved good sustainability. This is surely due to the good quality of deliverables and outputs, but also to the fact that the demand-driven approach used in its formulation is undoubtedly a guarantee of further use of project results and their embedding into national policies and actions. Ownership was in fact high, thanks to the continuous dialogue with partners and to the alignment of the projects with national priorities and areas of cooperation. Also, several actions implemented by the MDG-AI are now being funded by other sources; this is to be considered an achievement. More work needs to be carried out on themes such as VAW, and it is hoped that the UN system will continue cooperation with the GoS on this issue. Finally, financial sustainability does not seem a big issue at the moment, given the very pro-active GoS approach in designing and negotiating areas of cooperation with development partners.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Samoa is a Pacific island country, with less than 200,000 people residing on two main islands, approximately 3,000 km from New Zealand, and 4 000 km from Australia.

Samoa is a very cohesive and structured society, with a strong traditional culture. Each of Samoa's several thousand extended families nominates at least one traditional high chief ("matai") who represents them in village councils. Since independence from New Zealand in 1962, Samoa has been a stable democracy. Under the Constitution, executive power rests with the Prime Minister, who is elected by the legislature. The right to stand for election is limited to matai, although election is by universal suffrage. The Human Rights Protection Party

Strong policy settings for almost two decades have resulted in MDG outcomes and economic performance well above the average for comparable island countries. Yet Samoa's small size, limited natural resources, narrowly based economy, distance to major markets, and vulnerability to exogenous shocks, impose speed limits on growth and have led to a high degree of volatility in recent economic and social performances.

Hunger is almost non-existent; nevertheless, using the national poverty line, the level of basic needs poverty remains persistent at about one in five households.

Education access in Samoa is good. The adult literacy rate is 99%. Net primary school enrolment is 93%, although quality of education remains a concern, with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2010 MDG Tracking Report suggesting that about half of year six children assessed as at risk of poor outcomes in English literacy and numeracy.

Health indicators have improved, although with emerging issues. Samoans are now living, on average, a decade longer than thirty years ago, with life expectancy at birth rising from 62 in 1980 to 72 in 2008. Samoa has met MDGs targets for improved infant, child and maternal mortality rates, and almost all births are attended by skilled health professionals. Health facilities are well distributed throughout the country, although there are staff shortages, reflected in a recent decline in immunization rates. Non-communicable and lifestyle diseases are an increasing problem, with particularly high levels of obesity and diabetes.

Gender outcomes are mixed. Samoa has ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Equal numbers of girls and boys attend primary school, and girls are slightly over-represented in secondary education. Nevertheless, women make up only slightly less than 40% of the paid workforce. Women's representation in Parliament is still low, although improvements have been made by introducing a 10% female quota in the legislative. Samoan studies found that more than 50% of all women had experienced some form of domestic violence.

1.2 CONTEXT

At the time the project was conceived, Samoa was facing several challenges linked to the deterioration of development indexes. Samoa's 2010 progress report had showed mixed results, and indicators evidenced backward trends in all the Goals, most notably those related to poverty, education and health. In particular, MDG I showed the proportion of the population that had fallen below the Basic Needs Poverty Line (BNPL) had risen from 23% in 2002 to 27% in 2008, and the net primary school enrolment ratio had decreased for both boys and girls from about 99% in 2004 to 96% in 2009; dropout rates were also reportedly increasing. For MDG3, Samoa statistics evidenced that the ratio of women in Parliament was only 4%; moreover, studies stated that 65% of Samoa women above the age of 15 years had experienced physical violence by men. For MDG7, the number of species threatened with extinction had increased from 14 in 1999 to 30 in 2006.

This was also publicly acknowledged by the government for the first time through the Prime Minister, and led to a request by the government to UNDP to provide strategic advice on pro-poor policy options to address such shortcomings by ensuring a more equitable re-distribution

of the wealth from economic growth to the population, production of its first Trade Sector Plan, and capacity development, in line with the next national development plan (Strategy for the Development of Samoa for 2013-2017), which was planned to be more inclusive of the poorest of the poor and the vulnerable in the rural communities, and to ensure that basic social services (education and health) be more easily accessible and affordable.

The drafting of the project also coincided with some important steps, such as the Samoa accession to WTO, the consolidation of Samoa's position in the Pacific trade arena through PICTA and PACER+ agreements, and the country's graduation from Least Developed Country status to Middle Income Country status.

1.3 SOME DATA ON THE PROJECT

The overall objective of the MDG Acceleration Initiative (MDG-AI) as stated in the ProDoc, is *to avail the Government of Samoa with a full range of strategic and evidence-based policy options that have been successfully trialled worldwide that would enable the Government to direct its development resources where the greatest impact would be felt in reducing poverty and attaining a higher level of human development that is environmentally sustainable and resilient to the effects of climate change and natural disasters.*

The project was reportedly in line with the CPAP for Samoa, 2008-2012 and consolidated all UNDP Samoa Multi-Country Office (MCO) initiatives for poverty reduction and MDGs.

The Initiative identified the following areas of focus for accelerating MDGs achievements in Samoa: (1) Pro-poor policy advisory services; (2) Trade policy development and implementation; and (3) Increasing Parliamentarians focus on MDGs achievement.

These initiatives were rolled out in two phases, the first one focused on the achievement of *Output 1. Putting Samoa on a sustainable pathway towards transition from Least Developed Country (LDC) status to Middle Income Country (MIC) status by 2014*, the second one focused on *Output 2. Monitoring of MDGs Achievement, focusing in particular on MDGs less likely to be achieved by 2015.*

Implementing partners of the initiative were: MCO, Ministry of Finance and UNDP Pacific Centre, whereas responsible parties were: Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade¹; Trade Task Force, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development; Gender Sub-Sector Committee.; Youth Sub-Sector Committee.

The project duration was from April 2011 to December 2015.

¹ Active at the beginning of the project.

The overall budget allocated to the Initiative was USD 644,991, of which USD 535.623 for the first phase and USD 109,368 for the second phase (source: ProDoc).

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is structured in accordance with the OECD DAC requirements for evaluations.

The Introduction briefly summarizes the action.

Section 1 contains some background information and provides the basis for report users to understand the logic and assess the merits of the evaluation methodology and understand the applicability of the evaluation results.

Section 2 describes the evaluation scope and objectives and provides an explanation of evaluation criteria and questions.

Section 3 resumes the evaluation approach and methodology, especially related to data sources, data collection procedures and instruments, performance standards, stakeholder engagement, ethical considerations, background information on evaluator, major limitations of the methodology.

In Section 4 – Findings, we discuss main findings in relation to each evaluation criteria.

Section 5 will discuss the main lessons learnt, conclusions and recommendations emerging from the project experience.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

2.1 WHAT IS BEING EVALUATED

The **purpose** of this terminal evaluation is - according to the 2015 Evaluation Plan of the UNDP Multi-Country Office (MCO) in Samoa - *to determine how effective the programmatic elements of the Acceleration Initiative have been in achieving real development changes.*

This evaluation will assess progress towards the outcomes, factors affecting them, key UNDP contributions to the expected outcomes.

The evaluation simultaneously responds to two major needs of UNDP, namely: i) assess UNDP's contributions to a change in development conditions at country level; ii) provide recommendations for the next programming cycle by suggesting the most efficient structure and implementation modalities.

2.2 LINK OF THE INTERVENTION TO UNDP PRIORITIES

The MDG-AI is aligned with regional development priorities and is guided by the UNDAF for Pacific sub-region, aiming to achieve the following priorities or 'outcomes':

Equitable economic growth and poverty reduction, by supporting the development and implementation of evidence-based, regional, pro-poor National Sustainable Development Strategies to address population, poverty and economic exclusion issues, stimulate equitable growth, create economic opportunities and decent employment, and promote sustainable livelihoods.

Good governance and human rights, by enhancing national and regional governance systems that exercise the principles of inclusive good governance, respecting and upholding human rights; and supporting the development of resilient Pacific island communities participating in decision-making at all levels.

Equitable social and protection services, through support to the development of evidence-based and inclusive policies and plans; improved systems to deliver accessible, affordable, well-managed, gender sensitive quality social and protection services; and individual and community behaviour that reflects healthy lifestyles, social protection and better use of social services.

Sustainable environmental management, by mainstreaming of environmental sustainability and renewable energy into regional and national policies, planning frameworks and programmes; and supporting Pacific communities to sustainably use their environment, natural resources and cultural heritage².

² UNDAF for the Pacific sub-Region 2008-2012.

The project was also guided by the UNDP Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) 2008-2012, which states that

through a United Nations joint programme on national planning for MDG achievement, UNDP will focus its support on MDG 1 (eradicating poverty) and MDG 3 (empowering women) to achieve the following results: (a) gender mainstreamed into national development plans/national sustainable development plans, which are aligned with MDG targets and indicators and linked to national budgets; (b) strengthened and harmonized national and regional statistical information systems and databases, including development information (DEVINFO), focusing on sex-disaggregated data; (c) strategic planning and MDG advisory services provided for national planning, policy/programme formulation, gender mainstreaming, development plan implementation, and to support annual reviews facilitating MDG-based monitoring and evaluation, aid coordination and resource mobilization in Samoa where requested; (d) MDG report updated for Samoa for reporting to the General Assembly in 2010; (e) human development indices and gender-related development indices updated for Samoa; (f) human development or other reports providing practical options for population retention, income generation, gender equality and sustainable livelihoods in the country; (g) Integrated Framework for Trade; [...] (k) capacities developed of Government, civil society, the private sector, youth and “MDG volunteers” in strategic planning, leadership and management, programme design, MDG-based data-collection and monitoring and evaluation, gender mainstreaming, and communications; and (l) South-South cooperation and capacity development enhanced³.

2.3 KEY PARTNERS

The key partners involved in the project were: MCO, Ministry of Finance and UNDP Pacific Centre, whereas responsible parties were: Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade;; Trade Task Force; Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development; Gender Sub-Sector Committee.; Youth Sub-Sector Committee.

Under the two Outputs, other entities involved were

All the above-mentioned entities were partners of the project and have either directly implemented the project, contributed to its implementation, or oversaw its implementation.

2.4 SCOPE

This evaluation will cover the entire period of implementation of the project.

³ SAMOA Country Programme Action Plan, 2008-2012.

2.5 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The criteria used in this evaluation have been provided in the ToRs (i.e. **relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability**) and refer to the main OECD-DAC criteria with the exclusion of impact, the proper assessment of which is premature at this stage of implementation.

The consultant has paid particular attention to the critical analysis of available data in order to assess the evaluability of specific project components, through the following steps:

- i) Study the project history, design, and operation;
- ii) Determine the project's capacity for data collection, management, and analysis;
- iii) Assess the extent to which the project reached its goals and objectives.

