



Deep Dive Evaluation of Climate Change, Disaster Resilience and Food Security in the Pacific: Final Report

Prepared for the Australian Volunteers Program by the
Institute for Sustainable Futures

November 2021



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Citation

Gero, A., Megaw, T., Winterford, K. and Cunningham, R. (2021) Deep Dive Evaluation of Climate change, disaster resilience and food security in the Pacific. Prepared for the Australian Volunteers Program.

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Acknowledgements

Authors wish to thank all evaluation participants for generously giving their time, insights and suggestions during this evaluation. We are particularly appreciative, given the timing of the COVID-19 response.

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Executive Summary

This document presents the findings of an evaluation of the Australian Volunteers Program's thematic impact area of 'Climate change, disaster resilience and food security' in the Pacific. This evaluation is the third and final 'Deep Dive' which explore the three thematic impact areas for the Program.¹

The evaluation was conducted by the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF), University of Technology Sydney (UTS) from May to November 2021. The evaluation design for the Deep Dive evaluations was revised to adhere to travel restrictions related to COVID-19 in both Australia and the Pacific.

The Global Program Strategy for the Australian Volunteers Program (the Program) sets out the three impact areas to which the Australia Volunteers Program contributes. As described in the formative evaluation findings², these impact areas are understood as just one lens through which to assess contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program. This evaluation focuses on the impact area of Climate change, disaster resilience and food security. Sub-themes within this impact area, as well as examples of overlaps of the impact areas, are provided in Annex 2.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the outcomes and contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to the impact area of Climate change, disaster resilience and food security (CC-DR-FS). Four features of the evaluation define its scope and provide guidance on how evaluation findings should be interpreted. These features are: (1) Partner Organisations (POs) are the primary unit of analysis; (2) the evaluation uses the impact area of Climate change, disaster resilience and food security as a means to explore the Program's impact through the Australian Volunteers Program's support for POs, and to explore the progress of POs toward achieving their development objectives; (3) the evaluation focuses on the Pacific region, though POs in Pacific countries participated to different extents in the evaluation; and (4) the outcomes and impacts of the Australian Volunteers Program are not assessed; rather we assess POs' progress towards achieving their development objectives, and in turn the contribution of the Australian Volunteer Program to supporting the POs in this progress. Evaluation methods included Social Network Analysis (SNA); online quantitative and qualitative surveys; systems mapping of Climate change, disaster resilience and food security in the Pacific; (remote) key informant interviews; and document reviews.

The evaluation identified impacts in the area of CC-DR-FS through the work of POs and contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program. Enhanced resilience to the impacts of climate change were reported, as a result of POs work in disaster risk reduction and longer-term climate and disaster resilience. Improved access to water and sanitation for Pacific communities was described by POs and volunteers. Water security was the focus of work for several POs, both in terms of improving physical access through the supply of water tanks, and also increased community knowledge about the impact climate change will have on access to water. POs also contribute to improving gender and social inclusion outcomes in Pacific communities.

The evaluation revealed two main ways that volunteers contributed to these impacts. First, technical roles of volunteers provided POs with the ability to more effectively support beneficiaries on issues relating to CC-DR-FS. Second, volunteers contributed to broader organisational strengthening of POs. Both approaches were acknowledged by POs as supporting progress in CC-DR-FS.

Informed by the evaluation findings, ten practical and strategic recommendations are offered to the Australian Volunteers Program and DFAT. Whilst the recommendations are primarily focused on the Pacific context and the thematic impact area of Climate change, disaster resilience and food security, they incorporate lessons that can be applied in other country contexts. The recommendations are intended to strengthen the impact and sustainability outcomes of the Program, in line with the purpose of the impact areas, which is to act as a lens through which to view the Program's contribution to CC-DR-FS in the Pacific, and ways to "demonstrate how the program can multiply the impact of Australian aid".

¹ Inclusive Economic Growth; Human Rights; and Climate Change, Disaster Resilience and Food Security

² See: <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/avp-impact-areas-formative-evaluation-final-report.aspx>

Recommendations relating to Program management:

1. The Australian Volunteers Program should more effectively connect with other CC-DR-FS related DFAT funded programs³, to leverage and consolidate existing Australian funded activities to strengthen impact in CC-DR-FS.
2. The Australian Volunteers Program should build, maintain and deepen relationships with influential Pacific regional organisations (e.g. SPC, SPREP, UNDP, PIFS), recognising the strategic roles these regional organisations play in connecting and supporting POs in CC-DR-FS within and across countries in the Pacific. This could be achieved by Australian Volunteers Program in-country staff and POs participating in regional events, conferences and dialogue on CC-DR-FS facilitated by regional organisations, and engaging regional organisations in any networking events with POs.
3. Where the CC-DR-FS thematic impact area is a priority within a country context, the Australian Volunteers Program should sharpen focus on selected sub-themes. This sharpened focus may be decided at the Pacific regional or country level, enabling more in-depth engagement for greater impact. Flexibility of assignments outside a narrower focus should be supported so long as they have a strategic contribution to CC-DR-FS.
4. The Australian Volunteers Program should provide capacity building opportunities for Pacific in-country Australian Volunteers Program staff on climate change, to improve support to POs in sustaining the continuation of PO development outcomes. Capacity building opportunities may relate to risk informed development and the integration of climate change considerations into sectoral programming, and could be provided by Australian-based organisations, DFAT-funded programs or regional partners such as SPC or SPREP.
5. The Australian Volunteers Program should begin to consider integrating climate change and risk informed development within volunteer assignments, in line with DFAT policy to integrate climate change across the government's development assistance program. This recommendation provides another entry point for integrating climate change across the Program, alongside pathways described in Recommendations 4 (focused on in-country staff) and 6 (focused on POs).

Recommendations relating to POs:

6. The Australian Volunteers Program should facilitate opportunities for knowledge sharing and capacity building for Pacific POs on climate change, to support POs who are less familiar with how climate change may influence progress towards their organisational objectives. This could be achieved through an opt-in approach, enabling willing POs to share existing knowledge and expertise relating to their own climate change objectives. External expertise (e.g. through the Australia Pacific Climate Partnership Alumni Network, or Australian universities) could complement PO knowledge sharing.
7. The Australian Volunteers Program should continue to value the contribution to CC-DR-FS through the diverse set of non-thematic impact area focused volunteer inputs, which strengthen PO's organisational capacity to achieve sustainable outcomes. The Australian Volunteers Program can continue to strengthen its impact in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific through volunteer assignments supporting capacity building for PO organisational effectiveness and efficiency.
8. The Australian Volunteers Program should continue to provide funds to strengthen impact of volunteer assignments and further sustain POs work in the Pacific.

Recommendations relating to volunteers:

9. The Australian Volunteers Program should continue to value volunteer cross-cultural competence, and ensure cultural awareness is a key selection criterion when recruiting volunteers, to ensure impact of volunteer assignments. Strengthened cultural awareness could also be achieved by improved training for volunteers to be better able to integrate into their Pacific Partner Organisation and new country location.

³ E.g. the Australia Pacific Climate Partnership, COSPPac2, Gov4Res, PIEMA, AHP Disaster READY, Pacific Women

10. The Australian Volunteers Program should develop a decision-making system to critically assess whether or not remote volunteer assignments are likely to effectively support POs achieve their organisational objectives. A decision-making system that factors pre-existing relationships between the volunteer and PO, and other considerations such as available technology and connectivity of the PO, could support satisfying and impactful volunteer assignments for both POs and volunteers

Acronyms

AVI	Australian Volunteers International
AHP	Australian Humanitarian Partnership
CC-DR-FS	Climate change, disaster resilience and food security
COSPPac2	Climate and Oceans Support Program in the Pacific Phase 2
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
FRDP	Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
GESI	Gender and social inclusion
Gov4Res	Governance for Resilience
ICMT	In-country management team
ISF	Institute for Sustainable Futures
MDF	Market Development Facility
MELF	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework
MFAT	New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PO	Partner Organisation
PIC	Pacific Island Country
PIEMA	Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance
PIF	Pacific Island Forum
PIDF	Pacific Islands Development Forum
SFESA	Samoa Fire and Emergency Services Authority
SNA	Social network analysis
SPC	The Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TOR	Terms of reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UTS	University of Technology Sydney

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1 Introduction

This document presents the findings of an evaluation of the Australian Volunteers Program's thematic impact area of 'Climate change, disaster resilience and food security' in the Pacific. The evaluation is the third and final of three 'Deep Dives' which explore the three thematic impact areas of the Australian Volunteers Program.

The evaluation was conducted by the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF), University of Technology Sydney (UTS), from May to November 2021. The evaluation design follows those of the first and second Deep Dives (conducted in 2020, and 2021, respectively). The conduct of the evaluation adhered to necessary social distancing requirements related to COVID-19, in both Australia and the Pacific. Risks associated with COVID-19, remote evaluation activities, and mitigation strategies are described in Section 4.2 of this document.

The evaluation report has seven sections: 1) Introduction; 2) Background; 3) Evaluation purpose; 4) Methodology; 5) Findings; 6) Recommendations; and 7) Conclusion. This evaluation report has been prepared in line with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) M&E Standards (Standard 6) (see Annex 1).

2 Background

2.1 The Australian Volunteers Program

Since the 1960s the Australian Government has, through its aid program, supported Australians to volunteer in developing countries. International volunteering promotes cultural understanding through people-to-people linkages and is a means of promoting both public diplomacy and development outcomes.

The latest chapter of the Australian Volunteers Program (formerly Australian Volunteers for International Development) commenced on 1 January 2018 as a \$190m Australian Government investment in 26 countries, over a period of five years. The Australian Volunteers Program is managed by Australian Volunteers International (AVI), in a consortium with Cardno Emerging Markets Pty Ltd and Alinea International.

The Program continues to match skilled Australians from all walks of life with organisations overseas to help these organisations to deliver on their own objectives. The Program uses international volunteering as a people-centred approach to capacity development. As described in the Program's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (MELF), the Australian Volunteers Program aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Partner organisations (POs) are supported by Australia to achieve their own development objectives.
- The public in Australia better appreciates the value of international volunteering.
- Australian volunteers gain professionally and personally.

By achieving these outcomes, the Australian Volunteers Program will contribute to Australia's broader development and diplomacy goals:

- The Australian Government is achieving its development objectives.
- Australian aid is perceived positively in Australia and internationally.
- Australians are becoming more globally literate and connected.

2.2 The impact areas

The Global Program Strategy for the Australian Volunteers Program sets out three impact areas to which the Australia Volunteers Program contributes. As described in the Global Program Strategy and formative evaluation findings focused on the thematic impact areas, they are just one way to assess contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program. Other contributions of the Australian Volunteers Program to sectors such as health, education and technology are also valued.

This evaluation focuses on the impact area of Climate change, disaster resilience and food security. The definition of this thematic impact area is provided in the text below, and sub-themes within this impact area, as well as examples of the overlapping of impact areas, are provided in Annex 2.

Climate change, disaster resilience and food security: definition of impact area

The Climate Change, Disaster Resilience and Food Security impact area takes climate change and its impacts as the starting point. Responding to climate change impacts (including severe weather and disasters), adaptation and mitigation (including emissions reduction through renewable energy) are at the core of this impact area. Extending from this starting point are the resilience of agriculture and fisheries sectors and food security, all of which are directly affected by climate change. Environmental conservation is also included under this impact area, given the impact of climate change on the environment and that the preservation of healthy ecosystems provides a natural buffer to climate change. Furthermore, inclusion of environmental conservation under this impact area acknowledges that healthy ecosystems are more productive, and able to sustain livelihoods (linking to Inclusive Economic Growth).

2.3 Regional focus on Pacific island countries

This evaluation invited participation from POs across the 11 Pacific Island Countries (PICs) where the Australian Volunteers Program is active⁴. This section provides an overview of DFAT's engagement in the Pacific, noting both the importance of COVID-19 and climate change, disaster resilience and food security as current issues of focus.

DFAT in the Pacific region

Since 2016, the Australian government has worked to 'step-up' its engagement in the Pacific. As a key part of Australia's foreign policy, the 'Pacific Step-up' aims to promote economic prosperity through investments relating as to infrastructure, labour mobility and telecommunications. The Office of the Pacific, within DFAT, was also established in 2019 to better coordinate Australia's engagement in the Pacific.

Australia's Pacific aid program is estimated at \$1381.4M total Australian ODA (2019-2020). Aid investments within the Pacific aid program include the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility (worth \$2B), high speed internet for Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands and support for climate and disaster resilience (\$300M). Australia's aid to the Pacific includes the Pacific regional development program, which complements Pacific bilateral programs. Figure 1 below shows the estimated ODA to the Pacific region by sector⁵.

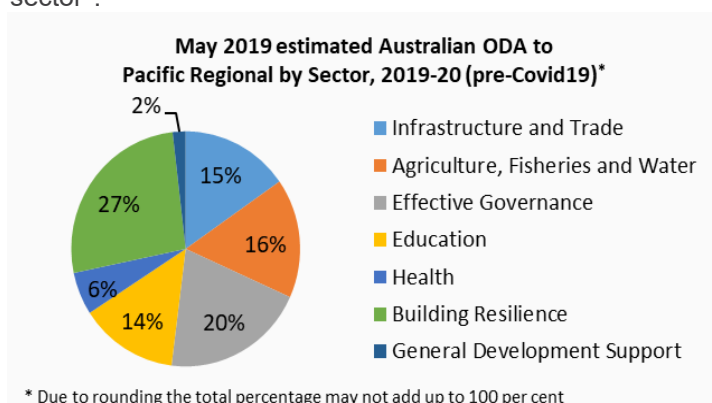


Figure 1: Estimated Australian ODA to Pacific by sector

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DFAT released its 'Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 Development Response' in June 2020. The Partnerships for Recovery document provides an overview of the ways in which DFAT intended to shift development focus to that of the COVID-19 virus. The objective of the response plan is that "Australia will partner with the Indo-Pacific in responding to and recovering from COVID-19, in support of our region's—and our own—security and economic recovery"⁶.

DFAT's Pacific regional COVID-19 response plan acknowledges the specific challenges faced by Australia's Pacific neighbours. While Health Security, Stability and Economic Recovery are the main pillars of the Pacific COVID-19 response plan, the document also makes mention of the links between COVID-19 and climate change. Climate and severe weather events can exacerbate COVID-19 risks, for example in relation to hygiene and limits to social distancing when people are forced to seek shelter in times of disaster. Livelihoods and food security are also strongly impacted by COVID-19 in the Pacific, with Pacific governments facing pressure to support the varying needs, for example in urban informal settlements.

Australia's climate change, disaster resilience and food security support and financial commitments to the Pacific is influenced by a range of factors. For example, domestic and global pressure to provide support to the Pacific region led to recent announcements from Australia's Prime Minister, who noted that Australia will increase its financial commitments for Pacific climate change investments to over \$700M (up from a previous commitment of \$500M)⁷. Australia is signatory to regional security agreements that highlight the criticality of climate change as a security threat to Pacific nations e.g. the Pacific Islands Forum's Boe and Kainaki II Declarations. DFAT's Climate Change Action Strategy⁸ highlights the need to integrate climate change across the government's development assistance program, including through climate resilient agriculture and food security, enhancing disaster resilience and also more broadly across sectoral programs.