2.6 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation questions have been elaborated following the indications provided in the ToRs, the UNDP MCO and the project document. They have been discussed and confirmed with the MCO staff during the field mission.

Each key question is presented together with a rationale where the hypotheses to be fulfilled are explained, and sub-questions and corresponding indicators that have been used to answer them are presented. Evaluation criteria, data sources, methods for data collection and analysis are specified for each question including possible limitations and risks concerning data collection and data quality. All this information is included in the **evaluation matrix**, presented under Section 3.4.

3. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The guiding principle in conducting the evaluation exercise has been wherever possible the use of participatory approaches, where relevant stakeholders are involved in the identification of main issues to be evaluated, which will constitute the evaluation *foci*.

The tight timing of the field mission and the unavailability of some stakeholders have to some extent posed a limitation in the implementation of this approach.

3.1 DATA SOURCES

The sources of information utilised for this report have been:

- UNDP Strategic Plan (2014-2017);
- UNDAF for the Pacific Region 2013-2017;
- Pacific Multi-Country UNDAF Action Plan;
- CPAP 2008-2012;
- Other UNDP documents;
- Project documents;
- Project outputs;
- National Strategic Development Plans;
- Interviews with programme and project stakeholders, partners.

The documents provided have offered the desired information on the degree of relevance of the MDG-AI in relation to expected objectives. The project documents provided the background for the consultant's assessment of effectiveness and efficiency of single actions under the project. Reports and other sources of information have provided for an overview and analysis of dynamics and priorities. Interviews with partners have provided additional information for the analysis of effectiveness and sustainability and have given to the consultant relevant information on the overall added value of the project.

The complete list of documents consulted is presented in Annex 6.2.

3.2 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING FRAME

The list of the actions implemented during the period has been provided by the MCO. On this basis, and on the basis of availability of project stakeholders, the attention of the consultant focused on some projects where more source of information was available, both in terms of

documentation and people to be interviewed. The majority of interviews held by the consultant regarded Regional Programme staff and partners of the regional projects.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTS

Methods for data collection and analysis

Desk Evaluation

The evaluation consultant analysed the UNDP strategic documents, the project documents including project reports related to the specific context of the Initiative.

In addition, the consultant analysed UNDP country and regional strategies and policies, logical/results framework, technical and financial reports, research reports, and other material produced.

Field visits

The purposes of the field visit were: to include relevant internal UNDP stakeholders in the preparation of the evaluation, as seen above; explore stakeholders' commitment and attitudes; verify country' priorities; collect information on the results of the various areas of intervention; assess the outcomes at final beneficiaries' level. To this last purpose the evaluator has met CSOs, NGOs and in some cases end users.

During the country visits, the following methods of data collection have been used.

Semi-structured interviews

Interviews took place with UNDP MCO staff and with stakeholders. These included: national authorities, national partners, civil society organisations (implementing partners and beneficiary organisations), other relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Data analysis

Data for analysis have been triangulated through a mixed methods approach that included desk review, consultation with all main stakeholders, and an independent assessment of development effectiveness. The latest made use of a difference-based approach, to identify expected and unexpected changes. Process tracing was also used, to identify mechanisms of change and the likely contributions of UNDP.

3.4 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND EVALUATION MATRIX

On the basis of the Evaluation Questions included in the ToRs, the evaluation consultant has elaborated a detailed Evaluation Matrix, including evaluation questions, relevant sub-indicators, and method for collecting data. The following evaluation matrix was used for this exercise.

Key Criteria	Key Questions	Sub Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators	Stakeholders	Tools
Relevance	The extent to which the activities are suited to the priorities and policies of South Africa and of EU at the time of formulation Are we doing the right things?	Validity	Are the project assumptions still valid?	Project references, country reports, other reports, relevant statistics		Desk review
		Design	Are the project structure and design relevant to the achievement of expected objectives and intended results?	ProDoc, Government reports, project reports, key GoS and UN stakeholders	Key GoS and UN stakeholders, project staff	Desk review, Interviews
		Alignment	Is the project in line with country's priorities?	GoS strategies, policies, reports, UN reports, MDG-AI reports, media, civil society	Civil society, project staff, GoS and UN stakeholders	Desk review, interviews
		Intervention logic	Were the chosen implementation mechanisms and instruments of MDG-AI conducive for achieving the expected results?	Government reports, perceptions by GoS, UN agencies, media and civil society stakeholders	Project staff, GoS and UN stakeholders	Desk review, interviews
Efficiency	Measurement of the outputs in relation to the inputs Are we doing things right?	Organisational Efficiency	Was management adequate to the planning and execution requirements? (Management Arrangements, Work Planning, Finance and co-finance, Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, Stakeholder Engagement, Reporting, Communications)	Levels of coordination Evidence of decision making, timeliness, programme adjustment and learning Comparison of reports to work plans Evidence of fund disbursement being appropriate to maximise utility	Project Staff, beneficiaries, Project reports, workplans, financial reports and other reports	Desk review, interviews
Effectiveness	The extent to which the Outcome activities attain its	Achievement of objectives	How did the project contribute to the end-of-project targets?	Development of concerted strategies and policy actions	Key stakeholders, national and UN reports, MDG reports	Desk review, interviews

	objectives Are the things we are doing working?	Resonance	How the project can further expand its benefits?	Areas where benefits can be still perceived	Key stakeholders, Project staff, GoS reports	Desk review, interviews Focus Groups
		Context	What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended objectives?	Outcomes for which there is a plausible performance story (mechanisms of change) linking back to the actions of the programme Stakeholder analysis of forces/drivers of change	Analysis of context, project staff, beneficiaries	Interviews, desk review
Sustainability	The benefits of the Programme related activities that are likely to continue after the Project fund has been exhausted Will the changes last?	Capacity development	To what extent have outcomes of MDG-AI been embedded in the country's structures?	Evidence of capacity gap analysis of key stakeholders and institutions Evidence of interventions to address self expressed and externally analysed gaps	National authorities Civil society groups	Desk review Interviews Focus Groups
		Ownership	What is the likelihood that the GoS will continue to make use of relevant results?	Existence of required knowledge, skills, and financial flows within national institutions to maintain MDG-AI outcomes Evidence of high level political support for target areas Integration of MDG-AI outcomes into national planning, budgeting and monitoring systems	UN agencies, other GoS stakeholders	Focus groups Interviews Desk review
			Does the GoS have any plans to continue delivering the stream of benefits and if so are they	Evidence of active contributions to the implementation of	JCC, Key SA TDCA stakeholders	Desk review, interviews

			likely to materialise?	TDCA activities		
		General	Assessment of: financial, environmental, socio-economic risks for sustainability	Evidence of sustainability measures in the project documents and analysis of their implementation	UNDP, GoS, other key stakeholders	Interviews, desk review

3.5 STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT

Despite the time constraints of the field visit and the limited availability of relevant stakeholders – due mainly to the fact that some project stakeholders had left their duty at the time of the exercise– the degree of engagement of stakeholders in this mission was satisfactory. Interviews held from home confirmed the interest and commitment of partners in the Regional Programme. More time devoted to field missions to other partner countries would have helped to gather more feedback as well as reach stronger consensus on the consultant’s findings.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The UN ethical standards in evaluations are based on the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct⁴. The UNEG guidelines note the importance of ethical conduct for the following reasons:

1. *Responsible use of power*: All those engaged in evaluation processes are responsible for upholding the proper conduct of the evaluation.
2. *Ensuring credibility*: With a fair, impartial and complete assessment, stakeholders are more likely to have faith in the results of a evaluation and to take note of the recommendations.
3. *Responsible use of resources*: Ethical conduct in evaluation increases the chances of acceptance by the parties to the evaluation and therefore the likelihood that the investment in the evaluation will result in improved outcomes.

The evaluation consultant has carefully followed the above mentioned Guidelines.

3.7 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON EVALUATOR

This exercise was conducted by Ms Donata Maccelli, for a total duration of 15 working days. She was the main responsible for the quality of the deliverables vis-à-vis the UNDP MCO. The extensive experience of the consultant in complex assignments supported the process for the quality check of each output.

3.8 MAJOR LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY

Limitation 1: the initial timing of the field mission – 10 working days of which only 5 dedicated to interviews – has impacted on the quantity of information, especially at final users’ level.

⁴ UNEG, ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’, June 2008. Available at

1.1 [HTTP://WWW.UNEVAL.ORG/SEARCH/INDEX.JSP?Q=ETHICAL+GUIDELINES](http://www.uneval.org/search/index.jsp?q=ethical+guidelines).

Mitigation: the UNDP MCO have provided additional DSA to the consultant to conduct interviews in the third week. Also, the consultant and the UNDP MCO staff have put maximum efforts to ensure a basket of relevant stakeholders for the interviewees. Home-based phone and Skype interview have been arranged and held.

Limitation 2: the project terminated in December 2015 and there were some difficulties in reaching out staff from different entities who had worked in the project.

Mitigation: The consultant has carefully analysed all relevant documentation and has conducted extensive interviews with the project staff of MCO and the UNDP Pacific Centre. This has helped reconstructing major issues and achievements as well as identifying general outcomes and results.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative Information

1. Budget: The database examined contains the planned budget and the funded budget as per latest data available at the MCO.
2. Timeframe: The start date, end date and time frame as stated in the project documents have been entered.
3. Funding Sources: Funding sources include recipient government; bilateral donors and core funding from the UN agencies themselves. The amounts provided by the different sources have been entered.

Qualitative Information

The gathering of qualitative data focused on obtaining an overview of key issues and information needs. The data was acquired through consultations and interviews with key stakeholders and a review of documentation.

Interviews were held with around 20 people that were both staff of national government bodies, staff of the legislative, project implementing bodies, members of the civil society, or engaged in one way or another in project related issues.

The documentation review was relatively comprehensive. At a minimum all project documents made available to the consultant were skimmed through – some were studied in more detail. In addition, Internet searches have been undertaken.

4. FINDINGS

This Chapter is structured in accordance with the OECD DAC requirements for evaluations. In Section 4.1 we discuss the project's design and its relevance to CPAP and UNDAF priorities and strategies. Section 4.2 discusses the project's efficiency, including the conversion of resources (financial and human) into results. Section 4.3 follows with a discussion of effectiveness, in particular the contribution of the results achieved to achieving the objectives (outcomes). Section 4.4 discusses the project's sustainability over time.

4.1 RELEVANCE

Definition: The extent to which the Outcome activities are suited to the priorities and policies of the country at the time of formulation.

Q1. Are the project assumptions still valid?