⁴ Papua New Guinea (PNG), Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu

⁵ Source: DFAT 2019-20 Pacific Regional Development Program Progress Report

⁶ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/partnerships-for-recovery-australias-covid-19-development-response.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/increasing-support-regions-climate-action-and-economic-growth>

⁸ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/climate-change-action-strategy.pdf>

3 Evaluation purpose

3.1 Evaluation objectives

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the outcomes and contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to the impact area of Climate change, disaster resilience and food security (CC-DR-FS). This objective relates primarily to the first (end-of-program) outcome of the Australia Volunteers Program: 'Partner organisations are supported by Australia to progress their developmental objectives'. As a secondary consideration, the evaluation also relates to the second (end-of-program) outcome, that the 'public in Australia better appreciates the value of volunteering' through the communication of outcomes of the Australian Volunteers Program.

3.2 Evaluation scope

There are four features of the evaluation which define its scope and determine how evaluation findings should be interpreted:

1. POs are the primary unit of analysis. Mapping of the global footprint of the Australian Volunteers Program portfolio in the three impact areas within the previous formative evaluation was used as a basis for selecting the regional focus for this evaluation. In the Pacific, there is a higher proportion of assignments, and also larger number of total assignments aligned with CC-DR-FS than other geographic areas of the Program.
2. The evaluation uses the impact area of CC-DR-FS to explore the impact of the Program's support for POs, and to explore the progress of POs toward achieving their development objectives. The evaluation is not focused on assessment of pre-defined Program objectives in CC-DR-FS.
3. The evaluation focuses on the Pacific region, and specifically, the PICs listed under 2.3 where the Australian Volunteers Program is active. The Pacific regional analysis was undertaken using an online survey, and included all POs whose objectives align with the CC-DR-FS impact area. The online survey gathered data relating to all evaluation questions and provided a breadth of understanding about the outcomes and impacts of POs and the Program's contribution. Adding to the depth of inquiry, a 'systems mapping' activity to assess PO coherence to the broader agenda of CC-DR-FS in the Pacific was undertaken. This mapping activity revealed climate change and disaster resilience as highly interconnected aspects of this impact area, with food security less connected (but not altogether disconnected). To assess the impact of POs in these two sub-areas of the impact area (climate change and disaster resilience), and the Programs' contribution, interviews were conducted with PO representatives and with volunteers who had assignments with these POs.
4. The evaluation applies the theory of change within the Australian Volunteers Program MELF, to focus inquiry on outcomes and impacts (end-of-program outcomes and long-term goals). The outcomes and impacts of the Australian Volunteers Program are not being assessed directly; rather, we assess POs' progress towards achieving their development objectives (in climate change and disaster resilience), and in turn the contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to supporting POs in this progress.

As indicated in Figure 2, outcomes and impacts in CC-DR-FS are the focus of the evaluation (see red box at top of figure). Contribution analysis enabled us to assess lower levels of the theory of change, with a particular focus on intermediate outcomes. The evaluation assesses the extent to which the Australian Volunteers Program contributed to PO progress towards achieving development objectives (see dotted red box). The Australian Volunteers Program, together with DFAT, is responsible for 'Foundational activities' and 'Influence activities' which lead to immediate change (outputs). See Annex 3 for details of the Program Logic for the Australian Volunteers Program.

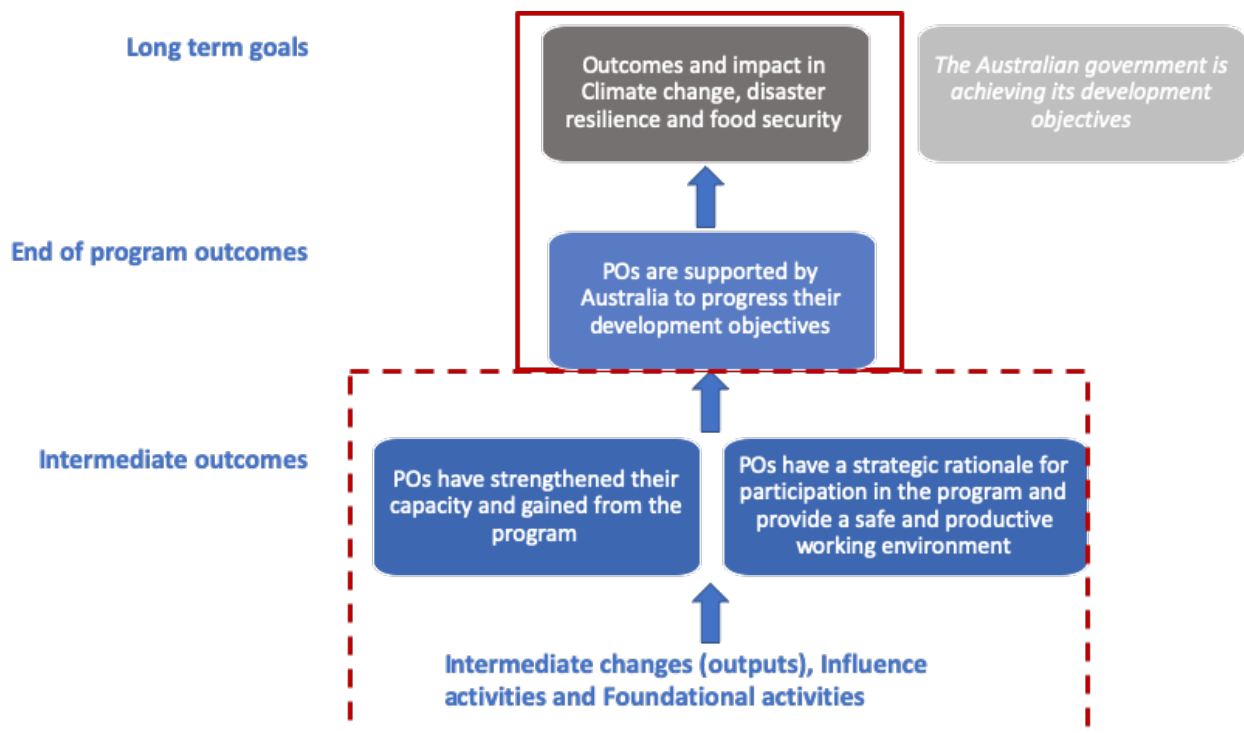


Figure 2: Australian Volunteers Program Theory of Change

3.3 Key evaluation questions

The evaluation questions are informed by the OECD DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance. These criteria focus on six domains of inquiry: relevance; effectiveness; efficiency; coherence; impact; and sustainability. The evaluation questions are also informed by the Australian Volunteers Program MELF. Evaluation questions are provided in Annex 4.

4 Methodology

4.1 Evaluation approach and methods

The evaluation is underpinned by a theory of change approach⁹, in line with the Australian Volunteers Program MELF and a systems perspective.¹⁰ It explores the contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to CC-DR-FS in the Pacific. Through this approach the evaluation seeks to situate the Australian Volunteers Program's contribution to POs within the broader country context in order to make sense of the Program's contribution to development outcomes in CC-DR-FS.

Contribution analysis was employed to identify causal linkages between the Australian Volunteers Program and outcomes achieved in CC-DR-FS. Based on learnings from the Deep Dives One and Two evaluations, and feedback from the Australian Volunteers Program, this Deep Dive evaluation focused more strongly on providing narrative accounts of the impact of POs and the contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program.

Five data collection methods were employed with different levels of engagement across the 11 Pacific island countries who were invited to participate in the evaluation¹¹. Evaluation methods comprised:

- Online quantitative and qualitative survey completed by pre-identified POs in the Pacific with a focus on CC-DR-FS
- Social Network Analysis (SNA) (contained within online survey)
- Systems mapping of CC-DR-FS in the Pacific
- Key informant interviews with five stakeholder groups: 1) POs, drawn from a sample of POs in the Pacific working on Climate change and disaster resilience; 2) where possible, beneficiaries of the sampled POs; 3) volunteers linked to the POs; 4) Australian Volunteers Program staff in the Pacific and Melbourne and 5) DFAT.
- A document review relating to DFAT policies, the Australian Volunteers Program and CC-DR-FS in the Pacific.

See Annex 5 for the list of documents reviewed for the evaluation.

The breadth and depth of our inquiry provided sufficient information to inform our evaluation findings. Breadth of inquiry related to inviting all POs working in the impact area of CC-DR-FS in the Pacific to participate in the online survey. Depth of inquiry related to exploring the links of POs to the broader context of Climate change and disaster resilience only, recognising that food security was a sub-area that was slightly less connected to the climate change and disaster resilience sub-areas. In practice, this meant that for key informant interviews, POs working in climate change and disaster resilience were included and those working in food security were excluded to enable a deeper focus on the interconnected climate and disaster aspects of the impact area.

The evaluation also focused on exploring outcomes and impacts related to Climate change and disaster resilience through triangulated data: interviews with POs¹²; volunteers; DFAT and Australian Volunteers Program staff. These perspectives provide a rich picture of the contribution of volunteers and the Program. See Annex 6 for a more detailed description of methods.

Data analysis included both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative analysis was employed for the quantitative online survey results and SNA. Qualitative analysis was employed for the qualitative online survey results, document review, systems mapping, document and interviews. All interviews were conducted

⁹ Funnell, S.C. and Rogers, P. J. (2011) *Purposeful program theory: effective use of theories of change and logic models*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Wiley.

¹⁰ Note that a systems perspective is key to the additional criterion of 'coherence' within the OECD DAC Evaluation criteria. "Including coherence also incentivises evaluators to understand the role of an intervention within a particular system (organisation, sector, thematic area, country), as opposed to taking an exclusively intervention-or institution-centric perspective" (p.8).

¹¹ Papua New Guinea (PNG), Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu

¹² Limited inclusion of beneficiaries – see section 4.2 for details

in English, recorded and transcribed. Interview transcriptions were analysed using NVivo software, with the evaluation questions used as the first layer of coding, and thematic analysis conducted within the evaluation question categories in the second layer of coding. The qualitative data provided a rich source of evidence, which, together with other data sources, informed the evaluation findings.

Informed by the Australian Volunteers Program theory of change, we ensured that evaluation participants represented five stakeholder groups in Australia and the Pacific:

1. PO representatives from Pacific countries where the Australian Volunteers Program operates (14 respondents for the online survey¹³, and within this sample, 8 POs for the key informant interviews¹⁴)
2. Beneficiaries of POs (n=2)¹⁵
3. Volunteers (n=7)
4. Australian Volunteers Program staff (based in Pacific, n=2 and based in Melbourne, n=1)
5. DFAT (Fiji Post) (n=1)

A summary of participants from these groups is provided in Annex 7.

Multiple sampling criteria were used for the different evaluation participants. All 37 POs whose objectives aligned with the CC-DR-FS impact area were invited to participate in the online survey. Eight POs were invited to participate in interviews. This sample was informed by limitations of the evaluation scope/budget and was deemed sufficient to provide a range of experiences. The intention was (as per Deep Dives One and Two) that through a snowball approach, POs would be invited to nominate beneficiaries to participate in interviews, however for various reasons, this did not eventuate (see Section 4.2). The Australian Volunteers Program identified eight volunteers linked to the POs who participated in the interviews. Out of these eight volunteers ISF invited to participate in interviews, seven volunteers agreed to be interviewed. Senior staff of the Pacific Australian Volunteers Program and also DFAT (Fiji) were also invited for interviews.

4.2 Limitations and risks

In line with the evaluation terms of reference (see Annex 8), the three Deep Dive evaluations were originally designed for in-country data collection. However, the design was revised in March 2020 based on travel restrictions related to COVID-19. The Deep Dive evaluations therefore proceeded using remote data collection methods.

Limitations due to the change from in-country data collection to remote data collection were mitigated as much as possible in this evaluation by: using an online survey; conducting interviews with Pacific-based participants via Zoom or phone; conducting the final sense-making workshop via Zoom; and using technology to facilitate collaborative and participatory processes (Google slides and Zoom breakout rooms). Lessons from Deep Dives One and Two were integrated into Deep Dive Three to ensure remote data collection methods and the overall design were appropriate and not burdensome for participants. Lessons included the importance of 'clean' data at the outset of the evaluation, ensuring regular check ins with the in-country team and including the in-country (or regional) team/s in the sense-making workshop.

The evaluation design stated a number of potential limitations, some of which need to be acknowledged, since they will influence the reader's interpretation of the findings. These limitations, and how they were mitigated, are described below.

Limited response rates associated with online surveys. A relatively low response rate for online survey: A 38% response rate was recorded for the PO survey (14 responses from a possible sample of 37¹⁶). The evaluation team, together with the Pacific Australian Volunteers Program staff, made extensive efforts to ensure that the survey was accessible and not burdensome to POs through: the use of both open-ended and

¹³ Respondents were from the following countries: Vanuatu, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa and Tonga

¹⁴ PO interviewees were from the following countries: Vanuatu, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa and Tonga

¹⁵ Beneficiaries contacted for the evaluation did not provide any key evaluation findings

¹⁶ Deep Dive 1 recorded a response rate of 50%, Deep Dive Two recorded a 68% response rate

closed questions; extension of the closing date of the survey and follow-up emails from the ICMT and evaluation team where appropriate.

The evaluation team has confidence in the survey data since the responses are from a cross-section of POs with objectives related to a wide range of development objectives relevant to CC-DR-FS. Respondents to the survey were also from seven of the 11 countries where the Program operates, reflecting a diverse geographic spread. The use of other data sources also means the evaluation findings are not solely reliant on the online survey results.

Self-reported assessment of impact and Australian Volunteers Program contributions. Evaluation participants included all key actors in the Program and they provided self-assessments of their roles and contributions within the Program. The evaluation has sought to mitigate the limitations of self-reporting through triangulation of data sources and by comparing and contrasting the responses of different stakeholder groups.

Ability to triangulate impact of the Australian Volunteers Program due to limited access to beneficiaries: Deep Dive Three presented several challenges in connecting with beneficiaries of the POs. Firstly, the nature of the POs and the work they do meant that identifying beneficiaries was more challenging than it was for Deep Dive Two e.g. POs for Deep Dive Three often worked with whole communities or villages, sometimes in remote locations. Therefore, identifying an individual to be a representative voice was challenging for the PO. Secondly, if an individual could be identified, English was their second language, and communicating over the phone would have been a challenge. Thirdly, connecting by phone was also a challenge with telecommunications to remote communities in the Pacific not being strong. The Evaluation Team did manage to connect with two beneficiaries of different POs, however the interviewees were not able to provide information suitable for the evaluation. This potential limitation was overcome by relying more on other stakeholder voices and secondary sources such as End of Assignment reporting.

While it is important to acknowledge these limitations, the evaluation team carried out enough consultations to provide ample data to inform the evaluation findings. Annex 9 provides further details on limitations and mitigation strategies.

5 Findings

5.1 PART A: Partner Organisations outcomes

Part A describes findings related to the outcomes for POs, the contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program and related contextual factors.

5.1.1 Outcomes for Partner Organisations (POs)

To a large extent, the evaluation found that POs in the Pacific were progressing their development objectives relating to CC-DR-FS. All POs described how their organisation was making progress towards their objectives. However, there was evidence that not all POs directly addressed CC-DR-FS in their objectives.