Project Design

The story of this project is quite interesting. It appeared that a certain amount of funds had been left unexploited from projects and other activities which were not completed. The MCO started then a reflection on other opportunities to use those available funds. The time coincided with a period when Samoa was facing a series of challenges related to its more strategical positioning at the global level, regarding trade through its accession to WTO, completion of its Diagnostic Trade Integrated Study (DTIS), approval of its Export Strategy as well as its Aid policy, completion of several significant infrastructural developments, as well as its repositioning in the International Dateline. In terms of MDG achievements, some shortcomings and even some steps back in poverty indicators were reported.

In light of that, after common discussion with Government stakeholders who were reportedly quite precise in outlining priorities, it was decided that available funds would be conveyed into an initiative whose objective was to provide support to the GoS on various actions aimed at addressing the above challenges.

The result of those discussion was therefore a combination of different initiatives, which can look 'scattered' – as one of the interviewees commented –, but altogether represented a valid contribution to the Government's most urgent needs in view of its commitments towards the WTO, towards its new status and towards better achievements of the MDG.

A Desk Review Document was also produced prior to the ProDoc, documenting the socio-economic and political developments of the country and serving as a background for the development of the project⁵. The document concluded that *Samoa's integration of sustainable*

⁵ *The desk review will serve as a key input into to national consultation and will serve only to guide discussions on the current status*

development as a cross cutting theme throughout all its development initiatives gives the UN a broad spectrum for intervening.

The following priority areas were identified:

- *Establishing a pro-employment macroeconomic framework that integrates employment targets in economic strategies with options for reducing poverty;*
- *Increasing labour market participation for women and men, especially those living in the rural areas where the poor are mostly found;*
- *Increasing agricultural production for improving food security and trade (farms, forestry and fisheries);*
- *Sector wide interventions for reducing the number of people living below the basic need poverty line;*
- *Strengthen institutional capacity and help rationalize climate change interventions in Samoa;*
- *Strengthen institutional, policy and planning mechanisms to mainstream DRM and CCA into development planning and budgeting and support the integration of national DRM and CCA policies and plans*
- *Parliamentary strengthening in order to enable the Legislative Assembly to function effectively and to its fullest capacity towards the achievement of the MDGs and good governance and advocating for population and development*
- *Social sector needs to be fully supported and especially to address the needs of children and women;*
- *Benefits of a vibrant cultural Industry, including cultural tourism and culture-related SMEs*
- *Ending VAW through a multi-sectoral approach and increasing women's participation in key decision making at the local and national level*
- *Building social services to meet the varying needs of vulnerable groups including, children, youth, the disables and rural folk*
- *Advocacy to secure ratification and implementation of UN human rights conventions*
- *Tackling gender inequalities across the board including ending VAW, increasing women's participation in decision-making at all levels and mainstreaming gender across all activities*

- *Building the capacity of social partners and civil society organizations operating outside the traditional realm (e.g. in urban areas, women and youth driven) to engage in participative planning and development in relation to their constituencies.*

It seems therefore rather clear that the Initiative – in spite of its ‘scattered’ aspects – was an efficient and effective way to respond to GoS demands and needs.

Q2. Are the project structure and design relevant to the achievement of expected objectives and intended results?

The following principles were used in the design of the project:

1. The need to identify new streams of national revenue collection and pathways towards achieving the MDGs, in view of Samoa's transition from Least Developed Country (LDC) to Middle Income Country (MIC);
2. The consolidation of what is called in the ProDoc *all existing and planned strategic initiatives supported by UNDP*;
3. An holistic framework for the acceleration of MDG achievement;
4. The participation of relevant UN Specialized Agencies, in order to bring the UN's normative standards to bear on the various initiatives (which however was not realised in the project implementation, due to various reasons explained in the following sections);
5. The use of lessons learned from existing projects and programmes at the community levels and global best practices, the latter being accessed from and through UNDP Regional Centres and Knowledge Networks, Solutions Exchange, etc.

Those principles were almost entirely respected in the implementation of the Initiative. With regard to the inclusion of other UN agencies in the implementation of the Initiative, both the Youth Employment Initiation Plan (2014) & the UNYEP (2015) were developed together with ILO. Also, ILO & ESCAP contributed to the pro-poor studies & paid for their own consultant.

Finally, the project document contained already some essential annexes: a Concept Note for the pro-poor policy options, ToRs for Eight Pro-Poor Consultants, a definition of Trade Sector Plan and Roles and Responsibilities approved by Cabinet, a first Timetable for the Trade Sector Plan, ToRs for the Climate Public Expenditure Institutional Review (CPIER) component. These annexes facilitated the timely commencement of activities.

Q3. Is the project in line with country's priorities?

Government of Samoa strategies

The *Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS), 2008–2012: Ensuring Sustainable Economic and Social Progress* (SDS) presented Samoa’s development vision, its medium-term national development goals, and the strategies that would be implemented during the four financial years 2008/09–2011/12 to achieve these goals. The Strategy is constructed against a vision of “Improved Quality of Life for All.”

These goals and strategies were organized into three priority areas: Priority Area 1: Economic Policies; Priority Area 2: Social Policies; and Priority Area 3: Public Sector Management and Environmental Sustainability. Strategies under Priority Area 1 were aimed at achieving: (1) sustained macroeconomic stability; and (2) private sector led economic growth and employment creation. Strategies under Priority Area 2 were aimed at achieving: (1) improved education standards; (2) improved health standards; and (3) community development: social harmony. Strategies under Priority Area 3 aimed at achieving: (1) improved governance; and (2) environmental sustainability and disaster risk reduction.

The Strategy outlined the significant economic and social progress made in the previous ten years, observing that the Human Development Index, Millennium Development Goals and other economic and social indicators showed that the quality of life had improved significantly. However, it was recognised that some groups in society were still experiencing hardship, and maintaining an improved quality of life for all was considered a challenge to be met in the next period. The country’s commitment to achieving equitable development for all by embracing the three pillars of human, social and economic development was reiterated in 2011 by the Prime Minister of GoS in the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Istanbul, Turkey (9-13th May 2011).

It can be seen that the *foci* of the SDS are well reflected in the MDG-AI. In particular:

Expected Output 1. Putting Samoa on a sustainable pathway towards transition from Least Developed Country (LDC) status to Middle Income Country (MIC) status by January 2014, was closely linked to the development of the next SDS through series of Pro-poor Policy Options focused on the most vulnerable. Also, the First Trade Sector Plan (TSP) produced under the Initiative well corresponded to the GoS SDS in its Priority Area 1 – Economic Policies, which states among the objectives: (4) facilitating beneficial international trade through outward-oriented trade policies; and (5) investigating development potential (natural resource surveys, scientific and market research).

The SDS states that Community development remains a priority area in the SDS 2008–2012, and is underpinned by promoting good governance in local communities, strengthening community economic development and enhancing social development and service provision. The government will also strengthen village economy and society and protect the rights and wellbeing of children,

youth and women. This involves various government agencies including the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD), the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, the Samoa Police Force and the Court System; and many active NGOs and community groups. In identifying their priorities for alleviating hardship, rural communities give special emphasis to: access to credit facilities; support for agricultural development; improved access to basic services and infrastructure, particularly water supply; access to quality education; and better roads and market access for identified disadvantaged communities. To achieve this improvement, the government will coordinate closely with the Village Fono (village councils) in light of the recommendations of the Cabinet-appointed commission that has reviewed the Village Fono Act.

Environment (CPEIR). Samoa has shown a strong interest in climate change issues and there is widespread awareness of climate change implications across government. The commitment to address climate change starts at the top of government and is reflected in the leading role played by Samoa in climate change debate and negotiation in the Pacific and internationally. The National Climate Policy 2007 provided a comprehensive list of actions that need to be taken to respond to climate change, covering adaptation, mitigation and climate services and including awareness, information, capacity and regulations. On policy and Implementation issues, Samoa has a well-developed set of policies and is engaged in further improvement.

The needs of women addressed through the MDG-AI well correspond to the SDS when reference is explicitly made to these groups: *The government will also strengthen village economy and society and protect the rights and wellbeing of children, youth and women. This involves various government agencies including the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD), the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, the Samoa Police Force and the Court System; and many active NGOs and community groups. The National Policy for Women of Samoa 2007-2017 aims to expand opportunities for women and ensure progress is made in implementing the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); while the National Policy for Children 2007-2017 outlines the planned direction for the care, protection and development of children in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Both of these policies will be implemented by MWCSD [Ministry of Women, Children and Social Development] in collaboration with the ministries of Health, Justice and Courts Administration, and Education, Sports and Culture.* It should be noted that the SDS does not mention violence against women, but only against children, thus still manifesting some embarrassment to acknowledge a phenomenon which is anyway increasing in many countries, regardless their degree of development.

Finally, the document makes large use of UNDP reports, confirming the crucial role such reports play in the Government strategies and policy documents.

With regard to the Samoa Parliamentary Support Project (SPSP) developed under the Initiative, the decision of including it into the MDG-AI comes from the Desk Review Document, in its part concerning Governance and Human Rights (Chapter 2.9) based on a 2011 Samoa Legislative Needs Assessment (LNA) and a 2010 Good Leadership Report by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. The Review concluded that *if Parliament is to grow into a nationally-focused House of debate and oversight, it will be important to work with all parties to strengthen the contribution of party-based politics to national parliamentary work.*

Samoa's aid effectiveness policies

Early in 2006, the Government of Samoa started developing its position on aid effectiveness, putting in place mechanisms for adequate coordination. The *Partnerships for Development* was perhaps the first document of such kind. Samoa became a signatory to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2008 prior to its participation at the Accra Agenda for Action summit, and has remained committed to full implementation of the aid effectiveness principles as articulated in the declaration. This has been reiterated in the *EVALUATION OF THE PARIS DECLARATION ON AID EFFECTIVENESS AND THE ACCRA AGENDA FOR ACTION* (2010), prepared by a team of independent consultants. The evaluation results show that the Paris Declaration is relevant in the Samoan context and has added to the strengthening of aid management for better development results at national and sectoral levels.

In the following years, aid effectiveness mechanisms have been further streamlined. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) is the main coordinating body of development aid; it is in charge of aligning SDS with MDGs and sectoral plans, and it subsequently establishes links and relations between sector priorities and the international donors' community, assigning to each donor a specific sector. This approach is relatively recent and was not in place during the design of the Initiative; at that time therefore there was no contradiction between the project formulation and the country's agenda for development aid.

4.2 EFFICIENCY

Definition: Measurement of the outputs in relation to the inputs.

Q4. Was management adequate to the planning and execution requirements? (Management Arrangements, Work Planning, Finance and co-finance, Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, Stakeholder Engagement, Reporting, Communications)

Management Arrangements

The project correctly foresaw two management levels.

The Project Manager role, exercised by the UNDP MCO directly and responsible for operational activities, for the day-to-day management and decision-making, with an overall responsibility for

ensuring that the Project produces tangible results in accordance with the RRF and Annual Work Plan endorsed by the Project Board.

The Project Board, with overall responsibility for providing strategic guidance and oversight - as well as management decisions concerning major project issues- , and for approving project budget revisions and Annual Work Plans (AWP).

The *executive role* of the project was assigned to the Assistant Chief Executive Officer (ACEO) of the Aid Coordination Unit of the Ministry of Finance, or National Project Director (NDP).

From the *supply side*, the project document envisaged *a. UNDP Multi-Country Office in Samoa, as the body responsible for supporting operational aspects of implementation; b. UNDP Pacific Centre in Fiji, as the body which provides guidance regarding the technical feasibility and substantive focus of the Project; and c. The ACEO of Ministry of Finance, as the key national partner as well as the focal point for UN assistance to Samoa.*

In general terms, this system worked well. The Project Board did not meet very frequently, due reportedly to tight schedules and overloaded working agenda. This has however not affected in a relevant way the project implementation, whose schedule and programmes were carefully followed by the MCO. Also, relationships and dialogue with the various project stakeholders were thoroughly maintained throughout the whole project.

As seen above, the Pacific Centre in Fiji was very involved in various issues related to the Initiative, from drawing ToRs to assessing the needs of the trade sector in view of the preparation of the Trade Sector Plans by Mr. Ahmed Moustafa and the CPEIR by Mr. Kevin Petrini.

Work Planning

Initial dates for start-up activities were already outlined in the ProDoc; the document also included annual workplans with relative budget for the years 2011 and 2012.

Delays in the implementation of activities occurred throughout the project were not due to deficiencies from UNDP side. Of those, a major delay was represented by some divergences between the MCO and the Office Clerk of the legislative Assembly (OCLA), who pushed with insistence for the replacement of the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) position with the hierarchically inferior position of Project Manager (PM), reportedly to achieve more ownership and control over activities. The absence from work of the Assistant Resident Representative (ARR)/ Head of the Governance and Poverty Reduction Unit, responsible for the MDGs Initiative at the MCO, was due to medical reasons, and impacted only on the delivery of the 2013 Annual Report thanks to the work of consultants that were on board by this time, working under the close guidance of the Resident Representative and DRR. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade reported some delays in receiving funds during the preparation of the Trade Sector Plan, with subsequent impact on the Ministry's budget. Finally, the delays in preparation of the APRs for 2012 and 2013 were due to

the Cyclone Evan disaster and the subsequent focus of the Multi-Country Office on response and early recovery efforts in Samoa.

Finance and co-finance

Phase 1: Allocated resources	
GoS: in kind	UNDP:
	Regular (TRAC) 125,140
	CCSDP: 30,000
	JCT4D: 9,483
	PRTFF: 26,000
	11888: 30,000
	<i>Sub-total: \$220,623</i>
	Pacific Centre Parallel Funding: \$ 235,000
	ILO & ESCAP Parallel Funding: \$ 80,000
	Total Funds Mobilized: \$ 535.623
Phase 2	
	\$109,368 To be mobilized for unfunded budget
Total	US\$ 644.991

Areas of work have been budgeted in the following way:

Annual Budget 2011-2012	UNDP MCO	NON-CORE	UNDP PC	ILO/ESCAP	Total per output
Annual Target (AT) 1.1- Pro-poor Policy Options	202,841		95,000	80,000	377,841
AT 1.2: Trade Sector Plan	18,200	15,000	10,000		43,200
AT 1.3: Parliamentary	2,000		80,000		82,000

Support Project: Document					
AT 1.4: HDR	46,450				46,450
AT 2.1: National Institutions strengthened to improve MDG expenditures			50,000		50,000
AT 2.2: Gender violence and gaps programme	25,250				25,250
AT 2.3: Youth	20,250				20,250
Total	314,991	15,000	235,000	80,000	644,991

As clearly deductible from the table, both the MCO and the UNDP Pacific Centre have substantially contributed to the project funding. ILO has contributed to the development of Pro-Poor Policy Options (through its consultant) and to the development of the two youth employment projects.. The largest amount of funds was dedicated to the eight pro-poor policy option papers; this choice has been relatively fortunate, given the impact these documents had in informing GoS's next strategies and approaches.

Non-core funding: The Poverty Reduction Thematic Trust Fund (PRTTTF) 5th tranche 2010, which the MCO had received from RBAP for mainstreaming of the MDGs into national plans, production of MDG Reports for Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau, and capacity development, had also funded an Economic Statistician Consultant to work on the above deliverables. This was one of the projects which was consolidated into the MDG-AI so that the consultant could include work on the pro-poor studies and TSP components of the MDG-AI as well.

The APR 2011-12 provided a copy of the ATLAS generated Annual Progress Report.

The 2013 Annual Report states that the overall expenditure for the MDG-AI for 2013 was US\$ 346,580.66, mainly used for TLDP initiatives and Community Conversations.

In 2014, the overall approved budget was US\$ 165,035.28 out of which US\$ 128,696.22 was expended, or 78 % delivery, spent mainly on ensuring that monitoring and evaluation of the TLDP sessions held in 20 13 were carried out in accordance with the 2014 AWP.

In 2015, The approved budget for the MDG-AI for 2015 was US\$63,315; however, this amount was partially reduced when the project was operationally closed in Q4 2015, based on the actual expenditure figure of US\$ 58,725.

Co-funding

Co-funding for the SPSP came from the Australian government funded regional Pacific Parliamentary Partnership (PPP) Programme on a parallel basis. Between 2012 to mid-2014 the PPP had spent about US\$175,000 under the Letter of Agreement (LOA) between UNDP, as it covered the salaries of approximately 6 Australian Parliamentary Rotational Specialists who came to Samoa to conduct specialised training and/or other types of TA in the Office of the Clerk and Parliament under the SPSP.

The Youth Employment Project (YEP) launched in 2015 was funded by several sources: of the approved budget, amounting at US\$1,028,500, UNDP TRAC funding was US\$289,000; UNDP SDGs Trust Fund US\$500,000 and ILO Swedish Fund US\$239,500. Parallel funding included GEF Economy Wide Adaptation to Climate Change (EWACC) project, amounting at US\$500,000. Reports signal that at the time of signing the project had a shortfall of some US\$2,671,500 to be mobilized.

Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

The project followed NIM guidelines, according to which a project is subject to an annual NIM audit if it exceeds an expenditure of US\$300,000. The first NIM audit was conducted in 2012 (for 2011 performance) and received an unqualified audit opinion by the Samoa Auditor General's Office.

A periodic Management Audit of the UNDP Multi-Country Office was carried out by the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) in October 2015, assessing areas for strengthening in the MCO operations and programmes management systems, to ensure adherence to UNDP global corporate standards. The MDGs Acceleration Initiative was one of the projects included in the audit.

Main observations were reportedly ⁶ that the Project Board was not active, and that the activities carried out in 2015 such as Support to the Transformational Leadership Development Programme (TLDP) were not included in the original project document. The MCO, according to the APR, took note of the observations and assured that UNDP had worked closely with the Aid Coordination Division of the Ministry of Finance in the overall management of the project. This is also confirmed by interviews held during the current evaluation.

⁶ APR, 2015. The Audit report was not made available to the consultant.

10% of the total project budget was allocated to UNDP to cover M&E requirements. Funds were accessed by UNDP office directly to support monitoring activities, in consultation with the National Project Director (NDP). Under the Initiative, several M&E reports have been produced; in particular, a MTE of the SPSP (the Support to Parliament), carried out by the International Parliamentary Union (IPU); and several reports on events carried out under the Increased Political participation of Women in Samoa (IPPWS), the Breakthrough Initiative (BTI) and the TLDP.

Stakeholder Engagement

As specified in the Section above on Relevance, stakeholder engagement is one of the key features of this project which was conceived following GoS indications, needs and priorities, and was developed in close cooperation with the Government. This commitment did not decrease throughout the implementation phase, although sometimes difficulties were reported with some stakeholders (these aspects will be analysed more in details in the following section on Effectiveness).

Reporting and Communications

The ProDoc states that *Financial and Operational Progress Reports will be prepared by the Project Manager and signed off by the Implementing Agency and submitted by UNDP on a quarterly basis in accordance with UNDP User Guide and using the standard report format available in the Executive Snapshot. These reports [...] will be used as the basis for the Annual Project Report (APR).* The consultant has been provided with Annual Reports; quarterly reports were not made available, if existing.

Annual Reports – although quite succinct - are clear and cover a satisfactory range of issues, from an update on the development of activities to a list of annual expenditures, presented by activities. Some more information on funding, including possible difficulties arisen during the project implementation, might also be provided; this is a quite key element and might offer important information, and convey significant messages, to the HQs.

As a conclusion, and within the constraints imposed by some limited information on all complex aspects regarding the criterion of efficiency, the project seems to have performed in a satisfactory way. Funds were timely available; unit costs seem reasonable. Delays – when occurred – were not due to management shortcomings. No negative comments are to be reported about the quality or the timing of the provision of the experts, which were generally recognised of very good quality. Management arrangements have been able to cover the project and ensure adequate control over activities, thanks to good and constant contacts of the MCO with stakeholders. Reporting is to be considered satisfactory although we do not know the opinion of other related UNDP offices (Fiji, Bangkok)

4.3 EFFECTIVENESS

The following section will analyse the extent to which the Outcome activities attain its objectives.

Q5. How did the project contribute to the end-of-project targets?

The following table briefly resumes the expected results of the Initiative.

Expected Outcome Indicator	Expected Outputs (EO)	Sub-Outputs (Targets)
Pro-poor national development plans and strategies developed and aligned with the MDGs.	EO 1. Putting Samoa on a sustainable pathway towards transition from Least Developed Country (LDC) status to Middle Income Country (MIC) status by January 2014.	<p>1.1 Pro-poor Policy Options to inform the development of its next Strategy for the Development of Samoa, 2013-2017, focusing on the most vulnerable and sex disaggregated actions</p> <p>1.2 First Trade Sector Plan (TSP) developed and presented to the Government</p> <p>1.3 Production of a fully funded Parliamentary Strengthening Project.</p> <p>1.4 National Human Development Report produced.</p>
	EO 2. Monitoring of MDGs Achievement focusing in particular on MDGs less likely to be achieved by 2015.	<p>2.1 Institutions strengthened to monitor public expenditures on the MDGs e.g. climate change, environment and other MDG gap areas.</p> <p>2.2 Programme developed to address gender gaps in Samoa and reduce violence against women and children.</p> <p>2.3 Programme developed to increase the participation of young people in Samoa in gainful economic activities and job creation, the latter in close collaboration with other UN Agencies and development partners.</p>

Expected Output 1

EO1.1 The Pro-Poor Policy Option Papers have been developed in 2011/2012 by several consultants recruited under ToRs prepared and attached to the ProDoc, in close cooperation with the government.