In the online survey, PO representatives were asked to provide examples of how their organisation had progressed development objectives. Figure 3 shows the results mapped against the sub-themes within the thematic impact area of CC-DR-FS. The results are based on the responses of POs who work across multiple sub-themes related to CC-DR-FS. Figure 3 shows the most common progress was in the areas of: water conservation and resource management (four out of 14 POs); conservation (three out of 14 POs); adaptation and resilience building (three out of 14) and disaster and humanitarian response (three out of 14).



Figure 3: POs working in sub-themes of CC-DR-FS

Interviews with POs in Pacific countries echoed the results of the online survey, revealing that POs are achieving progress toward a diversity of development objectives in the area of climate change and disaster resilience. Descriptions of progress shared during the interviews reflect the development objectives of the particular POs and are not intended to be representative of the breadth of different POs working in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific. The most commonly described themes which emerged from the interviews were progress towards water security and conservation, emergency response and disaster risk reduction.

The breadth of sub-themes and aspects associated with this thematic impact area meant that POs self-identified working in a wide variety of areas. For example, single POs described progress in food security and agriculture, another mentioned disaster-resilient construction. Climate-resilient water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) were also raised. One PO explained that climate change was mainstreamed into their existing sectoral programs, such as health and education:

...The key progress is that climate change has been identified as an important issue that we have integrated into most of our other programming... So, we have not up-skilled our program to a project that is particularly focused on climate change, but we just integrate that into our existing sectoral programs (PO interviewee).

There was mixed prioritisation of CC-DR-FS in PO's development objectives, with four POs explicitly describing climate change resilience as a priority, and four POs not directly addressing climate change issues in their work. It was interesting that climate change resilience was not an explicit priority of all Pacific POs, despite their high exposure and vulnerability to climate change impacts. Respondents from some POs indicated limited knowledge and awareness of how climate change will influence their work. One volunteer described the communities their organisation worked with as reactive to disasters and climate change impacts, focused on immediate development needs and "the here and now". Another PO, when asked if climate change featured as an explicit priority within their organisation, responded with the quote below, which provides an example of a PO the Evaluation Team sees as not directly addressing climate change, despite the PO working on water supply and security with communities.

I wouldn't say it is – how do I put it?... It's not exclusively ... we're more so focussed on for example, water conservation, we do talk about that the water source is depleting and just things around that, that. But we do mention stuff like climate change but I wouldn't say - it's more WASH focussed (PO interviewee).

Below, we briefly provide interview findings regarding ways POs are working to achieve progress, before identifying the contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program.

In water security and conservation, three POs are working to ensure communities have climate-resilient water supplies. POs described water resources (dams and wells) being affected by more frequent dry spells and saltwater intrusion. POs are supporting communities by conducting water safety planning, community education and providing infrastructure such as rain water tanks for safe storage of water. Another PO supports local water management committees to manage their own supply and maintain systems. A PO described their contribution responding to climate change impacts:

These people are affected by climate change because climate change has impacted on the water resources, it only depends on wealth. And salt water has intruded into their water well, and so one of the very simple solutions we have provided for them is helping them to have access to rain water. So providing water tanks. That means a lot to them because they have clean water, and they have safe water for drinking instead of the salinised water in their wells which is also exposed to e-coli because toilets are just a few metres away (PO interviewee).

Three POs have been progressing their objectives in emergency response and disaster risk reduction in various ways. POs are supporting Disaster Emergency Management Committees, preparing education materials on disaster risk reduction for children, raising awareness at churches and schools, conducting hazard mapping exercises, drafting evacuation plans and developing emergency warning systems. One PO described their integration of local and external knowledges for disaster response:

to understand some of the local knowledge of how they respond to different disasters, how they identify [hazards], and how we can [use] the best of the local knowledge of some of them [with] ideas that we have adopted from global best practice so that communities are well prepared in terms of their preparedness towards any climate change ... hazards or disasters, and they can ... develop some level of resilience against many of the effects of climate change (PO interviewee).

In conservation, POs are working to restore ecosystem health. The online survey identified three POs who work in conservation, while interviews highlighted one PO working in the sub-theme of conservation. For example, a government department has developed a forest and landscape restoration strategy to address climate change issues and strengthen community resilience. They have developed a National Forest Monitoring System which will support them to report to UNFCCC and other agencies, as part of a REDD+ project. Another initiative is a community program to reforest a riparian area, improve water quality and address sanitation issues of the community members living next to the river.

A lack of reliable climate data was identified as a barrier to PO’s progress. A single PO described bureaucratic challenges with accessing historic data, at the district or national level, on climate and weather patterns such as rainfall. The PO hoped to work from a baseline of climate data to support implementation of their climate change project. This finding is in line with recognition from elsewhere that limited climate change data is a barrier for organisations to take action.

5.1.2 Contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program

Breadth of learning about contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program in the Pacific

To a large extent, the Australian Volunteers Program has contributed to POs progressing their development objectives in CC-DR-FS, as evidenced by the online survey results for POs across the Pacific. Responses were favourable to the survey question “*To what extent and in what ways has the Australian Volunteers Program contributed to progress achieved in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific?*” As seen in Figure 4, 21% (three out of 14) of POs responded with ‘medium’ support, 29% (four out of 14) of POs responded with ‘high’ support and 29% (4 out of 14) of POs responded with ‘very high’ support. Only 7% (one out of 14) POs responded with ‘low’ support. 14% (two out of 14) of POs’ did not respond to the question. Examples of the ways in which the program contributed include: training and institutional capacity building; research support; building enhanced monitoring, evaluation and learning systems; and strategic development. Interestingly, one PO responded that the Australian Volunteers Program strengthened their capacity by providing additional people to perform key functions, which may be in tension with the Program’s capacity building objective. The full list of examples provided by POs is detailed in the survey results in Annex 10.

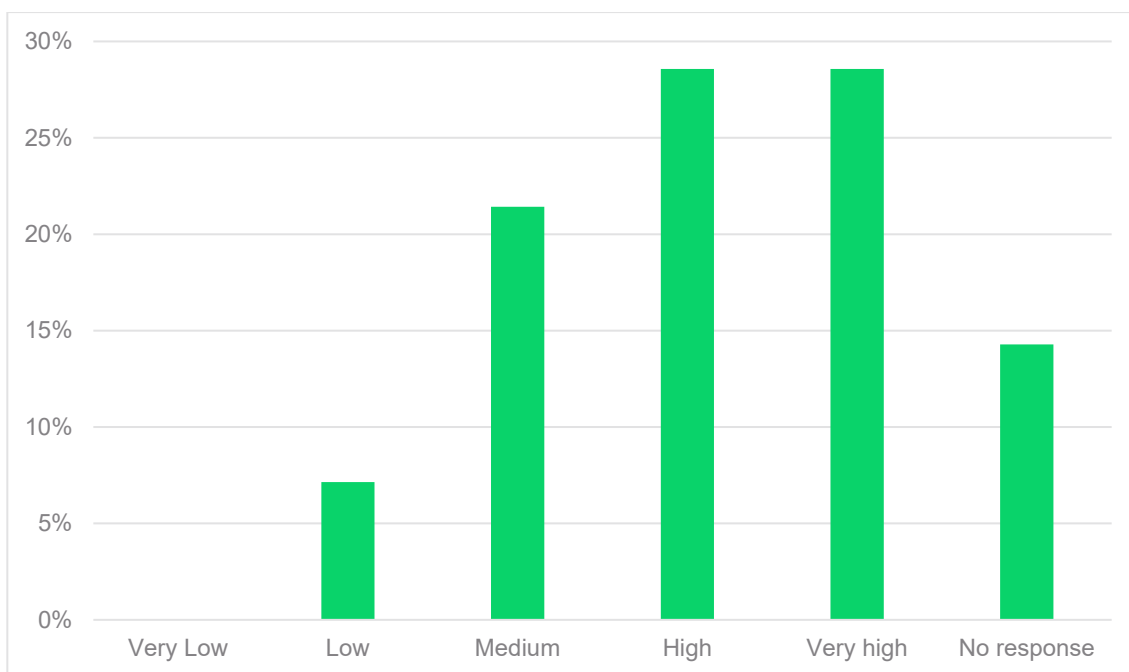


Figure 4: Australian Volunteers Program’s support to strengthen PO capacity

Depth of learning about the contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program in the Pacific

Pacific POs interviewed for the evaluation described similar contributions to progress achieved in CC-DR as the survey results. POs described various contributions from volunteers and from the Program more broadly. Limitations of the Australian Volunteers Program were also identified.

The Australian Volunteers Program has contributed to progress achieved in CC-DR in the Pacific through explicit assignment objectives that strengthen gender and social inclusion (GESI), as shared in PO and volunteer end-of-assignment reporting. Four POs valued Australian Volunteers Program’s focus on GESI because it contributed to change. Some examples of those changes were:

- Representatives from youth, people with disabilities, Village Women's council and Ministry for Internal Affairs as the government agency who focused on gender and social protection participating in consultations and policy development for disaster management
- Revision of a Disaster Management Plan to include focus on people with disabilities, elderly and other vulnerable groups
- A new policy to consider disability inclusion in a government workplace
- Extension of ambulance services to be more inclusive and appropriate for people with disabilities, and professional development of women in the ambulance services
- Youth and other marginalised groups from villages attending and graduating from vocational training
- Youth employed to develop the national nursery and propagate seedlings for reforestation.

The Australian Volunteers Program contributed to progressing PO objectives for CC-DR through skill sharing. The types of skills directly related to CC-DR included: reviewing disaster management plans; first aid and CPR training for disaster response; developing capacity in climate change mitigation and adaptation; natural resource management and coastal rehabilitation. The following two POs described the positive impact of skills sharing with volunteers:

To use [the volunteer's] expertise and technical know-how to support our forest research and nursery workers to be able to upgrade their skills and be able to venture into new ideas and techniques of raising seedlings...With this Australian volunteer, now we have mangrove seedlings in our nurseries that are planted along coastlines as part of addressing climate change issues and coastal erosion and degradation (PO interviewee).

The volunteer has actually contributed in a big way. We have now many materials, many tools to do community assessment of climate change, and there is a very clear focus on the kind of topics that we present and the kind of interventions that we implement in communities. So, those have been captured in the different documentations that the volunteer has assisted with. And also, the volunteer helped build localised capacity (PO interviewee).

More general skills indirectly contributed to CC-DR were: human resources; media communications; project management; fundraising; and risk assessment. One PO reported:

the Australian Volunteers Program have been helping with areas that we felt we couldn't get the support here in Fiji for, or the skills within the staff that we could attract, and without it (we can't achieve as much) (PO interviewee)

A common theme which emerged from interviews with POs was **the contribution of positive attributes of the volunteer.**

Cultural sensitivity of volunteers was highly valued by POs in order to build rapport and break down power imbalances between Australian volunteers (who were mostly Caucasian) and Pacific Islanders. Volunteers and PO staff needed to overcome language barriers and adapt to each other's different customs. POs described situations where volunteers did demonstrate cultural awareness and made significant efforts to align with PO and local culture. Conversely, POs also described situations where this was not the case, suggesting this as an area where the Australian Volunteers Program could aim to strengthen. A PO described cultural sensitivity and how this had not always been a positive experience:

Yeah, being able to disappear as much as you can, as a white person in a society like Fiji - it's very difficult. But some people do it very successfully, and we've had – I think we've had one volunteer that's done it really well. The others have struggled with it, and one in particular just, it was a struggle all the way through. Yeah, and that gets in the way of the volunteer's mission (PO interviewee).

POs described how it was important that volunteers were flexible and able to adapt to the organisational context. One PO described their maternal and child health and hygiene program as:

A new area of work for (our organisation) so it was dependent on (the volunteer) being able to foster and harness interest with stakeholders and bring them with them. This project required (the volunteer) to be self-driven and flexible in approach. I think (the volunteer) found it challenging to think through how they would adapt their approach to suit the context (PO interviewee).

POs were supported by the Australian Volunteers Program through relationship-building and network-strengthening in several ways. Firstly, volunteers created links between their POs in the Pacific and similar sector organisations in Australia. These links were built between the Pacific and Australia for fire and emergency services and disaster risk reduction. Another volunteer raised the profile of their organisation through building links with the Australian High Commissioner.

Secondly, volunteers created connections within the countries of their assignments. In one case, three volunteers placed with the same PO across three provinces created a network between local government in each of the locations to coordinate wildlife conservation work and upskill staff. In another case, the volunteer expanded the diversity of their PO's network through involving government and private contractors in trial agricultural projects. While another volunteer working in a disaster-prone Pacific country was:

...helpful in trying to develop a more harmonised, national approach to disaster management by providing more information and that is linking with all other partner organisation that have a mandate in disaster management (PO interviewee).

The Australian Volunteers Program contributed to progressing PO objectives in CC-DR through community outreach and awareness-raising. Some examples of volunteer contributions are: social media posts and television advertisements for public awareness about first aid in responding to medical emergencies; making a documentary about environmental justice and climate change; and public posters and website materials for disaster risk reduction.

The Australian Volunteers Program also made a direct contribution to building PO's capacity through funding. Two POs reported that volunteers helped them with successful applications for external donor funding and one volunteer supported their PO to substantially expand the budget allocated them from government. Some POs also benefited from the Impact Grants focused on COVID-19 response.

Interviews with volunteers also revealed the **advantage of Australian volunteers having prior experience of completing an Australian Volunteers Program assignment, or of working in the international development sector.** Those who had volunteered in other country or sectoral contexts had more experience to contribute to their assignment. As one volunteer stated, "Because I was in the program for three years, I could see what worked and what didn't work".

The evaluation identified some limitations of the Australian Volunteers Program that affected POs and volunteers. Some POs didn't have sufficient funding or staff dedicated to the project they hoped to establish with the volunteer's support, so their objectives were not achieved (reported by one PO, two volunteers). As one Program stakeholder described, some community organisations were not big enough and did not have the infrastructure to host a volunteer. Other volunteers faced challenges in remote travel needed to reach communities, insufficient transport allowances and lack of reliable telecommunications in those locations (reported by one PO and one Program interviewee). Several volunteers were repatriated due to COVID-19 so with their assignments cut short, they weren't always able to achieve the planned objectives.

5.1.3 Contextual factors affecting progress

The evaluation identified a range of factors that helped or hindered PO progress towards achieving their development objectives. These factors included:

Political factors and policy drivers at all levels of regional, national, subnational and community affect progress of PO development objectives. At the regional level, an enabler of the sector's progress in CC-DR is regional cooperation and strategic frameworks such as the Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent

Climate Change Action,¹⁷ which builds on the Boe Declaration for Regional Security¹⁸, and The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP)¹⁹, as identified in our document review.

Another enabler is that most Pacific governments have national policies that address climate change and disaster resilience. A common theme identified by POs was they must abide by political decisions and policies related to climate change and disaster resilience.

However, a barrier to progress is the lack of integration of climate policies by subnational governments, according to participating POs. One PO reported:

There's a lot of work going on at national, with climate change, but it needs to be, it needs to have a clear strategy for how it's rolled out at the subnational level, which I don't think it does. And I think that our pilot projects will help in this, how do you talk about climate change at a community level (PO interviewee).