The papers are of good quality, oriented to solutions and have therefore produced significant results. For instance, the Pro-poor Options paper provides for a menu of options that is expected to ensure that benefits from tourism make a meaningful contribution to reducing poverty and benefit the communities. Of importance is also the ongoing work that is looking to 'climate proofing' the tourism sector plans and programmes, such that an industry that contributes approximately 20% to Samoa's GDP, is able to increase its resilience and that of the communities that support it, to natural hazards and climate change impacts, as it continues to increase its tourist arrivals in the country that is expected to grow at 7% annually.

The GoS in general has always showed some reluctance in accepting the word 'poverty' related to the country's economic conditions, and has always preferred to use the word 'hardship', meaning that the main difficulties are to be linked to the monetary aspects of life, i.e. not to food but rather paying bills, services, fuel. This said, the studies conducted under the Initiative have evidenced the existence of households below the poverty line and have documented significant data. ,

There is evidence that the information delivered by the studies has been taken into consideration by the GoS and has – as expected – informed the development of the Government of Samoa's 2012-2016 Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS).

The SDS 2012-2016 is in fact focused on strengthening economic resilience and encouraging inclusive growth. Apart from dedicated interventions in the priority economic sectors such as tourism and agriculture, the SDS states that investments will also continue in support of the social sectors in order to achieve a healthy Samoa and improved access to quality education and training. Also, the SDS states that infrastructure in terms of water, energy, transport, and telecommunications will continue to be supported to provide the enabling environment for businesses and improved service to the public.

Interviews held with Government stakeholders have confirmed the significance of the information received through the Pro-Poor Policy Options and its use by the GoS in building the SDS, which implicitly affirms the necessity of integrating efforts directed at most vulnerable groups as a cross-cutting issue in the State overall and sector planning. This can be considered a remarkable achievement of the Initiative, which has contributed if not to a change in mind-sets at least to an increased awareness of, and attention to, the needs of the most vulnerable.

EO 1.2 The Trade Sector Plan had been developed by specialised experts, with inputs from the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji. The first Trade, Commerce and Manufacturing Sector Plan was launched in May 2012. The plan aims to maximize domestic and foreign trade and enhance productivity, income generation opportunities and equitable sustainable livelihoods for all Samoans, including those working in the informal subsistence sector.

The intention was to serve as a roadmap for the ongoing development of trade in Samoa in light of its accession to WTO, as well as its participation in Pacific regional trade agreements such as the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement and the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations.

Stakeholders interviewed during this evaluation have made positive remarks about the TSP, which have actually been largely and successfully used by the GoS in their path towards world and regional trade integration.

Some interviewees commented that the plan has been prepared following the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS) prepared in 2010 under the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), a facility established under the WTO for the preparation of countries accessing the Organisation⁷. This does not seem a critical remark. The TSP in fact contains a cost estimate, based on three scenarios (from low to high estimates) which is to be considered a relevant addition to the studies.

EO 1.3 The Samoa Parliamentary Support Project (SPSP) was prepared following the GoS strong commitment to utilize Parliament as a place for debate, discussion and oversight. In this context, the project aimed at working with all MPs to strengthen their capacity to use parliamentary processes to more effectively engage with national development issues on one side, and with the Parliamentary Secretariat or Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly (OCLA) to streamline working modalities and efficiency of the Office.

The design of the project was executed by the UNDP MCO and PC. The project is well structured, with four main pillars – strengthening of MPs and political parties' leadership and accountability, reinforcement of law-making and committee oversight, awareness of the public about the Parliament's role and work, and streamlining of administrative support and services.

⁷ The Samoa's Trade Sector Support Programme (TSSP) was approved by the EIF Board in April 2014. This project is implemented by the Ministry of Finance, with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour (MCIL) and serves to harness existing and potential avenues for export enhancement, while tackling specific sectors of the Samoan economy. The project will enhance the linkages between supply chains in Samoa, touching upon market development in the agro-industry. Moreover, the project focuses on providing resources for attaining medium to long-term goals in the trade sector with components addressing specific sector policy and governance, tied to manufacturing and linkages to other economic sectors, private sector development and foreign trade. A DTIS update is currently ongoing to identify key areas/shortfalls that require further strengthening, taking into account the changes in the national, regional and international environment.

As anticipated in the previous sections, there were initial difficulties, reportedly due to the OCLA's firm position in keeping full control over project's activities, which led to the cancellation of the CTA position and its replacement with the hierarchically lower position of Project Manager. The consultant could not interview the OCLA stakeholders and could not see the deliverables produced under the action. An interview held with the former Speaker of the Parliament – now Minister of Agriculture – showed however that the project has produced significant results, not lastly because the action was the first one of such kind carried out in Samoa, and the Parliament highly benefitted from the expertise of Tasmanian and Australian experts selected and hired by UNDP. It has been commented that the Legislative Assembly has now at disposal a full range of methodologies and instruments able to deepen the knowledge of the MPs and to enhance work of the committees, the MPs and of the administrative structure of the Parliament, the OCLA. Also, activities aimed at increasing awareness of the population have proven to be successful; the Parliament now organises periodical open days when students and practitioners can observe how the Legislative Assembly works. This is significantly contributing to an enhanced dialogue between the legislative and the citizens, thus paving the way to increased confidence of the constituency in the State and its representatives.

Another positive effect of the action is that the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has ensured further funding support to the Samoan Parliament through a project directly implemented by the DFAT, whose duration is one year and whose content represents a continuation of the SPSP.

EO 1.4 The envisaged production of the Samoa's second National Human Development Report (NHDR) has not progressed. Already in 2013 the APR signalled problems on this output, stating that further discussions on the focus of the NHDR would take place and steps undertaken to commence production in partnership with the National University of Samoa or other entity agreed with the Government. The same happened in 2014. In 2015, the last APR of the Initiative confirms that *the production of the NHDR was left out at the request of the government, until it becomes clearer how the report would be better utilized by the government.*

EO 2.1 The main result under this output is the production of the Samoa Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (CPEIR), prepared between March and May 2012 under the overall guidance by the UNDP Asia Pacific Regional Office in Bangkok, working from the UNDP Pacific Centre in Fiji and UNDP Samoa, and oversight of the Climate Resilience Investment Coordination Unit in the Ministry of Finance (MoF) of Samoa. The document was one of five pilot CPEIRs testing a new methodology for reviewing public expenditure related to climate change, including both adaptation and mitigation, and the way in which this is guided by policies and managed by institutions. CPEIRs were conceived to respond to concerns that institutional structures for climate finance need more coherence and that better monitoring of outcomes needs to be established. This new methodology is being developed in response to increased

spending on activities and interventions relating to climate change, both from global funds and bilateral support, and from domestic resources.

Samoa was selected as a pilot country because of the strong interest and commitment of the government, and the MDG-AI was able once again in conveying GoS priorities to action.

The CPEIR has been a success, firstly because of the undisputable quality of the work, and secondly because it is still considered by the GoS a very important milestone in Samoa's path to sustainable development. It constituted a key baseline study to observe and analyse what was implemented in Samoa regarding climate change. It has been commented at the MoF that currently new methodologies are being applied in the country; the CPEIR looked only at climate relevant expenditures, while in other countries programmes are assessed according to sustainable development pillars, in a reportedly more comprehensive and usable way than the CPEIR. These developments do not compromise the overall high value of CPEIR, which has been extremely useful to start looking at expenditures and has strengthened knowledge about policies and institutional frameworks. The GoS is currently considering the need for integration and consolidation of climate change related expenditures into sectoral programmes, moving away from a project based view towards increased coordination. Finally, the CPEIR has reportedly provided the foundation for other GoS programmes, namely the Programme of Climate Resilience (PPCR) and the Integrated Country Economic Wide Adaptation to Climate Change and DRR).

EO 2.2 Under this output, the UNDP Support to the Government of Samoa's Gender Programme (SGSGS) was implemented. The purposes of the SGSGS were to provide support to: the Transformational Leadership Development Programme (TLDP) Break-Through Initiative (BTI) groups in their planning, implementation and review of their activities; the Government to complete Community Conversations (CC) sessions in every village to foster a more inclusive society, stopping violence and creating safe spaces; and the Government for the achievement of its overall gender objectives through the services of a dedicated UNDP programme specialist. Under the project various actions have been developed, all of which considered as needed and useful by relevant stakeholders.

This project has received considerable attention from the MCO, which has put particular emphasis on this aspect in its APRs. For example, the focus of 2013 Annual Work Plan was reportedly on the roll out of the Transformational Leadership for Development Programme and Community Conversations scoping missions, linked to the 'gender' aspect of the MDG-AI. In 2014, the focus was on ensuring that monitoring and evaluation of the TLDP sessions held in 2013 were carried out in accordance with the 2014 AWP; and planning for two TLDP sessions and one Community Conversations session. The 2015 APR reports three main *foci*, two of which are related to gender aspects.⁸

⁸ i) *Preparation of three (3) projects: two joint projects on the political empowerment of women and youth employment,*

The success of activities aimed at reducing gender gaps and VAW is to be noted. Activities held under the TLDP and CC have been extremely appreciated by participants, who came from a broad range of professions in the country at the policy making levels (e.g. Government CEO and ACEO levels, academia, media, churches, NGOs, UN Agencies, etc.). Training was also provided to a number of agents of change, selected on the basis of their past work and activities in promoting gender equality, human rights and bringing about change in their areas of focus. They were trained to become special leaders in their communities, to bring about a change in redressing VAW and inequality.

One of the major successes of the action is that in 2014 the CC have been adopted by the MoWCSD as a tool for the roll out of its work programmes in the villages, and from then on they are funded under the Ministry's budget. Through this, the UNDP has gained further credibility and reputation among GoS stakeholders on gender related themes; and it is not to be excluded that the choice of the UN system for support to gender and youth issues in the overall framework of aid development in Samoa, as described in the Relevance section, was also due to the high consideration enjoyed by UNDP in this sector.

Another significant achievement under this output has been the Increasing the Political Participation of Women in Samoa (IPPWS) Joint Programme with UN Women. The programme, which started being implemented in 2015 with the target of increasing the number of female MPs in the Parliament, was funded mainly by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT) and UNDP with some funding from UN Women. UNDP passed the amount of US\$ 190,000 (45% of the total amount of the funds) to UN Women for implementing one of the components, which were: 1. Outreach and education on the increased political participation of women, 2. Working with political parties, 3. Capacity building for women candidates, 4. Mentoring and support for MPs on Gender. The project was aimed at taking opportunities offered by the 2013 Constitutional Amendment that introduced a 10 per cent quota of women representatives into the national Legislative Assembly. At the time of the project start, only three of the forty-nine MPs were women, and no parties in Samoa had provisions in support of women candidates. The action was realised through a wide range of activities, from broadcasting on TV and radio of special programmes to increase citizens' confidence in women candidates, to technical support to female candidates on how to run a campaign, to community actions and workshops. As reported in the 2015 APR, at the end of 2015, *components 1 and 2 had been carried out and at least 19 women publicly declared their intention to run for the March 2016 General Elections. Some of these women stated that the political training that they had attended had impacted on their final decisions to run in the elections.... According to the Acting Electoral Commissioner, the IPPWS had some influence on this result as it was the only other large-scale programme at the time*

respectively, and a project on providing support to the national gender programme with view on the up-scaling of the Community Conversations to a nation-wide level; ii) Provision of on-going funding to the TLDP Break-Through Initiative (BTI) groups. (APR 2015)

addressing voter education alongside the Electoral Commission. Interviewees have confirmed that the programme brought about considerable changes in attitudes and mind-sets of target groups. The results of the 2016 elections saw five women MPs – a result which some considered not relevant, but a good result in general terms. The action is continuing, with UN Women still working on the establishment of women caucuses and on further support to elected female MPs. It is important that there is general awareness of the need for further support in this vital aspect of good governance.

Finally, efforts were also made towards finalizing the UN Gender Equality Framework for Samoa by UNDP and UN Women, resulting in the production of the UN Gender Equality Framework for Samoa being finalized and adopted as the umbrella under which different UN Agencies and Entities would implement gender equality work in parallel.

With the existence of the Framework, UNDP completed the preparation of the as well as an updated version of the UNDP Support to the TLDP and CC programmes project document - both to be signed and implemented in the first quarter 2015.

EO 2.3 The expression of this output is the Youth Employment Programme (YEP), developed under the Samoa 'One United Nations' arrangements but in practical terms prepared and implemented by the UNDP MCO. The programme is in its early implementation phase, with the building of a database containing profiles of youth jobs to be matched with available jobs on the market. Another component will be to encourage youth entrepreneurship and the establishment of a business incubator for young people. The Cabinet has approved the document and currently advertisements are being placed for designing the project. Small grants will also be distributed **and will include** seed funding, technical assistance on technical and financial issues and financial services for beneficiaries of grants. The technical assistance part will be focused on mentoring activities and actions aimed at improving an enabling environment for small enterprises, collective marketing for products, and other services. The Ministry is currently working on the extension of the small grants to women and people with disabilities, in order to expand the social impact of the initiative.

Although ILO is not directly involved in this particular programme, other actions are coordinated by the GoS and there are reportedly 'no overlapping' between ILO and UNDP actions on youth. However, it is perceived among state stakeholders that the aid delivery modalities of the UN system are not unified yet and that 'less competition and more coordination' would be advisable to create synergies and increase credibility of the system.

In general terms, the effectiveness of the MDG-AI has been high. Most of the expected objectives have been achieved, and envisaged actions have produced quality results in terms of better knowledge, awareness and coordination of the GoS on targeted issues. Also, the project has favoured dialogue and reflection on several themes, and has boosted further efforts to streamline

working modalities of different parts of the GoS. Finally, actions at community level have significantly contributed to stimulate a change in mind-sets and attitudes towards some aspects – regarding gender, or knowledge of the state powers’ working mechanisms – which had not been taken into consideration previously.

Q6. Were the chosen implementation mechanisms and instruments of MDG-AI conducive for achieving the expected results?

Implementation mechanisms

The project was implemented under a direct support to NIM modality, meaning that UNDP implemented all project activities directly in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, Aid Coordination Unit, and in keeping with the provisions of the description of UNDP Country Office Support Services, as explained in the Letter of Agreement (LOA) between UNDP and the Government, attached to the ProDoc. The UNDP was directly paid by the GoS with the addition of a one off 7% fee for these services.

The ProDoc justifies the choice of the NIM modality by explaining the greater flexibility of this modality in drawing upon several different sources of funds, both core and non-core, and in the sourcing and recruitment of international technical consultants.

The project envisaged guidance from the Sub-Regional South-South Cooperation and Capacity Development Unit in Bangkok. The CPAP 2008-2012 disposes that coordination and joint work and funding should be conducted so that the Unit would provide funding for MCPD/UNDAF programmes in the areas of: *(a) policy and programme formulation and implementation; (b) MDG small grants for community-based sustainable development initiatives; (c) management-capacity development; (d) planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation and auditing; and (e) documentation of good practices/lessons, communications and advocacy.* This arrangement is stated in the ProDoc. Such decision was aimed at reducing transaction costs for Government and development partners, and most importantly at sharing best practices and lessons learnt making use of the resources and experiences available in the region.

It appears in reality that inputs from the Bangkok Unit have been quite limited and that the biggest contributions to the project have been provided by the Pacific Centre in Fiji. This office was largely involved in the project implementation and has participated in the preparation of important and innovative deliverables, such as the CPEIR and the Trade Sector Plans.

The high knowledge of local cultures and mind-sets of the Pacific Centre also helped minimising the risks of frictions among different views, which is quite common in development contexts if project planning comes from central units and is not locally rooted.

Tools and Instruments

The project has made large use of a variety of tools which is worthwhile exploring for their innovative character and their capacity to produce impact at community level.

TLDP and BTI

These tools were largely used in the *Support to the Government of Samoa's Gender Objectives* project, which is part of the MDG-AI.

The Transformational Leadership Development Programme (TLDP) is defined as *a process that brings about deep and sustainable change in thinking and action. The methodology has been applied worldwide to impact on a range of issues. It is based on cutting edge, new generation thinking and draws its tools and techniques from organizational behaviour, sociology, psychology, development practices and other disciplines*⁹.

In Samoa, the programme has been designed to create Breakthrough Initiatives (BTIs), i.e. small projects to address the domains of gender inequality, violence and discrimination. BTI seed funds were also provided by the UNDP. The purpose of funds was to “kick---start” or progress BTI activities, rather than to carry out whole BTI projects. They also allowed BTI groups to pilot part of a project, to test an approach, to collect information and identify lessons learned. Guidelines for Seed Funds are simple: the majority of funds should have been spent on delivery of the activity and directly address the gender/social issue the group was dealing with; there should be a contribution from the groups included in the work plan and budget.

The TLDP is a Learning-in-Action process, and was delivered in three sessions with intensive intersession work between each session. Each session was three-to-four days long, with an intersession period of six-to-eight weeks, when participants were expected to create and implement their Breakthrough Initiatives which were presented in the next session. As reported in the second TLDP report, many participants had made progress with their BTIs – for example, the media team had managed to unite all the media in Samoa – TV, print and radio - to come together as a united platform to address domestic violence in Samoa; the team working with arts [Tiapapata Arts Centre] had already started using art therapy to help children from the Samoa Victim Support Group to deal with their trauma. The mission report observes how the session generated many important conversations regarding violence in Samoan society. *Breaking the silence and denial, participants openly discussed issues such as the culture of using violence to 'discipline' children and the long term impact of this.*

Under this evaluation an interview was held with one of the participants, working at the Tiapapata Arts Centre. She confirmed that the TLDP and subsequently the BTI implemented by the Centre were extremely positive experiences; in particular, the TLDP was defined ‘illuminating’ in

⁹ Report on the First TLDP, 2013.

disclosing how power systems work inside us, and in its capacity of breaking up stereotyped attitudes and thoughts.

The BTI at Tiapapata

The initiative, amounting at WST\$3,000 provided by the GoS (MWCSO), consisted of:

1. Art therapy sessions designed to improve the mental health, confidence and self-esteem of victims of abuse and people living with mental health challenges while at the same time teaching skills to awaken a creative impulse that can lead to income generation;
2. Promotion of awareness and understanding of art therapy as a modality to improve emotional intelligence.

Activities realised under this BTI were: 1. BTI activity Fa'aliga o Lagona (Expressions of Emotion), providing weekly art classes at the Tiapapata Art Centre for young female victims of abuse sheltered at the Samoa Victim Support Group House of Hope; 2. weekly art therapy programme with a group of mainly girls and young women from urban Apia (Lelata and Fa'ato'ia villages); 3. Weekly art therapy workshops at the Goshen Mental Health Trust premises in Apia; 4. a weekly art programme with students at Aoga Fiamalamalama; 5. Documenting activities with various groups using high definition videos for the purpose of a documentary film on the BTI project.

Reportedly, seed funds were used to purchase art materials from Samoa Stationery and Books used by the Tiapapata Art Centre to provide opportunities for the various groups to explore their creativity in an expressive arts programme.

The Arts centre worked with 20 of the 60 young women part of the Samoa Victim Support Group on art therapy. Their works were reportedly very symbolic in transmitting the feelings derived from the participants' personal experiences. The Initiative was concluded with the "Fa'aliga o Lagona -Expressions of Emotion" Art Exhibition, where artworks made by participants from Samoa Victim Support Group, Goshen Mental Health Trust, the Mental Health Unit of the National Health Services, Aoga Fiamalamalama, and the Lelata/Fa'ato'ia youth were exhibited at the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development. The exhibition was installed in time for the opening of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence and, with the exception of pottery displayed on tables, remained up for the full sixteen days.

The BTI also funded the preparation of the "Fa'aliga o Lagona - Expressions of Emotion" documentary film, made of footage captured in art classes over the period from October 2013 to December 2014 by one of the Tiapapata Arts Centre owners, Galumalemana Steven Percival, who is a well-known intellectual, artist and filmmaker in Samoa. The footage was subsequently used to produce a 20-minute documentary film on the Art Therapy BTI Project). The title of the film, Fa'aliga o Lagona (Expressions of Emotion), was Inspired by the TLDP. The Consultant will watch

the movie when technological means (a DVD player) will be available; written information made available explains that the film features interviews with key people who subsequently became involved with the project. The Asia Australia Mental Health Symposium also facilitated art therapy workshops at the Tiapapata Art Centre.

The documentary film described above entered the 2014 Samoan National Human Rights Award and was selected as the winner for the Audio Category.

This BTI is an example of how well a modest fund (WS\$ 3,000) can produce tangible results and inspire a renewed sense of dignity in people affected by violence. This is also a witness of the power of art therapy in healing deep psychological wounds, as we will see later on under Community Conversations.

In addition to the TLDP, a separate Training of Trainers (TOT) process was designed to develop a cadre of TLDP facilitators in Samoa, and is being held back-to-back with each TLDP session. Two days of TOT were held after each TLDP session.