One volunteer perceived the aims of CC-DR programs funded under the Australian aid program including their volunteer assignment, contradicted Australia's overarching domestic climate policies which are not supportive of the Pacific's ambitions in mitigating climate change²⁰, as noted in the quote below. It is uncertain whether this one view is indicative of broader stakeholder perspectives and be detrimental to the Program.

I can do all my work in resilience but the same government that's funding you to make more strong houses in this country, there's also fuelling the problem. So that definitely threatens the integrity of this whole program (Volunteer interviewee).

An important factor influencing progress in climate change and disaster resilience is funding and resources for organisations working in CC-DR sub-themes. The document review found that development funding for climate change mitigation and disaster resilience was an enabler to progress in this impact area. Climate and disaster resilience finance is provided through the Global Environment Facility, the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), Green Climate Fund (among others). The main bilateral donors in the region include DFAT, MFAT, China and USAID. On the ground, funding and resources were limited, as indicated in interviews with POs. Four POs identified insufficient funding and resources as a barrier to progressing their objectives, especially with reaching outer islands and responding to crises when under staffed. Resourcing was particularly difficult for POs which were reliant on funding from Pacific governments. However, one PO had their funding increased,

We have been the leading agency with responding to disasters and emergencies, so in order for us to successfully respond they've given us assistance with our request for more personnel and more equipment (PO interviewee).

Localisation of development and humanitarian assistance is an enabler of CC-DR. POs interviewed identified strong relationships and trust with local communities as an enabler of progressing their objectives. Our system map activity conducted for the evaluation also found a push for locally led development and the prioritisation of local leadership, in order to strengthen local capacity to respond to climate change impacts. For localisation to be effective, there needs to be active engagement in coordination mechanisms including

¹⁷ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (2019) *Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent Climate Change Action*, <https://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/50th-Pacific-Islands-Forum-Communique.pdf>

¹⁸ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (2019) *Boe Declaration Action Plan*, <https://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/BOE-document-Action-Plan.pdf>

¹⁹ Pacific Community (SPC), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and University of the South Pacific (USP) (2016) *Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management [FRDP] 2017 – 2030*, http://gsd.spc.int/frdp/assets/FRDP_2016_Resilient_Dev_pacific.pdf

²⁰ Casule, N. and Jiva, G. (2020) *Te Mana O Te Moana: The State of the Climate in the Pacific 2020*, Greenpeace Pacific, <https://act.greenpeace.org.au/pacific-climate-report>

national governments and regional or UN mechanisms in humanitarian response, CC and DR²¹. For one PO who supports locally-led solutions to addressing climate change:

most of the communities... we have been working with them for a number of years; and so there is trust; there is rapport; there is relationship that has built up over a number of years, and so these are the things – the factors that really help. Also when we go most of – especially with these climate change projects that we are working with currently we actually get to go down to the community and ask them what they need, and then we apply for funding (PO interviewee).

On the other hand, traditional leaders and local government who did not have a strong awareness and were not proactive in addressing climate change and disaster resilience were a barrier to two POs making progress in these areas. A PO describes,

It depends everywhere, because there are competing priorities of communities ... [community have] other important needs as well, and other community based programming as well, and sometimes (climate change and disaster resilience) is not taken very seriously or it's taken out of context and you will get very little support from the communities as well, government support sometimes or most time, at least not always there, and then it does not enable us to quickly get into communities or have access to communities as well where we can be able to implement project in a timely manner (PO interviewee).

5.2 PART B: Program impacts

5.2.1 Impact for Pacific communities

The evaluation found indications of impacts that resulted from the work of POs in the area of CC-DR-FS in the Pacific, informed mostly from the perspectives of POs and their recent volunteers²².

Different types of impact were described, linked to the diverse POs who participated in the evaluation. Impacts were described such as gender and disability inclusion, enhanced resilience to the impacts of climate change, and improved access to water and sanitation for Pacific communities. These different types of impacts are described in detail below.

Gender and disability inclusion in the work of POs. Four POs described how gender and disability inclusion was important to the work their organisation does with communities. These POs worked across a range of sectors: shelter and construction; water, sanitation and hygiene; community development; and disaster preparedness and response. In each of these sectors, POs were working hard to embed gender and disability inclusion as an ongoing priority. The POs supported their beneficiaries to take steps to particularly include women's and people with disability's views, perspectives and strengths when engaging with communities.

For example, one PO mentioned that:

We've done a few studies, assessments about gender inclusive WASH and the challenges that women face ... so definitely women are the beneficiaries that we work towards, you know recognising that women [and their families / households] are the biggest beneficiaries and also the biggest users of water... (PO interviewee).

Another PO working in disaster preparedness and response commented on the lessons they had learned from past disasters, and the need to support community members to develop appropriate roles and responsibilities during a disaster to ensure people with special needs (e.g. elderly, people with disabilities, children) were cared for. The PO interviewee spoke about providing training, in collaboration with other non-governmental organisations (NGOs), for community disaster preparedness and response:

²¹ Pacific Resilience Partnership Technical Working Group on Localisation (March 2021) *Humanitarian Action in the Pacific "Towards Strengthening Local Action in the Pacific"*, http://www.resilientpacific.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Humanitarian-Action-in-the-Pacific_ecopy.pdf, p. 27.

²² As described in Section 4.2, the evaluation team was not able to reach beneficiaries of the POs for a variety of reasons

And we identified groups [needing specialised support] and teach them [community members] this is the idea and give them training so that they can know how to do it (PO interviewee).

More inclusive approaches to CC-DR-FS are important because climate change is experienced and responded to differently depending on gender, dis/ability, social status and other social constructions. POs are intentionally working with women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups to ensure they are more resilient to shocks and stresses associated with climate change. This in turn ensures that the broader community is more resilient.

Enhanced community resilience to the impacts of climate change. More than half of the POs interviewed (six out of eight) described how their organisation was contributing to longer-term resilience to climate change. Enhanced community resilience to acute weather events such as stronger tropical storms and cyclones was reported by POs, as a result of their work with communities. Broader contribution to disaster risk reduction and longer-term resilience was also reported by POs, through promotion of climate change resilient plants for environmental conservation.

Examples of community capacity to cope with stronger storms and cyclones was evidenced from three POs in three different Pacific Island countries. One of these POs specifically targeted its work with cyclone-prone communities to ensure infrastructure and housing better withstands storms and cyclones. Strengthened local emergency response plans was also reported by a PO, who recognised the impacts stronger storms would have on communities. During an evaluation interview, another PO representative acknowledged how the magnitude of disasters is changing, and how communities need to know how to respond. Community-based disaster preparedness and response was a key feature of their work, and their support was vital particularly relating to evacuation centres:

We'll leave it to the community to do it as they know their people well, but on the advice that we've given to them; even the location and identifying the locations are safe areas and where to go. So we advise them this is the best place for them... also inspect the [evacuation] shelters and other things if we see that the shelters not good, not safe for elderly, for men and women to stay together, so we've given them advice to make sure the evacuation site or in the shelters will not create any more problems (PO interviewee).

Programs which connected climate change and disaster risk reduction (DRR) was another area where POs were working and contributed to more resilient communities in the Pacific. Improved DRR within communities was noted, with a PO describing efforts to address climate change within their DRR programs. The PO noted how staff had been working with communities:

[we] go through different trainings on identifying the generalised impacts of climate change, and also what some localised strategies or solutions that we can be able to assist the communities in addressing climate change in their own communities (PO interviewee).

Enhanced riverbank and coastal resilience resulted from the work of a PO through the growth and distribution of climate resilient plant species. Whilst the PO worked on a range of forestry and landscape restoration projects (including a REDD+ focused on reducing emissions from deforestation), the PO spoke about the benefit of the Australian Volunteer who worked in the plant nursery. Climate resilient plant species were distributed to communities and planted in water catchment areas, along river banks and coastal locations to act as a natural buffer against flooding and coastal inundation for riverside and coastal communities. Describing how the distribution of climate resilient plant species supported enhanced resilience to climate change, the PO noted that:

So this very much contributed to reducing climate change issues and impacts ..., our water, and other forest resources as well (PO interviewee).

Improved access to water and sanitation for Pacific communities. The evaluation found evidence of improved access to water and sanitation in the communities in which POs worked. Water security, through provision of water tanks, was one example of impact described. As described by two POs, water tanks contribute to long-term health and wellbeing, and have positive economic outcomes. The impact was described by one PO representative:

The simple solution that we have provided for them which is what they requested is rainwater tanks, but that is a long-term benefit because for the next number of years they are able to drink clean water; be able to cook food for their families; be able to prepare food to sell. So be involved in economic activities because of the rainwater tank that is provided. So that is definitely a long-term benefit for them (PO interviewee).

Increased community knowledge and an introduction to the effects of climate change on water security has been another key contribution of POs. This example was described by one PO who has provided training and services and encourages community action in climate change response:

Especially with things like climate change, we have introduced them [beneficiaries/communities] to that sort of thinking, given that the [water] source, is no longer how [it was] before. So in the long-run I would say with all this [PO] assistance given, they [community members] are the ones that would mostly benefit it, given that they'll remain independent (PO interviewee).

5.2.2 Contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program for Pacific communities

As described earlier in section 4.2, the evaluation team was not able to access beneficiaries to ascertain their perspectives of the Australian Volunteers Program's contribution, but POs and volunteers interviewed for the evaluation described contribution. Two main ways that volunteers contributed were described. First, volunteers had a positive impact through their technical roles with POs, providing POs with the ability to more effectively support beneficiaries on issues relating to CC-DR-FS. Second, volunteers had an impact via indirect and CC-DR-FS non-technical means through their capacity building and organisational strengthening roles for POs. These two forms of contribution are described below.

Volunteers had positive impact through their technical roles relating to CC-DR-FS with POs. The contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to longer-term, high level impacts were apparent where volunteers were placed with POs who prioritised climate change and disaster resilience. For example, a PO described how a volunteer with specialist skills supported the organisation grow plants to help stabilise river banks and coastal zones. The PO noted:

In our forest nursery, we have never been raising mangrove seedlings before. But with this Australian volunteer, now we have mangrove seedlings in our nurseries that are planted along coastlines as part of addressing climate change issues and coastal erosion and degradation. So it contributes a lot (PO interviewee).

Another PO representative also described technical support a volunteer provided in the disaster and emergency response sector. The volunteer supported the organisation to train first responders to emergencies:

that's where we've got our paramedic and then our staff, fire fighters upskilled their skills, their knowledge with regards to pre-hospital treatment ... medical response. So AVI, Australian Volunteers Program has helped us big time (PO interviewee).

Another example of contribution was described by a volunteer who supported a PO to review and improve village disaster plans. This volunteer advised communities to comprehensively include a range of hazards in the plan, including pandemics, given the timing with COVID-19. The volunteer noted how this was achieved collaboratively with the beneficiaries (the community, via the village 'committee'):

So that certainly made a big contribution in terms of being proactive about it rather than waiting further down the track. So there have been quite a number of village emergency management plans updated to reflect pandemics, and that was done with committee members (Volunteer interviewee).

POs described the contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program through PO capacity development roles and organisational strengthening. Volunteers were able to contribute to POs' progress in CC-DR-FS through capacity building roles and support, though not directly focused on areas of CC-DR-FS. This contributes to the Australian Volunteers Program logic intermediate outcomes 'POs have strengthened their capacity and gained from the program' (see Annex 3). Most of the volunteers interviewed

for the evaluation described how they had supported their POs across a range of non-technical (and unrelated to CC-DR-FS) aspects of the organisation including:

- human resources and staff management
- project management
- monitoring and evaluation
- computer skills, IT and data management
- improved organisational policies and structures

The connection between this CC-DR-FS non-technical support, with the ability of the PO to deliver on its climate change priorities was recognised by one PO who noted:

With human resources... if you have a confident human resources manager... it makes things a lot easier when managing staff at all levels. So, again not directly related to climate change, but certainly had a huge effect on the way we delivered... So without it we wouldn't have been able to deliver as effectively (PO interviewee).

Similarly, another PO noted how its volunteer had supported the organisational capacity to manage projects, including additional externally funded projects:

So the volunteer really helped the office, building the capacity of the office to implement projects, and other skillsets that we needed (PO interviewee).

Partner organisation ‘stories of change’

Habitat for Humanity Fiji: improving disaster-resilient housing reconstruction

Habitat for Humanity Fiji: A shelter and construction focused organisation

Habitat for Humanity Fiji is a non-government organisation (NGO) working to support low income families and communities in Fiji to reduce substandard housing. The organisation works to improve building and construction expertise through the provision of training. Training is provided directly by Habitat for Humanity Fiji staff as well as through partnerships with vocational training institutes for certified training courses, which has the added benefit of improving employment opportunities.

The training is based on these eight key areas that are related to the most vulnerable components of construction for low income families that are – and communities - that are threatened by natural disasters (PO interviewee).

Training is provided by Habitat for Humanity Fiji on a range of issues that influence the sustainability and resilience of housing in Fijian communities. For example, addressing gender barriers in the construction industry is also a priority for Habitat for Humanity Fiji. Working with communities to provide inclusive opportunities for upskilling for all genders is a priority of the organisation.

Integrating climate change considerations within the work of Habitat for Humanity Fiji is an important organisational objective. As a result of climate change, tropical cyclones, storms and flooding events are increasing in frequency and intensity, and are affecting housing and community infrastructure. Habitat for Humanity formalised its ‘Build Back Safer’ training program following severe Tropical Cyclone Winston in 2016 (a category 5 storm, and the most intense cyclone on record, passing directly over Fiji) and has since increased focus on building resilience through disaster risk reduction training and other approaches to climate-resilient shelter.

Research informing post-disaster shelter reconstruction practices

Research and subsequent guidance developed by Habitat for Humanity Fiji has had positive impacts in the shelter sector in Fiji and across the Pacific. The research, undertaken in 2018-2019, explored resilient (re)construction in remote Fijian communities and aimed to provide insights to assist remote communities in their reconstruction efforts after disasters. Guidelines have been developed on the provision of affordable, resilient housing designs and tangible opportunities to improve local capabilities in rebuilding and retrofitting homes. The research involved consultations with 27 communities in six Fijian provinces. A comprehensive planning tool was developed as a result of the research, as noted in a media story:

In the form of a handbook and online resource, the tool gives best-practice shelter solutions, identifies country specific supply chains and community resources for use by humanitarian response agencies (Radio New Zealand story, 12 July 2019).

Prior to finalisation, Habitat for Humanity Fiji facilitated a peer review of the research. The peer review process involved a multi-stakeholder consultation with representatives from the construction industry and national government, including the Ministry of Housing who was represented by the Minister and policy advisors. This process enabled relevant shelter-based stakeholders to provide inputs into the research and to validate its findings.

The impact of the research is evident in two main ways. Firstly, research impact is evident through government uptake of research findings. The national government’s engagement in the peer review process enabled a high level of awareness of the research. As a result, the Ministry of Housing factored Habitat for Humanity Fiji’s research findings into their National Building Review. The second way research impact is evident is via its uptake and influence in other Pacific countries. Habitat for Humanity Fiji’s networks with other Habitat for Humanity partners and other NGOs funded through the Australian Humanitarian Partnership has enabled the research to be replicated, for example in Vanuatu. Country specific guidelines are therefore expected to be developed for Vanuatu, as has been the case in Fiji.

Contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program

Australian Volunteers have been hosted by Habitat for Humanity Fiji over several years, supporting the PO to strengthen the organisation in staff management, communications and project management. Most recently, an Australian Volunteer was placed with Habitat for Humanity Fiji between 2017 – 2019, supporting the organisation to strengthen their monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) systems.

The Australian Volunteer working on MERL made contributions to the research described above, and its subsequent outcomes, in several ways. Firstly, the volunteer initiated and coordinated the research project after discussions with the Director. The volunteer worked alongside Habitat for Humanity Fiji's Community Development Program team to ensure shared learnings and co-leadership. The volunteer described how the research emerged:

The first component was research, it was - let's research how people can actually build in these communities, looking very specifically at reconstruction in remote communities. And then from those learnings, let's look at how we can, as Habitat, change our designs and work with the community to build something that's stronger... So, I was involved in the coordinating that research component (Volunteer interviewee)

The research team were mindful that at each step of the way, the research should benefit Habitat for Humanity Fiji and its community beneficiaries. The volunteer supported the team to develop research tools such as interview guides in local i-Taukei language and ensure research findings and recommendations resonated for beneficiaries.

Secondly, the volunteer used their networks to seek out potential donors to secure funding to mobilise recommendations from the research. As a result of this, following the completion of the research, the New Zealand Government provided additional funds to develop a home-builders guide that summarises the building code.

Thirdly, the volunteer facilitated the research to be shared across multiple channels and for different audiences. For example, the research was presented for a primarily academic audience at the Pacific Update Conference at the University of the South Pacific in 2019. It has been shared for a general audience with media via channels such as Facebook and Twitter as well as radio (see story on [Radio New Zealand website](#)).

The PO noted that in addition to the impacts described above that relate specifically to the research, the capacity building provided by the Australian Volunteers Program over years had supported the organisation to increase their impact in their own work:

... without stepped capacity we would not have been able to progress our mission, we would not have been able to grow, we would not have been able to have the confidence within the staff, within the project managers to be able to take on more challenges.

... In the past, we were building one house at a time, but now we're building multiple – multiple houses, multiple projects going on at the same time. Right now, we have 33, 34 projects, active projects on at the same time, and in various stages of completion. But yeah, that's just a testament to the project management and administrative confidence that we have, and part of that has been as a result of the partnership with AVI (PO interviewee).

Habitat for Humanity Fiji were cognisant that over time, support provided by the Australian Volunteers Program had enabled significant organisational strengthening, which had far-reaching impacts, including the research on post disaster shelter, but also increased capacity in managing shelter construction.

Samoa Fire and Emergency Services Authority: increasing disaster resilience through its medical emergency response

Samoa Fire and Emergency Services Authority: Samoa's leading emergency service provider

Samoa Fire and Emergency Services Authority (SFESA) is an independent entity of the Government of Samoa established in 2005 to save lives and property through quality fire and emergency services and proactive safety awareness campaigns. SFESA promotes public awareness of what community members should do in case of a natural disaster or other emergency and which number to call to receive assistance.

As a result of climate change, there has been increased weather variability in Samoa such as more severe dry spells, heavy rains and cyclones. In the dry season, SFESA focus preparedness and response efforts on responding to forest fires. According to the PO, some farmers start small fires in the dry season to clear their farming land, but strong winds sometimes spread the fire and they escalate into forest fires.

In the wet season, SFESA are likely to undertake flood rescue. Heavy rains lead to flooding in low lying and coastal areas, and some communities need to be evacuated to safer ground. Cyclones often coincide with the wet season. SFESA work with the community and other organisations on disaster preparedness and response, integrating considerations of climate change.

Before it was not that bad but in the last ten years, we've seen the increase of those natural disasters which has affected the Pacific Islands. And during our days we've got our safety awareness and prevention team that goes out to the community, we work together with our other non-government organisations and also our Disaster Management Office, and...Red Cross and other organisations that assist us just as community; we work together and do a collective approach to make sure the safety message is given out (PO interviewee).

SFESA's disaster risk reduction work includes instructing the community to prepare an evacuation plan, with special attention to the needs of people with disabilities, the elderly, women and children.

Development of medical emergency response services

Since SFESA started, its medical division has grown in size and capability. Previously SFESA had an ambulance vehicle that was only utilised to transport emergency victims to the hospital. These ambulances were staffed by firefighters with some basic first aid, as there were no trained paramedics in SFESA. More recently, the ambulance vehicles have been upgraded with equipment and SFESA personnel have been trained in pre-hospital treatment skills. These changes have been supported by the Government of Samoa, which has provided increased funding for equipment and personnel to respond to disasters and emergencies.

SFESA has become the primary ambulance service for Samoa. Among their staff, they now have one Samoan qualified paramedic who graduated from Victoria University in Australia. In 2021, SFESA recruited 10 new ambulance officers to add to their medical division.

SFESA has built partnerships with Victoria Fire Risk, and the Australian and New Zealand Fire Council. The organisation is also part of the Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance that shares information with other Pacific-based emergency response agencies.

Contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program

SFESA has hosted an Australian Volunteer in three consecutive roles as Emergency Medical Services Mentor, Paramedic Trainer, and Paramedic Mentor. The volunteer developed the capacity of the ambulance and rescue crew and functioning of the medical division in several ways.

The volunteer developed training programs to enhance the skill levels and mentored staff in delivery of these trainings. One training developed was a two-week training program for first responders to emergencies called EMT 1, which covered advanced first aid and procedures for medical and trauma emergencies. Around 50 members or 80% SFESA staff have received that training. The other training developed was a simpler two-day training program with basic first aid and resuscitation techniques, that was delivered for the entire fire service including volunteer fire fighters. To ensure sustainability of the training programs, the volunteer built the capacity of their counterpart in the ambulance and rescue crew to deliver the trainings, so they were confident to continue implementing the trainings once the volunteer had returned to Australia. The impact of these trainings on quality of care is evident through this story of change shared by the volunteer:

When I first arrived in SFESA, I quickly became aware that equipment was old, used and needed replacing. An early challenge was the purchase of new defibrillators. Once they arrived, comprehensive training was provided to each member of staff. Several months later an ambulance responded to a GP clinic where a patient had gone into cardiac arrest and the doctor had commenced CPR. The crew arrived on scene and expertly commenced resuscitation efforts including applying the defibrillator. This patient was shocked twice on scene and regained a normal heart rhythm. When the crew returned two hours later the patient was awake. This patient left hospital alive and with good neurological outcomes. This is a fantastic achievement anywhere in the world but particularly here. This is one of my proudest moments (Volunteer interviewee).

Gender and social inclusion was a priority that the Australian Volunteers Program integrated in all volunteer assignments. The volunteer encouraged women fire fighters to take up professional development opportunities and delivered an all-women training. In addition, the volunteer took the ambulance crew through scenarios with victims with disabilities, and also responded directly to support people with disabilities.

The volunteer developed the functioning of the SFESA medical division in its resourcing, policies and organisational structure. The volunteer supported SFESA to request more funding from the government, by completing an inventory of the emergency response and medical equipment they needed and found quotes for each item, and the government fulfilled this funding request. The volunteer helped SFESA put in place policies and legislation to support the operations of the emergency medical response team.

So the Volunteer Program has helped us ... or advising us this is a good way forward and also the right approaches to do it and also with our training models, processes and policy that we have, we didn't have before, for us to ensure that what we do is right (PO interviewee).

The volunteer supported SFESA to set up a new personnel structure to enable the medical division to have dedicated staff for the ambulance service and this was approved by the Board. The volunteer also contributed to public awareness activities to improve community compliance with fire, accident and disaster risk reduction measures resulting in fewer accidents and unnecessary loss of life and property.

As reported by both the PO and the volunteer, there has been an increase in community confidence in SFESA, because of the training and increased skills of SFESA members.

[Our capacity] has been significantly improved in terms of the skills for our fire fighters and most of the confidence that the community has put on us because of the training and the skills of the fire fighters. So, see a lot of public perception has been positive and we also see because of that physical exchange of personnel, so we've looked at if we can continue ... like now for a few years that would be good because every incident and every emergency it's unique, it's different from each other. And also we've seen that the more we expose ourselves to those incidents and more training, [we are] also promoted for more and more training and more resources. And unless we have that right personnel or right person that can teach us and show us, that [external training] would be good (PO interviewee).

5.3 PART C: Efficiency, relevance and coherence

5.3.1 Assessment of efficiency

Efficiency of the Australian Volunteers Program

To a large extent, the Australian Volunteers Program operated in an efficient way to contribute to progress in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific. Three main aspects that support efficiency include well matched POs and volunteers; efficiencies associated with the in-country management team, and technology that supports remote connections. Evaluation participants had mixed views on the efficiency of remote volunteers. Ongoing efforts to improve efficiencies and build in new and innovative practices were also described.

The majority of evaluation participants noted a high level of program efficiency when there was a good match between PO and volunteer. Two POs and two volunteers described efficiencies when volunteers could work well within the PO's organisational culture, build relationships effectively and support the PO on agreed objectives. Conversely, when the volunteer was a poor fit and left the program early, one volunteer noted this was an inefficient use of resources given the time required for inductions and training.

Australian Volunteers Program in-country staff enhance efficiencies through their relationship and network building with POs, and their understanding of local context. Participants across the stakeholder groups described the efficiencies associated with Australian Volunteers Program in-country management teams (ICMTs). Regular meetings between POs and ICMTs, personal visits to PO offices, proactively sharing relevant information and events with POs, and facilitation of PO workshops, were all described by POs as activities that supported efficiencies. A volunteer noted the efficiencies associated with having local country program managers who understand the context in which POs were operating, and how this aligns with the high value placed on relationships in the Pacific. There was one dissenting view, with a volunteer being unimpressed with the efforts made by ICMT and their lack of support to volunteers and POs.

The Australian Volunteers Program's use of technology supports remote connectivity and is an enabler of efficiency. One PO noted the benefits of being able to connect to other POs using Zoom and other technology enabling remote connectivity. Another PO appreciated the ability to access online training and assignments, and the way the Australian Volunteers Program encourages and supports the use of technology to connect with POs, and for POs to connect with each other.

Yeah, I think it's very efficient because high tech advance – high technology is helping a lot, you know? Anything ... that you want to get done or share or get on, it's just a matter of getting connected I think. So even in the times of the COVID, it's helping a lot, there's a lot of time involved in, you know, talking in Zoom with some of the partner organisations overseas. So personally I think it's [the Australian Volunteers Program is] becoming more cheaper, more cost-effective because of high technology (PO interviewee)

There were mixed views about remote volunteering and efficiency outcomes. Some evaluation participants valued the remote volunteering modality, describing the associated efficiencies, particularly when the volunteer had already worked in-country and face-to-face relationships had already been established. For example, one PO described a successful remote volunteering assignment that occurred due to COVID-19 repatriations, where the volunteer was able to continue their support to the PO from Australia. Another PO described how a six-month remote volunteer assignment had supported the organisation through exchange of information and online training.

Another PO noted how having multiple remote volunteers concurrently could be an efficient way to support the PO achieve its objectives. Australian Volunteers Program staff interviewees noted the importance of remote volunteers having a role in a broader mix of volunteering modalities, particularly given travel restrictions associated with COVID-19.

Two POs noted their preference for 'on the ground' volunteers, with one interviewee noting:

I would say, with the remote assignment, it does come with its challenges. Given that we probably much prefer the person was here (PO interviewee).

Volunteers interviewed for the evaluation who had been both in-country and remote agreed that it was far easier to support POs by being in-country.

Most POs responding to the survey were satisfied by the Australian Volunteers Program’s response to feedback. Survey questions 14²³ and 15²⁴ asked POs about whether or not they had provided feedback to the Australian Volunteers Program (14) and if so, how they rated the response (15). Results are shown in Figure 5.

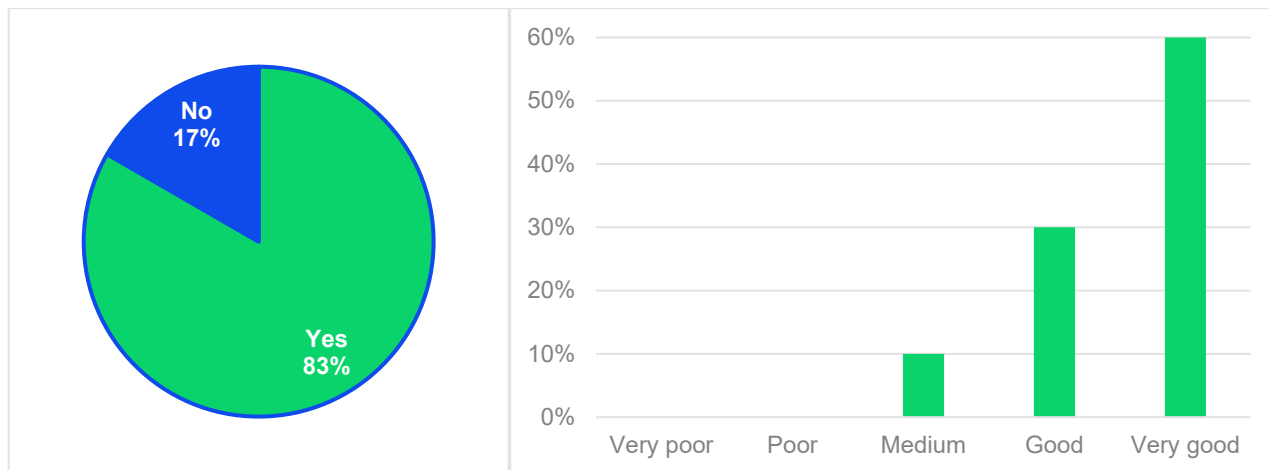


Figure 5: Results from survey question 14 (left) and 15 (right)

As can be seen in the results for question 14, most respondents (10 out of 12 responses) reported that they had provided feedback to the Australian Volunteers Program. Question 15 shows how the Australian Volunteers Program responded to PO feedback. Out of the 10 POs who responded, they all rated the response to feedback favourably, with 10% (one out of 10) ‘medium’, 30% (three out of 10) and 60% (six out of 10) responding ‘very good’.

Australian Volunteers Program staff described ways the program was exploring improvements to efficiency. Staff were keenly aware of the need to focus on efficiency of the program, and noted that learning and improving, and considering new ways of working were discussed and trialled to improve the use of resources:

So think[ing] about clustering volunteers, thinking about groups of volunteers that are remote now. Different modalities by which you can still get the same outcome. I think that’s where we look at becoming more efficient, and that’s the evolution of the program (Australian Volunteers Program interviewee).

Further improvements suggested by Australian Volunteers Program evaluation participants included:

- clustering of volunteers
- discussing new types of volunteers including local volunteers
- consideration of shorter-term assignments

Challenges to efficiency

The limited connections to other DFAT-funded programs limits potential efficiencies. As described below in more detail in Section 5.3.3 (Coherence), the Evaluation Team found that the Australian Volunteers Program could be better connected with DFAT-funded climate change and food security activities programs. Doing so would enable the sharing of skills and possibly open up opportunities for new relationships and connections that would improve the impact of the Australian Volunteers Program.

²³ 14. “Have you provided any feedback to the Australian Volunteers Program on how it can improve its support to Partner Organisations?”

²⁴ 15. “When you gave feedback to the Australian Volunteers Program, how do you rate the response provided?”

Limitations in the supply of specialist climate change skills can contribute to inefficiencies in sourcing volunteers. An Australian Volunteers Program interviewee noted that some of the skills and expertise POs request support for within the CC-DR-FS impact area are still emerging, with relatively few professionals having such expertise. For example, experts working in improving access to climate finance, gender and climate change experts, or experts working in the integration of climate change into sectors such as education, WASH or health, are likely to be in high demand in paid jobs. These experts may be unwilling to work in a volunteer role given opportunities for employment. The time taken for the Australian Volunteers Program to seek out volunteers with this appropriate expertise is inefficient, given the supply is low. The Australian Volunteers Program needs to consider these efficiency implications when discussing potential volunteer placements with POs.

5.3.2 Assessment of relevance

To a large extent, the Australian Volunteers Program has been suitable for POs in the Pacific working on CC-DR-FS. Respondents to the online survey and interviewees across stakeholder groups described evidence of suitability. Approximately half of the POs interviewed (three or four out of eight) had development objectives explicitly focused on CC-DR-FS, while the other half worked on these issues in indirect ways. Two out of eight PO interviewees said the Program was not suitable, citing reasons of currently not having a volunteer and being fully staffed, to personal circumstances of the volunteer necessitating the volunteer leaving the assignment early before objectives were achieved. Examples of suitability are described below, drawing on interview and survey results. Suggested areas which could be addressed in order to strengthen the suitability of the Program are also provided.

Evidence of suitability of the Program to POs

Volunteer skills, mindsets and capacity building have been suitable in supporting POs. Several aspects of volunteers were raised by interviewees that demonstrate volunteers have been suitable in supporting POs. Volunteer capability to provide effective capacity building of PO staff members was most commonly cited, raised by four POs and two volunteers. A PO described the way non-technical (unrelated to CC-DR-FS) capacity building supported the PO to progress its development objectives:

The majority of the engagement with the Australian Volunteers Program is based on capacity building of our team to be able to deliver those outputs, so not directly related to delivering the outputs, but building our capacity to be able to deliver (PO interviewee).

A volunteer also reflected:

I think the capacity building that I was able to do in really upskilling their team it took a while to identify that member really and that team to get all that groundwork sort of sorted you know, that they wanted to build that. But yeah, I think it was certainly appropriate in improving the emergency services (Volunteer interviewee).

Volunteers also provided specialist training and led strategic thinking within POs. Two POs described how specialist training was relevant to them, one noting it supported them 'big time'. Another PO described the training provided by a volunteer that supported PO staff and community members to better understand the impacts of climate change, and also supported them in identifying local solutions.

The [volunteer] role was basically to do trainings for identifying the communities where we had to develop a climate management team from the different localities that we work in, and they had to go through different trainings on identifying the generalised impacts of climate change, and also what some localised strategies or solutions that we can be able to ... [implement] to assist the communities in addressing climate change in their own communities (PO interviewee).

Other personal attributes of volunteers that supported POs were mentioned by POs and volunteers. These attributes included volunteer's specialist skills, which were appreciated by two POs relating to village disaster management and forestry. The mindset of mutual learning, and volunteer and PO being open to growth was raised by a volunteer as an important aspect of suitability of the Program.

PO's are progressing their organisational development objectives with contributions of the Australian Volunteers Program. The evaluation found evidence from multiple stakeholder groups that POs were progressing their development objectives. Volunteers described how they had supported POs in improving organisational systems and techniques. Support was provided in relation to monitoring and evaluation, as well as improved systems that supported POs more effectively achieving their goals. One volunteer introduced new systems that improved plant growth and plant health, and secured funding through a regional PO to take PO staff on a field visit to a neighbouring Pacific country to observe different approaches to plant propagation. PO staff greatly appreciated this opportunity and the POs practices were improved as a result.

We were able to take the staff over to Fiji and look at the techniques that they were using in their national nursery in Fiji, so that was fantastic to be able to bring some of their techniques back to Vanuatu and implement those new techniques as well, so that was great (Volunteer interviewee).

In the survey, POs were asked to rate the suitability of the Australian Volunteers Program to support the PO's objectives. The most common response was 'very high' (43%, six out of 14 responses). Other responses were 'high' (21%, three out of 14), 'medium' (14%, two out of 14) and 'low' (7%, one out of 14). Two POs (14%) did not respond to the question. Results are seen in Figure 6.

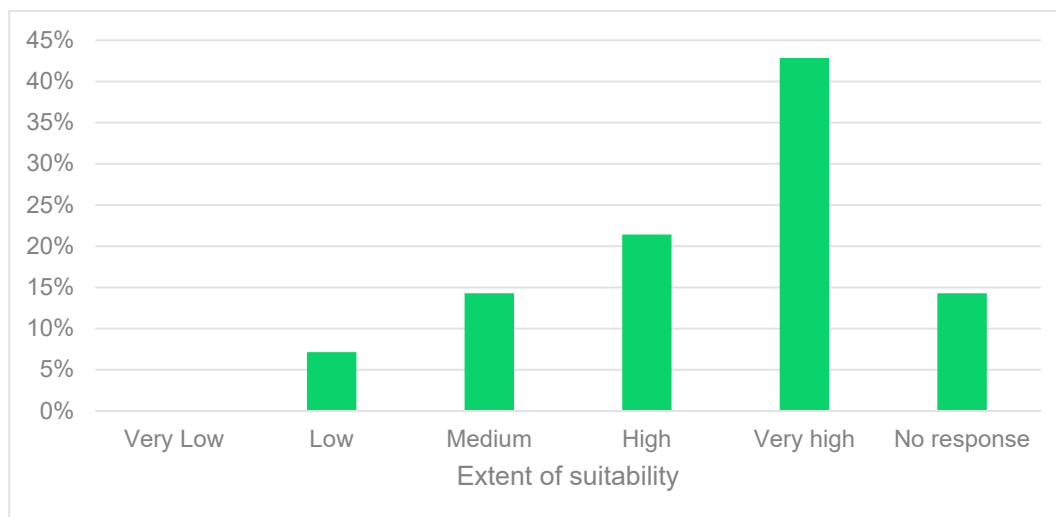


Figure 6: Suitability of Australian Volunteers Program to support PO objectives

In the survey, respondents were also asked: "In what ways has the Australian Volunteers Program been suitable to strengthen your organisations capacity?". Common themes of these responses are listed below, with the majority of examples being non-technical (unrelated to CC-DR-FS), and more relating to broader organisational strengthening.

- Strategic and policy development and advice
- Human resources and administration
- Capacity building and training of staff
- Resource development
- Research data collection and analysis
- Enhanced PO monitoring, evaluation and learning systems
- Business development and fundraising
- Project management, enhanced PO processes / programs and financial management
- IT support
- Specialist knowledge transfer
- Media, filming

Australian Volunteers Program suitability was demonstrated through non-technical (unrelated to CC-DR-FS) support and flexibility of assignments. Three Australian Volunteers Program interviewees described how relevance of the program was demonstrated through the non-technical CC-DR-FS support, but rather organisational management support to POs. Such support enables POs to lead the technical aspects themselves:

I think the biggest way that we're doing that [demonstrating relevance] is supporting our Partner Organisations, not necessarily in addressing technical expertise in addressing climate change directly, but in other ways such as supporting, I guess supporting organisational development which it has been a bigger aspect of the program (Australian Volunteers Program interviewee).

Two volunteers described how the flexibility of the Program enabled them to adapt themselves and their assignments to changing PO needs. Situations within POs changed over the course of volunteers' time with their POs, and volunteers appreciated that they were able to adapt their assignments to meet the changing needs of the PO, with the support of the ICMT.

Areas to strengthen suitability of the Program

The evaluation found evidence of several ways the relevance of the Australian Volunteers Program could be strengthened. Evidence provided is at three levels. Firstly, relating to the selection of POs; secondly relating to support to volunteers; and thirdly the focus of the program in relation to the CC-DR-FS impact area.

Improvements in the selection of POs would enhance relevance. Evaluation findings highlight that improvements could be made to ensure POs are more effectively prepared to host a volunteer. A volunteer noted they did not have a counterpart until six months into their position, which made capacity building difficult. Interviewees also described that the PO needs to be clear about their genuine need for a volunteer and where the volunteer will add capacity. One PO noted that at the moment, they had full staff capacity so there was no need for a volunteer. Evidence from the evaluation indicates this was not always the case and volunteers sometimes felt they were working as a staff member, as described below.

I found like a lot of the time I was just doing the job for them, I was writing the reports that really someone else should have been doing... I don't feel like at the beginning it was, I was just being used as an employee (Volunteer interviewee).

Suitability of the Program would be enhanced by volunteers having improved cultural sensitivity and awareness. One volunteer described the tension they felt working as a 'white Australian volunteer' in the aid sector, and how they were actively trying to think through their role in decolonising aid. Additional support could be provided to volunteers that addresses decolonisation, power and privilege and how this relates directly to their position as a volunteer with a PO in the Pacific.

Australian Volunteers Program support to POs on climate change would improve Program relevance. While some POs (approximately half those interviewed) understood the relevance of climate change to their organisations, other POs either did not comprehend its relevance to their work, or were unsure how to integrate into their programming. This finding demonstrates the need for some POs to broaden their awareness of climate change impacts, and how climate change will likely influence their work. For example, a PO working on water, sanitation and hygiene issues noted that:

I guess I could say none of the work has been particularly targeted towards climate resilience or climate change ... I guess, and even ... the office is slowly moving into that, we're in the kind of scoping and trying out different models at the moment, but we haven't got any engaged at the moment (PO interviewee).

5.3.3 Assessment of coherence

Two aspects of coherence were assessed as part of this evaluation. The first is the extent to which POs' development objectives in CC-DR-FS are consistent with other actors' interventions in the Pacific. The second aspect is the extent to which there are synergies between the Australian Volunteers Program and other DFAT interventions in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific. Evaluation findings are provided below.

Coherence with other actors' interventions

To a large extent, POs' development objectives are consistent with government policies and programs, at the national, regional and international levels. Six Pacific POs interviewed described how their work aligned with government. At the national level, POs were aligned with specific policies and institutions in sectors such as housing, water and poverty reduction. 3 POs also described how they were aligned with national government policies on climate change mitigation and adaptation. At the regional level, POs were guided by several treaties and agreements, including the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific. POs also described alignment with international agreements such as the Paris Climate Agreement (2015).

The Social Network Analysis (SNA) from POs working in the CC-DR-FS impact area showed strong connections between POs and governments. Connections within government was most clearly seen in Vanuatu, where the Vanuatu Ministry of Climate Change and National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) was connected to both the Vanuatu Government Department of Water Resources and Vanuatu Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Samoa Ministry of Women, Community and Social, Samoa Ministry of Health, Samoa Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and Samoa Water Authority were also connected with POs. Not surprisingly given the links with the Australian Volunteers Program, 5 POs listed the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) as an organisation supporting their development objectives.

To a large extent, PO's development objectives are consistent with objectives of non-government and civil society organisations, as described in PO interviews. Interviews with POs indicated the alignment of their development objectives with local civil society organisations in addressing climate change impacts. POs also described collaboration with Queensland University and international non-governmental organisations CARE and Caritas on climate change projects.

In addition, the SNA showed two POs were connected with local Vanuatu NGO Live & Learn, three POs were connected with INGO World Vision, and several POs had fragmented ties with other NGO/CSOs.

The Social Network Analysis (SNA) results show that POs are part of a broader group of organisations working across the CC-DR-FS impact area. Figure 7 shows a visualisation of the POs' networks by location and Figure 8 shows a visualisation of the POs' networks by organisation type, from the SNA findings. These figures show the network is connected, with no outlying arrangements separated from the central network (as per other Deep Dive SNA visualisations). The network also shows that many POs have unique networks that they operate within at national scale, and balance this with international partners.

Regional, international and Australian organisations (see blue, black and light green squares in Figure 7) play key connecting roles, as would be expected of these types of organisations. It is often these organisations that maintain the only tie to POs and their unique networks. The most common connecting organisation was United Nations Development Programme (UNDP - O18 – large blue square in centre), which eight POs were tied with. Six POs described a connection with The Pacific Community (SPC O13 – large blue square in centre left), which is an international development organisation governed by 22 Pacific island countries and territories and six developed countries with strategic interests in the region. As described by one PO interviewed,

We do have the Pacific Community and in Fiji we also exchange our way forward, our plans and also objectives in terms of (disaster) response and resilience. So we do advise this and so we adjust and align our plans so that it can reflect on those areas (PO interviewee).

Five POs described a connection to the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP O15 – middle-sized blue square in centre), the region's key intergovernmental organisation for environment and sustainable development. SPREP has hosted Australian Volunteers Program volunteers in the past, both at the headquarters in Samoa and at national offices e.g. in Vanuatu. These regional organisations are often the link to organisations that have otherwise fragmented networks, meaning they are critical for some POs to remain connected to the network or system relevant to CC-DR-FS. See 'Areas to strengthen coherence' below for suggested ways to leverage the influence of these regional organisations.

Some POs have their own networks within the same country that are not shared by other POs, and are connected by single ties to regional organisations. This may be due to the Australian Volunteers

Program selecting POs individually and the lack of operational connections between the organisations, who work across different sub-themes of the impact area. There are some exceptions such as Vanuatu and Samoa where multiple POs reported partnering with similar partner organisations.

Many POs partner with organisations from their own country (same coloured circles in Figure 7) as well as organisations outside of their country (different coloured squares in Figure 7). This supports the finding stated above that POs' development objectives are consistent with CC-DR-FS policies and programs at the national and transnational levels. The SNA also shows there are cliques of POs within this network that appear to be often geographically bound to similar locations. This may be due to the nature of the geography of the Pacific being made up of hundreds of islands with varying populations and infrastructure, with some central regional engagement from the capital cities.

Many POs were supported by organisations of a range of different types in CC-DR-FS. From the SNA analysis, the most common type of organisation supporting POs in descending order are: national government, international NGO, donor, international agency, local NGO, research/educational institution, subnational government, private sector, national NGO, religious organisation, community, regional organisation/NGO intergovernmental, local government, government statutory body, state owned enterprise (see Figure 8). The squares indicate where PO have listed organisation that they work with outside of their country (n=60), while the circles indicate organisations that POs partner with within their country (n=123).

Whilst the SNA provides insights into how POs are coherent with other actors' interventions, the evaluation team acknowledge its limitations and the partial picture it provides. It is important to acknowledge that this SNA is a quantitative analysis undertaken with qualitative instruments, being the online survey which was only responded to by 14 POs out of 37 POs who were sent the survey (38% response rate). It would be best within a SNA survey for there to be an iterative approach, wherein, all the POs contacted would have completed the survey, and all POs partner organisations, would have also been contacted and have completed this survey. It is also important to note that social networks offer a snapshot in time of the interactions that exist, in this instance, between POs and their partner organisations within their country and outside of their country since 2018. Networks are not quantitatively comparable unless there is a longitudinal survey of the same actors and the same questions have been asked within the survey.