Mission reports of the TLDP sessions are well prepared and accurate, and above all they provide a feeling of the change people feel after having experienced the session. It seems that all participants have benefitted from the TLDP in terms of increased confidence, trust, knowledge and a positive approach in dealing with gender issues. An anonymous wrote the following comment after a session:

I would like to say thank you so much to both of you as I was one of the people who was against Gender Equality because I thought it will ruin my spiritual belief but now I know it is deeper and more complex than ever¹⁰.

The first mission reports concludes with a comment on the UNDP work which is perhaps worthwhile quoting: *we would like to suggest that UNDP play a supportive role to provide the necessary information to the participants of the TLDP and members of the Core Group. It is now important that people get into action themselves, decide what strategies and partnership they need to develop to work on their BTIs and manage and take ownership of the process on their own. We recommend UNDP do not get into managing, advising, coordinating or planning on people's behalf. In this process of building transformational leaders, people need to think and act with full freedom.*

The TLDP and the BTI have been the subject of a discussion held with UNDP and main stakeholders and participants in May 2014. It was stated that while the TLDP is highly relevant to Samoa's national policy environment, the effectiveness of TLDP was mixed and was higher where challenging themes were the focus of the actions. One of the biggest merits of the TLDP was its

¹⁰ IBIDEM.

impact, in the establishment and work of 14 BTI groups, and their high ownership and commitment in the initiatives. A concerning issue was the sharp decline of participants, from more than 100 in the initial phase to 54 in 2014; the cause of such decline is not clear to the consultant.

In any case, given the high importance attributed to TLDP by the UNDP and the MoWCSD, it was decided to run other sessions in 2015 and to add a full-time TLDP/CC Coordinator position to work with MoWCSD, UNDP and BTI Groups.

The resonance of BTI has been very satisfactory. Notably, the Media BTI Group held a presentation at the Australia High Commissioners Residence in October 2013, inviting a number of key members of the community, and gained a lot of exposure through the local press. Also, the MoWCSD BTI Group arranged a March on 25th November 2013, launching 16 Days of Activism and linking in with Orange Day (which raises awareness on gender violence).

CC

Community Conversations were another very effective modality for working at community level on themes which are still considered sensitive by the local population. The aim of the Community Conversations sessions was *to foster a more inclusive society, stopping violence and creating safe spaces*¹¹.

A visit was conducted under this evaluation to the community of the village Aufaga. Women invited to the visit were very positive about the significance and impact of their Community Conversation, where art performances focused on representation of gender violence were presented. This type of approach is to be praised, because it allows to touch upon sensitive issues in an indirect though deep way, able to directly speak to people's hearts and emotions and allowing victims of violence to go through a sort of catharsis. The performance comprised dances, a drama and various other pieces of art and was followed by at least 700 people from that and other neighbouring villages.

The first Community Conversations training was planned for November 2014. To date 41 CCs have been completed and the MoWCSD is planning further conversations, following its decision to adopt CCs as a work modality and directly fund this initiative.

Q7. *How the project can further expand its benefits?*

The project has produced already considerable benefits to the country and its citizens. It is worthwhile noting that tools and methodologies provided to the GoS have been largely appreciated, adopted, and used for further work. If environment and trade related issues are now dealt with in the framework of other programmes and further streamlined, there is a need to expand the work done at community level through TLDP, BTIs and CCs on women political

¹¹ ProDoc, *UNDP Support to the Government of Samoa's Gender Programme*.

participation, gender equality and VAW issues. It is hoped that the MCO and the UN Women will continue working on these significant issues through the same tools which have proven to be highly effective.

4.4 SUSTAINABILITY

Definition: The benefits of the project related activities that are likely to continue after the Project fund has been exhausted

Q8. To what extent have outcomes of MDG-AI been embedded in the country's structures?

As examined in the previous sections, all outcomes have been utilised and are being used by the GoS to further streamline its policies and strategies.

The TSP and the CPEIR have provided a quality basis for continuing work on environmental and trade related issues. Even if some of the approaches adopted in the studies and reviews produced, they have constituted a significant step towards developing sound policies and working mechanisms.

The support to the Samoan Parliament project has provided a full set of knowledge and operational tools which are being extensively used, and has offered the opportunity to continue working with the legislative. The fact that DFAT is now directly funding a project with the Parliament of Samoa does not decrease the value and importance of the initiative, which has been the first one of such kind in the country.

The IPPWS and SGSGP projects have contributed to create a favourable environment for advancing women's positioning in the political, economic and social life of the country. In particular, the IPPWS project took opportunity of the momentum, combining forthcoming elections with the constitutional amendment on increase of women's quota in the Parliament, thus maximising impact and results.

Innovative and highly effective techniques offered by the TLDP, BTI and CC have showed to the GoS that further work on sensitive themes is needed. This resulted in the decision of the Government to adopt the CC techniques and fund such initiatives from their own budget.

The YEP project seems also promising in terms of sustainability, although it is premature to make an assessment in this phase of the initiative, which is only in its starting phase. In future, more coordination with ILO or other relevant UN agencies would ensure better sustainability and durability of results.

Better coordination with other UN agencies would also be essential in order to provide an 'unified' message to the country. It has been observed by some interviewees that sometimes there is discontinuity or even contradiction among policies and priorities of the UN system in Samoa.

While the evaluation cannot provide an informed judgment on this question, it might be advisable to reflect on this issue and make appropriate decisions if this is the case.

Q9. Does the GoS have any plans to continue delivering the stream of benefits and if so are they likely to materialize?

As said in above sections, the Government of Samoa is oriented to continue enhancing efficiency and inter-sectoral coordination both in the use of internal resources and in its agenda on development aid effectiveness. Results showed in the MDG-AI implementation have witnessed the high interest of the GoS in outputs and outcomes of the Initiative, which have been extensively analysed and used. The extent to which results and benefits will continue being taken into consideration in the future is unknown. In the case of the CPEIR, we have seen how the methodology used in the review has been thoroughly analysed and, used, allowing the GoS to learn and use this knowledge to boost other methodologies that were considered innovative and promising. The pro-poor option papers have been the basis for the building of the new SDS; however, the rapidly changing context (be it economic, political or environmental) which characterises our historical period might in future suggest new orientations in the next Strategy. Finally, efforts made by UNDP on gender issues are to be considered still highly valid. The GoS has acknowledged this – not lastly by adopting the CCs – and seems determined to carry out further work.

Q10. Assessment of: financial, environmental, socio-economic risks for sustainability

Financial risks

The transition of Samoa from LDC to MIC, completed in late 2014, is not considered a concern by most GoS stakeholders interviewed during this evaluation. In fact, the UN General Assembly, in resolution 59/209, reconfirmed that graduation from least developed country status should not result in any disruption to the graduating country of its development plans, programmes and projects, and reemphasized the importance of ensuring a "smooth transition" for graduating LDCs¹². The notion of smooth transition implies that the loss of international (bilateral and multilateral) support measures granted by virtue of LDC status should not harm the graduating country in its development process.

Since 2009, when the request for delayed graduation was approved, the Government led a consultative process with all its development partners to discuss what assistance could be expected to support graduation. A *Smooth Transition Strategy* was issued in 2014, and assessments were made on the impact of the transition on the local economy. For instance, it was reported that graduation would result in the loss of preferential market access under the Duty Free Quota Free arrangements; however, it was concluded that Samoa has a limited range of

¹² SAMOA'S SMOOTH TRANSITION STRATEGY REPORT, 2014.

products for export and as such its fisheries products to the USA will continue to benefit under the GSP scheme after graduation. Also, the GoS was prepared to minimise the negative effects of graduation with adequate negotiations with main trade partners; as an example, China agreed to extend zero tariff treatment on noni juice and other agro-processing products beyond until 2017. At the time of the Strategy, discussions were under way with the Government of Japan on a similar arrangement for noni juice, fish exports and organic products such as honey, vanilla and cocoa which would see rise in tariffs on graduation.

The continuation of activities related to gender equality is perhaps one of the factors at risk. Community Conversations are only one of the instruments to continue addressing some of these issues, but it cannot be the only one. Real changes in attitudes and mind-sets can be achieved only through continuous work and it is hoped that the UN system will continue collaborating with the Government and with the civil society.

Other sectors where the project has contributed do not seem affected by financial risks: funds seem available for the trade sector through the EIF and other donors.

Environmental risks

There are no environmental risks associated with the Initiative, which on the contrary has worked on climate change issues. The other components of the project do not affect environmental themes, apart from the support to the trade sector; the GoS is however streamlining its environmental policies and it is hoped that attention will be put on the environmental aspects of trade. The efforts of the Government to enhance inter-governmental coordination and its recognition of the transversal, cross- sectoral character of environment related issues leave good hope. According to information received during this evaluation, more attention should be put on the fisheries sector where fishing with nets – largely in use among foreign importers – might represent a danger for numerous marine species of the rich and precious sea of the country.

Socio-economic risks

As analysed above, the recognition by the GoS of the existence of aspects of hardship and poverty in Samoa has led to increased interest in the situation of the most vulnerable layers of the population. This shall be considered as one of the merits of the MDG-AI. Another example is the inclusion of women and people with disabilities in the groups eligible for small grants under the YEP. It has also been confirmed that the state agenda will from now on consider the needs of vulnerable groups as a crosscutting issue, which will be taken into consideration in sectoral planning.

5. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 MAIN FINDINGS

The table below provides a concise recapitulation of the answers to evaluation questions.

Criteria	Low				High
Relevance					
Efficiency					
Effectiveness					
Sustainability					

Relevance

The Project has been highly relevant to UNDP policies and priorities, and is aligned with the overall strategies and outcomes indicated in the UNDP Strategic Plans at global, regional and country level. The initiative has also been relevant to country policies, to which envisaged actions have provided substantial contributions. The project formulation, although quite ‘spontaneous’, is an example of how a project based on the expressed priorities and wishes of a country government can promote and favour commitment, participation and ultimately durable results. This has been in actual terms a demand-driven project, where all actions were conceived on the basis of what the GoS proposed, and were then integrated into the UN strategic frameworks. The articulation of the outcomes is well structured and it is balanced with regard to the distribution of resources across the different expected outputs. Finally, the project has been implemented in close cooperation with the UNDP Pacific Centre and the Bangkok Regional Centre, thus demonstrating that joint implementation can produce very good results.

Efficiency

From the available documentation it seems that project implementation has been smooth and that no major issues are to be reported in this sense. Delays occurred throughout the project period were not due to UNDP shortcomings, but to external circumstances (the cyclone Evan) and to divergences occurred between the UNDP and some stakeholders (i.e. the OCLA); the latter were however settled and the initial delays did not limit the effectiveness of the action. Finally, the use of resources has been good, with reasonable unit costs and timely disbursements.