Another limitation and observation is that this 'network' was not purposefully set up to be a network. Rather, this was an exploratory enquiry into the interaction between POs and their partner organisations. This may be influencing and potentially driving the network structure, resulting in the multiple cliques or discrete networks that the POs report. If we had focused on a particular sub-theme within CC-DR-FS impact area, we might have seen a more connected network of organisations

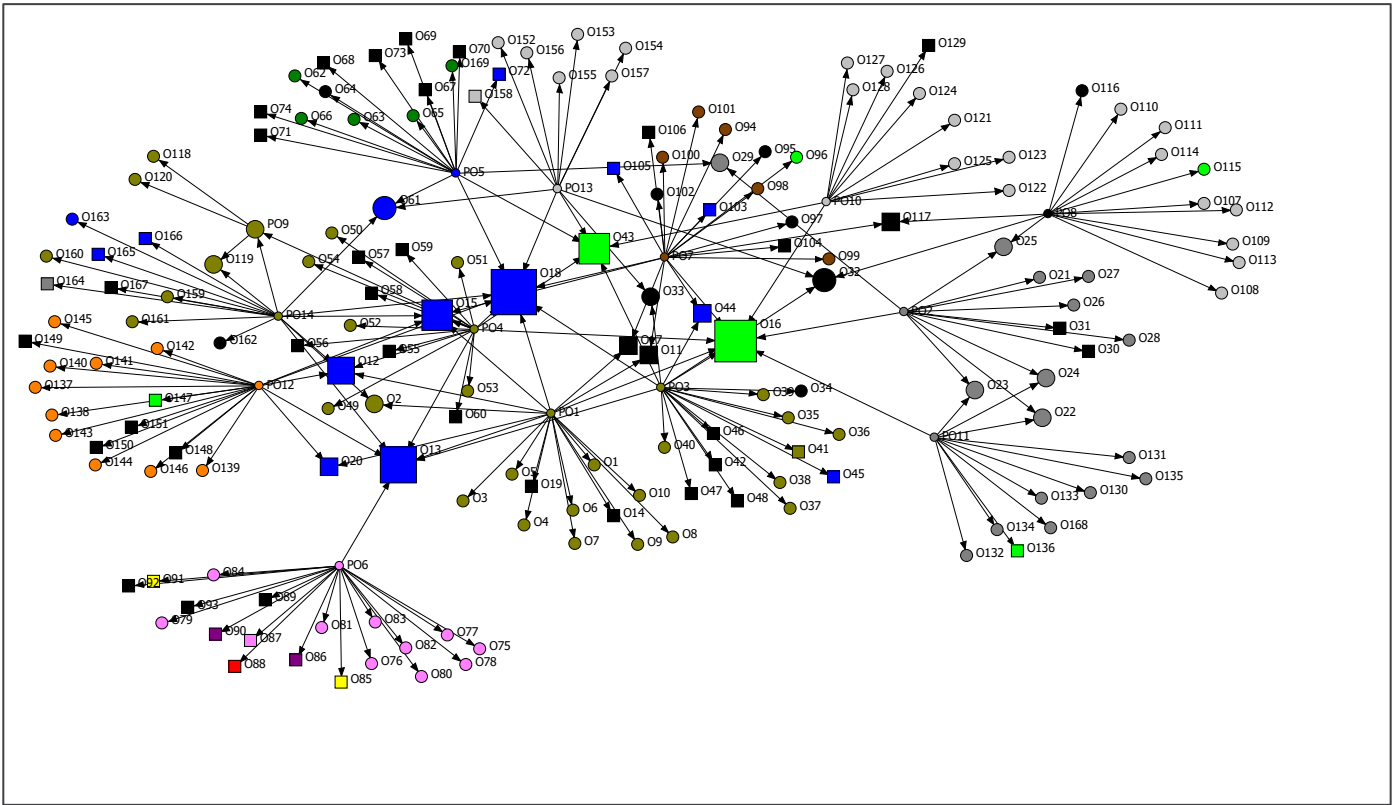


Figure 7: Visualisation of Australian Volunteers Program Pacific network: Location

Table 1: Legend for Figure 7

A = Partner Organisation; C = organisation nominated by PO				
NODE COLOUR REPRESENTS ORGANISATION LOCATION:				
Australia = Light Green	Fiji = Dark Green	Federates States of Micronesia = Pink	Guam = Red	International = Black
Marshal Islands = Yellow	Pacific Regional = Dark Blue	Palau = Purple	Papua New Guinea = Light Grey	Samoa = Dark Grey
Solomon Islands = Orange	Tonga = Brown	Vanuatu = Khaki		
SHAPE REPRESENTS within / outside Country				
Circle = Within Country			Square = Outside of country	
SIZE OF THE NODE DENOTES IN-DEGREE:				
The larger the node, the greater the in-degree of that node.				

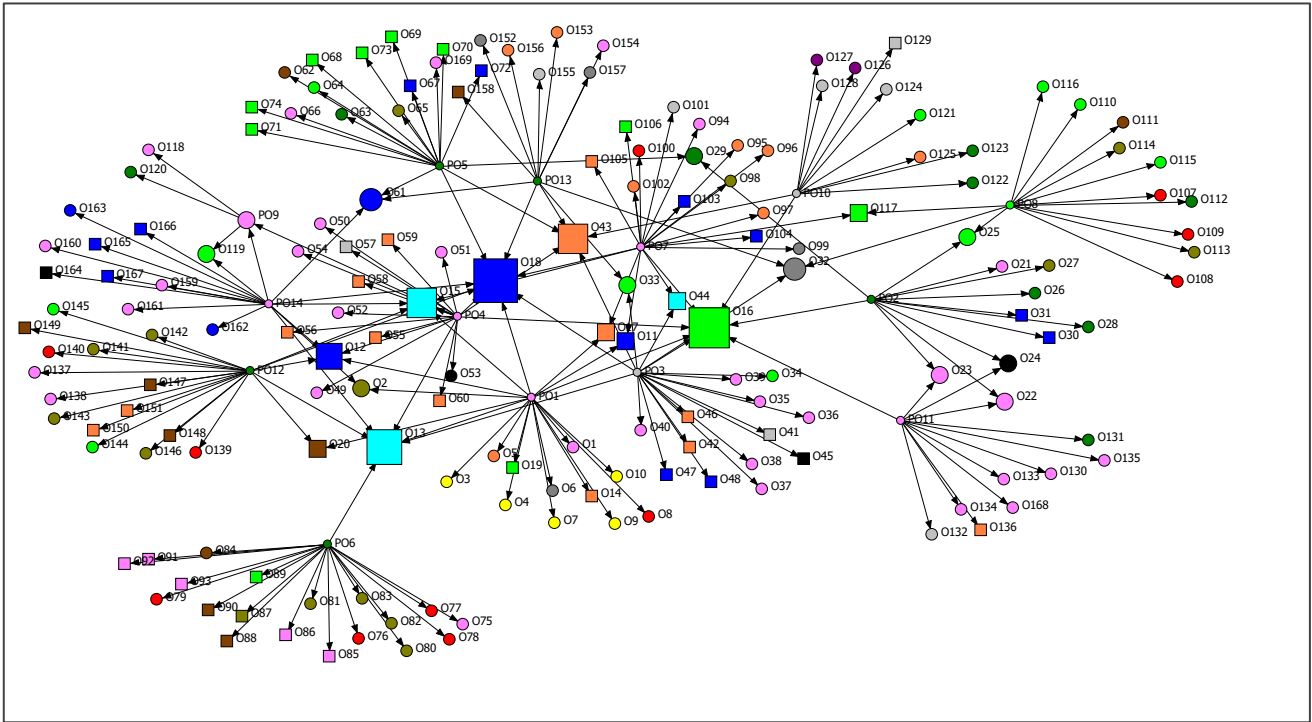


Figure 8: Visualisation of Pacific Australian Volunteers Program network: Organisation type

Table 2: Legend for Figure 8

PO = Partner Organisation ; O = organisation nominated by PO				
NODE COLOUR REPRESENTS ORGANISATION TYPE:				
Government - national = Pink	Government – sub- national = Red	Government – local = Purple	NGO - International = Light Green	NGO (national and other) = Dark Green
NGO – local = Khaki	Donor = Orange	Religious organisation = Dark Grey	International agency (e.g. UN agencies) = Dark Blue	Intergovernmental = Light Blue
Research/Education institute = Light Green	Religious Organisation = Dark Grey	Small business enterprise / private sector = Light Grey	Community = Yellow	Other = Black
SHAPE REPRESENTS within / outside Country				
Circle = Within Country			Square = Outside of country	
SIZE OF THE NODE DENOTES IN-DEGREE:				
The larger the node, the greater the in-degree of that node.				

POs’ development objectives in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific are consistent with other actors’ interventions, as evidenced by a ‘systems mapping’ exercise. The systems mapping was undertaken to help situate the work of the POs in relation to the impact area and the sub-themes of CC-DR-FS. Systems mapping facilitated learning on the coherence of the Australian Volunteers Program to the regional context of CC-DR-FS. A detailed overview of the systems mapping method and results is provided in Annex 6.

The systems map (see Figure 9) shows climate change and disaster resilience to be heavily interlinked. This finding reflects how the policies and institutions in the Pacific often address both climate change and disaster resilience, demonstrating recognition of how disasters are exacerbated by climate change. Positive drivers for addressing climate change impacts and enabling disaster resilience which are consistent with POs’ development objectives include: recognition by development actors of traditional knowledge and local

capacity in CCA and DR; community-based ecosystem approach to natural resource management and CCA; healthy terrestrial and marine ecosystems; localisation of development and humanitarian assistance; training and capacity building of Pacific people; strength of community resilience; level of disaster preparedness. To a lesser extent, POs were focusing on integrated CCA and DR interventions; influence of faith-based leaders and institutions on CCA and DR; were aligned with strategic frameworks to support CCA and DR; and regional and national policies for CCA and DR.

Importantly, the work of POs seeks to address drivers which have a negative impact on CC-DR in the current state of the system. POs are working to address exploitation of natural resources and deforestation; respond to increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events and other environmental impacts; and promote inclusion and meaningful participation of marginalised groups in decision-making (especially youth and women).

In the systems map, food security sits as a more discrete cluster of elements, with particular issues related to agriculture, health, nutrition and food consumption less connected to climate and disaster resilience. Positive drivers for addressing food security which are consistent with PO's development objectives include: climate resilience of local Pacific food crops; agricultural productivity; and adaptation of Pacific people's diets. POs are also addressing negative drivers in order to maintain food security, including: access to safe and nutritious food; and impacts of COVID-19 pandemic (on livelihoods and wellbeing).

Compared to Deep Dive 1 and Deep Dive 2, the systems map for Deep Dive 3 covered an impact area with three sub-areas which had more disperse, complex and overlapping drivers. The human ecology systems framework was used to aid comprehension of the complex system by grouping thematic elements into four major clusters relevant to sustainability challenges: state of discourses, institutions, ecosystem and human wellbeing. Within each of these clusters, there are multiple variables and interlinkages. The complexity of the system may make it more difficult for the Australian Volunteers Program to design strategic interventions and find evidence of impact across the impact area.

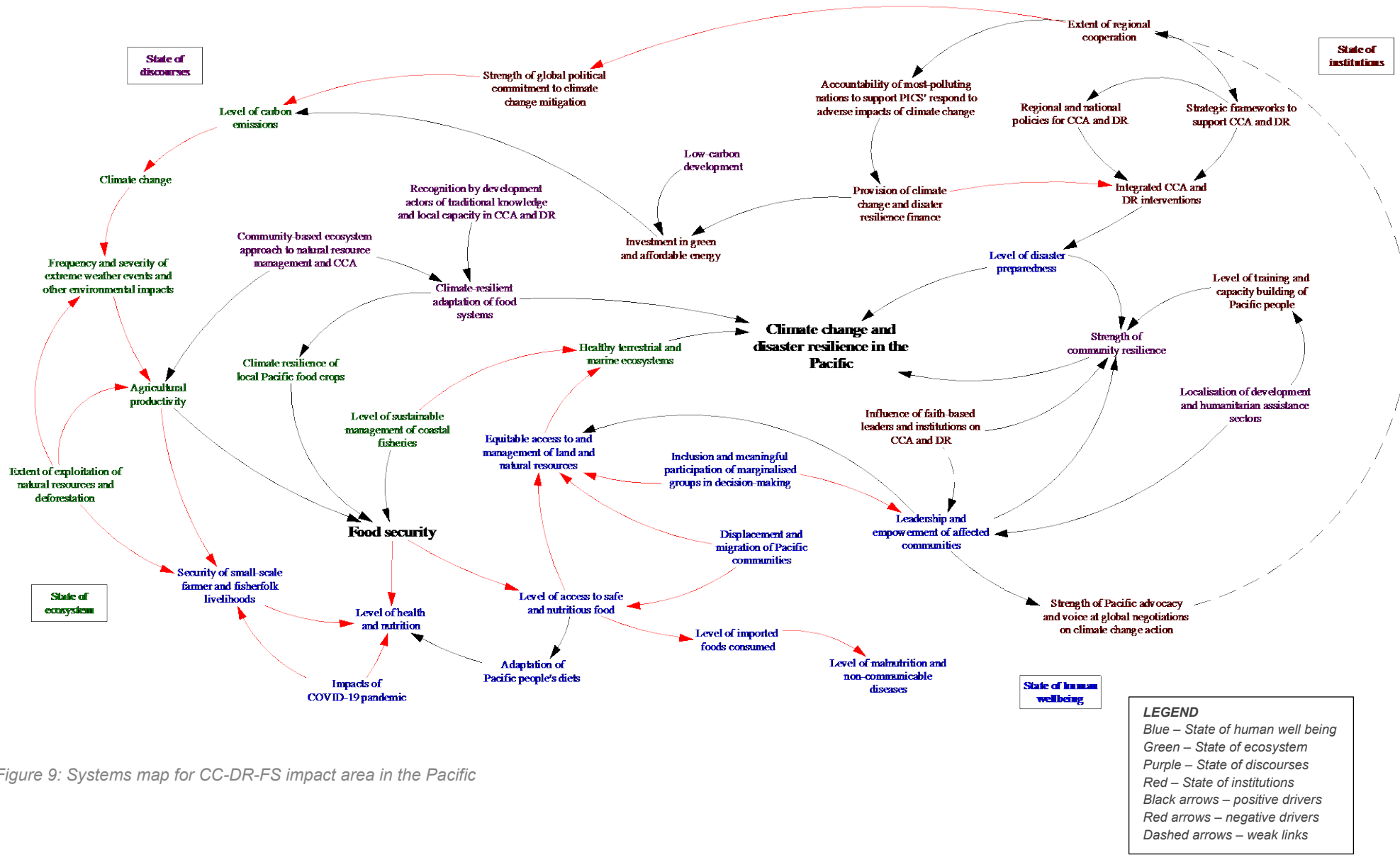


Figure 9: Systems map for CC-DR-FS impact area in the Pacific

Coherence with other DFAT interventions

To a medium extent, the evaluation found that Australian Volunteers Program links to other DFAT initiatives in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific. Linkages between the Australian Volunteers Program and other DFAT interventions were most evident in disaster resilience, and linkages in climate change and food security sub-areas were found to a lesser extent. Evidence of linkages are provided below. Given the breadth of thematic elements within this impact area (see Systems map Figure 9), and organisations working in CC-DR-FS (see SNA Figure 7), there are also opportunities to strengthen connections between DFAT-funded initiatives within CC-DR-FS and the Australian Volunteers Program.