Effectiveness

The expected objectives were achieved in a very satisfactory way. Continuous dialogue with partners and quality of expertise were undoubtedly appreciated by beneficiaries. In many cases,

the Initiative has enhanced cooperation among relevant stakeholders (i.e. in the gender related actions) and has introduced new tools which – when properly adapted and divulged –will effectively contribute to expanding awareness of citizens and changes in attitudes. The actions on trade, parliament and environment have stimulated further reflection and streamlining of policies. The pro-poor option papers have strongly contributed to the development of strategic thinking about the conditions of the most vulnerable groups and have offered a solid basis for streamlining this cross-cutting issue across various sectors.

Sustainability

This is one of the rare cases when a project has achieved good sustainability. This is surely due to the good quality of deliverables and outputs, but also to the fact that the demand-driven approach used in its formulation is undoubtedly a guarantee of further use of project results and their embedding into national policies and actions. Ownership was in fact high, thanks to the continuous dialogue with partners and to the alignment of the projects with national priorities and areas of cooperation. Also, several actions implemented by the MDG-AI are now being funded by other sources; this is to be considered an achievement. More work needs to be carried out on themes such as VAW, and it is hoped that the UN system will continue cooperation with the GoS on this issue. Finally, financial sustainability does not seem a big issue at the moment, given the very pro-active GoS approach in designing and negotiating areas of cooperation with development partners.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

1. The project has effectively stimulated and improved policy and strategy streamlining in many sectors, from trade to environment, institutional strengthening, and gender equality themes.
2. Although the intervention presents a wide range of themes, issues and activities, these have been well aligned with priorities and coherently responded to needs.
3. Sustainability is good and most project outputs have been incorporated into country's policies, strategies and operational mechanisms.
4. Continuity is required in order to take advantage of results and outputs developed under the Project, in particular on gender issues and VAW. These achievements need to be consolidated through further cooperation.
5. Coordination with other UN agencies operating in the country should be further strengthened to ensure unity of messages delivered, efficiency and effectiveness, and to achieve higher credibility.

5.3 LESSONS LEARNT

6. The demand-driven approach used in the formulation of the Initiative has very effectively contributed to enhance commitment, ownership and embedding of the project's results into national practices, policies and working mechanisms.
7. The success of the project has also demonstrated that the project-based approach – which is currently largely criticised among development partners - can be successful if the actions are demand-driven.
8. The relative rapidity and flexibility of the Initiative in addressing selected areas have also contributed to UNDP's better credibility and reputation, and have minimised the shortcomings of the UN system aid delivery mechanisms, which are in general considered lengthy and bureaucratic.

5.4 LINKING CONCLUSIONS/ LESSONS LEARNT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions/Lessons Learnt	Recommendations	To whom?
The project has effectively stimulated and improved policy and strategy streamlining in many sectors, from trade to environment, institutional strengthening, gender equality themes.	No need for recommendations	
Although the intervention presents a wide range of themes, issues and activities, these have been well aligned with priorities and coherently responded to needs.	No need for recommendations	
Sustainability is good and most project outputs have been incorporated into country's policies, strategies and operational mechanisms.	No need for recommendations	
Continuity is required in order to take advantage of results	Continue funding activities on gender equality and VAW using innovative	UNDP MCO, PC, UN Women

Conclusions/Lessons Learnt	Recommendations	To whom?
<p>and outputs developed under the Project, in particular on gender issues and VAW. These achievements need to be consolidated through further cooperation.</p>	<p>methodologies and tools, such as those used in the Initiative (TLDP, BTI)</p>	
<p>Coordination with other UN agencies operating in the country should be further strengthened to ensure unity of messages delivered, efficiency and effectiveness, and to achieve higher credibility.</p>	<p>Explore opportunities to conduct joint programmes with other UN agencies, i.e. ILO</p>	<p>MCO</p>
<p>The demand-driven approach used in the formulation of the Initiative has very effectively contributed to enhance commitment, ownership and embedding of the project's results into national practices, policies and working mechanisms.</p>	<p>Devise a special fund for demand-driven projects and initiatives such as the Policy Advice Centres, which operate in many developing countries</p>	<p>UNDP HQ, PC, MCO</p>
<p>The success of the project has also demonstrated that the project-based approach – which is currently largely criticised among development partners – can be successful if the actions are demand-driven.</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>UNDP HQ, PC, MCO</p>
<p>The relative rapidity and flexibility of the Initiative in addressing selected areas have also contributed to UNDP better credibility and reputation, and have minimised the shortcomings of the UN system aid delivery mechanisms, which are in</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>UNDP HQ, PC, MCO</p>

Conclusions/Lessons Learnt	Recommendations	To whom?
general considered lengthy and bureaucratic.		

6. LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1 Literature and Documentation consulted

Annex 2 List of Meetings

Annex 3 Presentation held on 28 April at MCO

ANNEX 1. LITERATURE AND DOCUMENTATION CONSULTED

Available documents
MDGs Acceleration Initiative Project Document
Budget allocations, expenditures
Trade Sector Plan
Concept Note of Parliamentary Support action
Grant Facility Guideline for Break Through Initiative (BTI) Groups
Parliamentary Support Programme (SPSP) Prodoc
Climate Public Expenditure Institutional Review (CPIER)
Youth Employment Program (YEP) Prodoc
UNDP Support to Samoa Gender Program Prodoc
Pro-Poor Economic Report
7 Pro-Poor Policy Option Papers
3 Mission Reports by TLDP Consultants
Annual Progress Reports (3). Includes Combined Delivery Reports (CDRs) and AWP, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015
Evaluation of Transformational Leadership Development Programme (TLDP) by National University of Samoa, 2014
Outcome Evaluation of TLDP by Consultant, Gatoloai Tili Afamasaga, 2015
Mid-Term Evaluation Report of SPSP 2013 (IPU)
Samoa Ala Mai BTI Acquittal Report
Tiapapata Art Centre Acquittal Report
SDS, 2008-2011
SDS, 2012-2016
Samoa Smooth Transition Strategy, 2014
ADB Hardship Study of Samoa
Poverty Report 2009 based on 2008 HIES Data

Poverty Report 2016 based on 2013/14 HIES Data
Pacific UNDAF, 2013-2017
Pacific UNDP Sub-Regional Development Programme(SRPD), 2013-2017
UNDAF, 2008-2012
Samoa Country Programme Action Plan, 2008-2012
Samoa UNDAF Action Plan, 2013-2017
UNDAF Action Plan Matrices, 2013-2017
UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014-2017

ANNEX 2. LIST OF MEETINGS

Day- Date	Time	Persons to meet	Details
Saturday, 9/4/16		Arrive Apia	Tanoa Tusitala Hotel
Sunday, 10/4/16		Free	Tanoa Tusitala Hotel
Inception Phase			
Monday, 11/4/16	2pm	Introductory briefing session with DRR/OIC, Jaime Aguinaga and Georgina Bonin, ARR-GPRU + Trevor Saaga, GPRU Programme Associate	
Tuesday, 12/4/16	9-12pm	Document review, UNDP MCO	
Wednesday, 13/4/16		Document review	
Thursday, 14/4/16		Document review	
	3pm	Inception Phase report by DM.	
Field Phase			
Monday, 18/4/16		Document review	
Tuesday, 19/4/16			
	10am	Gatoloai Ms. Tili Afamasaga,	Joint Project Coordinator, Increasing the Political Participation of Women in Samoa (IPPWS) Project, UNDP
	4pm	Dr. Susan Faoagali	former UNDP consultant: Gender, Youth Development & Human Rights Specialist, UNDP
	11am	Suisala Ms. Mele Maualaivao	National UN Women Coordinator, Apia
Wednesday, 20/4/16			

	10am	Silafau Paul Meredith and Salote Meredith	Respective Consultants, Economists. Call Salote on Mobile: 7232369 for venue
	12:30m	Georgina Bonin	ARR-GPRU, UNDP MCO, Apia
Thursday, 21/4/16			
	10:30am	Ms. Salote Meredith & Silafau Paul Meredith	Trade Sector Plan Coordinator, MCIL & Economist
Friday, 22/4/16			
	9:00 am	Mr. Henry Tunupopo	ACEO, Trade Dvn, MFAT. Follow-up with Henry. 3 rd Floor Government Building.
	10:30am	Ms. Litarā Taulealo	ACEO, Climate Change Office, MOF, 3 rd Floor Central Bank Building.
	2:30pm	Dr. Lalotoa Mulitalo	Parliamentary Legal Counsel under SPSP. OCLA, Tuanaimato
	4pm	Ms. Lita Lui	ACEO, MOF, Aid Coordination & Debt Management, 3 rd Floor, Central Bank Building
Monday, 25/4/16			
	10:30am	Tomasi Peni	National Coordinator, ILO, UN House, Matautu-uta Phone: 27473
	11am	Leiaua Mr. Henry Ah Ching	ACEO, Planning & Policy Dvn, MOF
	2pm	Peseta Ms. Margaret Malua	CEO, MCIL
Tuesday, 26/4/16			
	9:30am	Bob Ale. Focal Point for SPSP	Australian DFAT, Australian High Commission, Beach Road

	10:30am	Fuimapoao Ms. Beth Onesemo-Tuilaepa & Ms. Louisa Apelu	CEO, MWCSO & ACEO, Women's Dvn, MWCSO-Trevor to liaise with Tali on timing please
	11am	Hon. Laauliolemalietoa Polataivao Fosi	Former Speaker & now Minister of MA
Wednesday, 27/4/16	10am	Peseta Ms. Noumea Simi	CEO MFAT
	3pm	Galumalemana Steve Percival	Tiapapata Arts Centre
Thursday, 28/4/16			
	3pm	Introduction and Preliminary Report session with Ms. Lizbeth Cullity	UNDP RR
Friday, 29/4/16	9-12am	Lemalu Ms. Nele Leilua + Community Visit to Aufaga	Samoa ala Mai BTI.
	1-2pm	Wendy Percival	Tiapapata Arts Centre
Synthesis Phase			
Monday, 2/5/16		Report writing	
Tuesday, 3/5/16		Report writing	
Wed., 4/5/16		Report writing	
Thurs., 4/5/16		Report writing	
Fri., 5/5/16		Report writing	
Final Phase			
Mon., 9/5/16		Arrival in Italy	
Tues., 9/5/16	tbc	Skype Call: Mr. Dyfan Jones	Regional Governance Team Leader, UNDP MCO, Suva, Fiji
	tbc	Kevin Petrini	UNDP Pacific Officer re. CPEIR
Wed., 10/5/16	tbc	Skype call: Mr. Ahmed Moustafa	Regional MDGs & Poverty Reduction Team Leader, UNDP MCO, Suva, Fiji

ANNEX 3. PRESENTATION HELD AT MCO, 28 APRIL 2016



Presentation MDG
Acceleration Initiative