Evidence of links between Australian Volunteers Program and DFAT Posts in the Pacific region were described by several Australian Volunteers Program interviewees and volunteers. According to one Australian Volunteers Program interviewee:

We usually meet quite regularly with DFAT Post ...and if they had areas that they'd like us to join in, sometimes they encourage us to work with the existing projects that they have. And then other times they would prefer we don't, but it depends on the project, but DFAT have a very big influence on where the assignments, the volunteers go in-country, in [this Pacific country] more than some other countries (Australian Volunteers Program interviewee).

Our evaluation also found a few examples of the Australian Volunteers Program facilitating and strengthening relationships between POs and the Australian High Commission. One PO (as noted in 5.1.2) reported that the Australian High Commissioner conducted a site visit to their office and the Australian Volunteer did a presentation highlighting their activities in disaster risk reduction.

There are several linkages that the Australian Volunteers Program has with other DFAT investments in the Pacific. These investments include the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) relating to food security, RedR which is an Australian disaster relief and humanitarian assistance organisation, and Global Green Growth Institute which works on government action for climate change.

The evaluation found that the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP), partnership between Australian Government and Australian NGOs in disaster response and preparedness, was effective in building connections between POs with other NGOs in the Pacific. Through the AHP, the Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CAN DO) network of Australia is implementing disaster preparedness activities in the Pacific. The Australian Volunteers Program has developed relationships with AHP over recent years, and five volunteer assignments with AHP POs were ready for departure in 2020. However, COVID-19 halted the volunteers' deployment. POs interviewed for the evaluation commented on the positive benefits AHP has had on collaboration between humanitarian organisations in PICs. One PO shared:

I think [the Australian Humanitarian Partnership has] been instrumental in breaking down some of the barriers between CSOs in Fiji. And so, we have been able to work together, I think a lot more than we did in the past. There was a lot of territoriality in the past, you know, because everybody's after the same funding (PO interviewee).

This finding is supported by our systems mapping activity which identified the importance of integrated climate change adaptation and disaster resilience activities to make more efficient use of resources and effective mainstreaming of risks into development planning and budgets. Climate change and disaster resilience is being mainstreamed to varying degrees in Pacific governance structures, from traditional and local governance (e.g. councils of chiefs, village disaster response committees) to national ministries, as well as regional institutions. Regional institutions coordinating and implementing climate change action include SPREP, SPC, The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF), some of which are present in the SNA visualisation in Figure 7.

The Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance (PIEMA), jointly funded by DFAT and New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), has facilitated connection between emergency response organisations across the Pacific (some of which are POs) in the disaster resilience sector. While there have been some Australian Volunteers Program volunteers placed with PIEMA agencies, as noted in the quote below, this is one DFAT-funded program (also with broader links to Australian emergency response organisations) where connections could be strengthened.

The Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance, so we come together and meet every year. So now we do it online where we're sharing information and look at the ways out, we can tap into the different society and also how to tackle different disasters (PO interviewee).

The surveyed POs were asked if they had connections to other Australian organisations beyond the Australian Volunteers Program. Their responses are seen in Figure 10: 67% (eight out of 12) POs responded favourably that they did have connections or relationships with other Australian organisations. 33% (four out of 12) said they did not have connections or relationships with other Australian organisations. Organisations listed by POs are below.

- Melbourne Fire Brigade
- Regional NGO office of the PO (mentioned by two POs)
- Embassy of Australia to the Federated States of Micronesia
- Geoscience Australia
- University of the Sunshine Coast
- University of Tasmania
- DFAT (mentioned by two POs)
- Australian Red Cross
- Red R
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia
- Governance for Growth
- Pacific Trade and Invest
- Pacific Rise
- Market Development Facility (MDF)

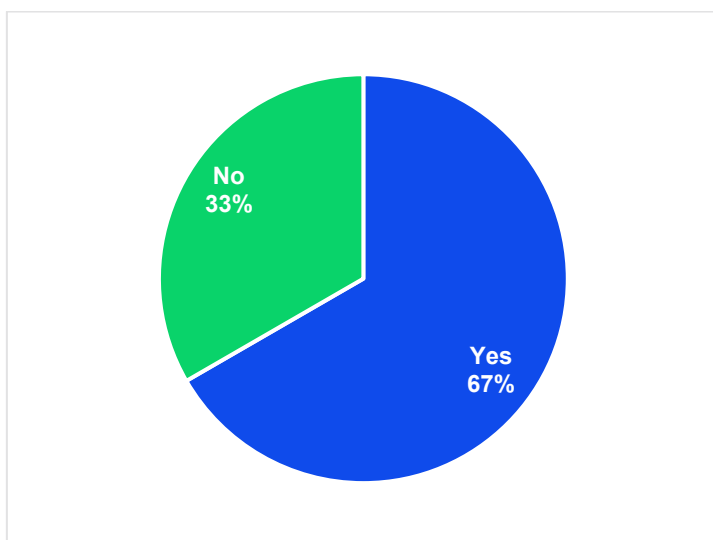


Figure 10: POs connected or who have relationships with other Australian organisations

The list of Australian organisations mentioned by POs includes some key Australian organisations connected to DFAT investments (e.g. Melbourne Fire Brigade, who partner with Samoa Fire and Emergency Services through the PIEMA Project, and the Market Development Facility, which is a DFAT funded initiative promoting sustainable economic development). However, the list of Australian organisations provided by POs does not provide strong evidence of connections to many DFAT programs²⁵ in CC-DR-FS. Further inquiry would be needed to assess the strength of connection between Australian Volunteers Program and DFAT initiatives in each Pacific country the Program operates. Unfortunately, DFAT staff were not available for interview, with only one DFAT Post staff member engaging in the evaluation, providing an emailed response to interview questions.

Areas to strengthen coherence of the Program

²⁵ For example, Australia Pacific Climate Partnership, COSPPac2, Gov4Res, PIEMA, AHP Disaster READY, Pacific Women

The evaluation found evidence of two ways the Australian Volunteers Program could be more coherent with other actors' interventions and DFAT interventions in the Pacific region.

Coherence of the Program would be strengthened by the Australian Volunteers Program sharpening its focus on specific elements of the CC-DR-FS system. Evaluation findings highlight the breadth of system elements the Australian Volunteers Program could potentially try to influence. POs are working in many different sectors within the CC-DR-FS impact area, and their networks are somewhat fragmented. The Australian Volunteers Program should consider identifying a smaller and more targeted set of system elements and consolidate efforts to support POs working on these aspects, to achieve more impact. An example of sharpened focus could be to focus on the sub-area of climate change which intersects with the Human Rights impact area, and support POs which promote inclusion of youth, women and people with disabilities in decision-making regarding climate action.

Sharpening the Program's focus on specific elements of the CC-DR-FS system would encourage partnerships between Partner Organisations and DFAT-funded projects and activities. Given the breadth of development programs DFAT supports across the impact area, sharpening focus on specific elements of the CC-DR-FS system would increase possibilities for partnerships. It is expected that consolidating volunteer assignments on a few elements of the CC-DR-FS system (a programmatic approach) would optimise expertise and create more capacity for the Australian Volunteers Program to link with DFAT interventions. For example, the Australian Volunteers Program could sharpen its focus in the disaster resilience sub-area through working with National Disaster Management Offices as Partner Organisations and strengthening partnerships with emergency service agencies in the Pacific through PIEMA.

Recognise the influential role of regional organisations in the CC-DR-FS impact area. The SNA revealed the key connecting role regional organisations play, particularly for POs working in countries with few or no relationships to any other organisations outside their own country. By strengthening relationships with these influential regional organisations, the Australian Volunteers Program could open up opportunities for POs to access additional support, connections, funding opportunities and collaborations for increased impact.

5.4 PART D: Sustainability

5.4.1 Evidence of sustainability

There is a high degree of evidence of ongoing benefits in CC-DR-FS attributable to POs and the Australian Volunteers Program.

In the online survey POs were asked, “How likely is it that benefits from the Australian Volunteers Program will continue for your organisation, to progress your development objectives / organisational mission?” Of the respondents, 21% of responses (three out of 14) were ‘medium likelihood’, 36% of responses (five out of 14) were ‘likely’ and 21% of responses (three out of 14) were ‘very likely’. 21% of responses (three out of 14) were ‘don’t know / no response’ as seen in Figure 11.

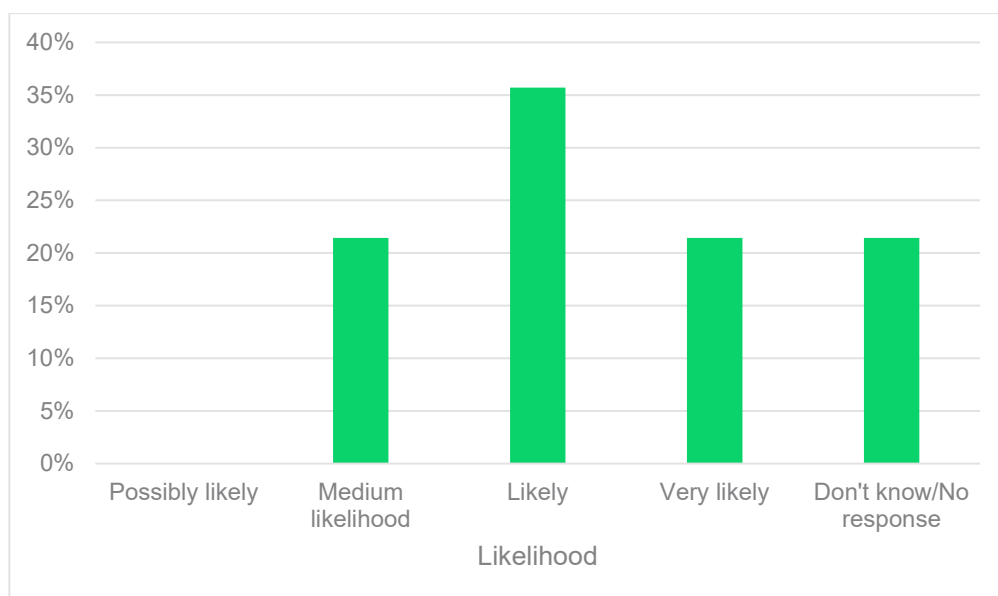


Figure 11: Likelihood of benefits from Australian Volunteers Program to continue

POs who completed the online survey were also asked to provide reasons for these ratings, which provide critical insights into drivers of sustainability. Detailed responses can be found in Annex 10, and are also illustrated below. Some key themes which demonstrate sustainability are evidenced by both survey responses and interviews, as described below. Evidence was apparent at two levels – firstly, the sustainability of the higher-level impacts of the POs work. Secondly, the sustained change described within POs.

Some POs recognised that climate change is a long-term issue needing to be addressed. Four out of the eight POs who were interviewed demonstrated an understanding of how climate change will affect their organisation. These four POs also described their commitment to integrating climate change into their organisational priorities and objectives. The support of volunteers enabled these POs to further progress their development objectives relating to climate change, and their ongoing organisational commitment to take action on climate change are together indications of sustainability. For example, one PO noted:

Climate change is here to stay... So Forestry will consider this and will always engage or prioritise climate change as one of its major activity, major thing to be able to address (PO interviewee).

This PO also noted that they were recruiting a climate change officer who will link to the Ministry of Climate Change. This indicates a strong and sustainable commitment to achieving ongoing progress in CC-DR-FS. The volunteer connected to this PO also spoke of the PO's plans for progressing objectives around CC-DR-FS, particularly in reforestation to support both climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.

Another PO was committed to improving the organisation's disaster preparedness and response program. Again, this provides some evidence that ongoing benefits provided by the Australian Volunteers Program will be sustained.

Sustainability of impacts is aided by POs having stronger networks. Through their assignments, some volunteers established and enabled POs to interact and network with other like-minded organisations. For example, a volunteer connected their PO to the Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) who was able to provide training. This resulted in a mutual benefit, for the PO and the training organisation. An Australian Volunteers Program interviewee described how volunteers had supported POs to see the benefits of networking with likeminded organisations:

Some of the feedback that we've got from partners is things like we [POs] are now able to – you know, we see the necessity of networking and you know, making our organisation, our programs visible and that means you know, they are able to coordinate with other like-minded organisations to implement that program (Australian Volunteers Program interviewee).

Another PO described how they had developed stronger networks and visibility, particularly relating to their climate change program. A PO who had hosted a volunteer with responsibilities relating to climate change noted that:

So, a good level of this program has been – has been shared with our other partners, and many of them are considering replicating that kind of model that we do. At the same time, the National Government has recognised some – I mean has given recognition to the program of [the PO], and we have had consultations on how [the PO] can continue to be able to work closely with key partners at sub-national levels (PO interviewee).

Sustainability of impacts is supported by the ability of POs to access more funding sources.

Interviewees across stakeholder groups all commented on the support the Australian Volunteers Program had provided, in supporting POs to access a wider variety of funding sources including grants offered by the Program itself. An Australian Volunteers Program interviewee noted:

They [POs] have also increased their ability to get more funds for further projects and so that means you know in terms of their reach and I know they have been talking about, you know they work in the other island as well. So that means the reach of their program is more now (Australian Volunteers Program interviewee).

POs and volunteers also mentioned their success in gaining funds from other donors, supporting their ongoing work in achieving their development objectives. A volunteer described how they had supported their PO in accessing funds for research to further learn and improve the approach the PO was taking. The volunteer then supported the PO to access funds to implement some of the research recommendations:

So, I was involved in the coordinating that research component of it and yeah from there, there was some extra funding that we were able to mobilise (Volunteer interviewee).

The evaluation found that capacity building for POs led to sustainable outcomes. Interview and survey data provide evidence that the capacity building provided by volunteers led to sustainable change within the PO. A volunteer in a training role spoke of their counterpart delivering training:

The last course was delivered with my counterpart, he delivered most of the course. I feel very confident that he will be able to deliver this training after my departure without too much assistance (Volunteer interviewee).

PO survey respondents also mentioned that mentoring conducted by volunteers was successful and put to good use by staff. One PO noted that newly built capacity then builds on volunteer contributions.

More effective and efficient organisational management, policies and processes within POs is more likely to lead to sustainable outcomes. Interviewees across stakeholder groups and survey respondents provided a variety of examples of the ways in which the Australian Volunteers program has supported POs to improve their internal management, policies and processes. A PO survey respondent noted that:

Some benefits [of the Australian Volunteers Program] have longer shelf-life than others. The improvement of processes may be around longer because they end up in policy (PO survey respondent).

Another PO commented in an End of Assignment report, that the support a volunteer provided in terms of an improved organisational structure had been approved by Human Resources and noted that it should be a sustainable change. Australian Volunteers Program interviewees commented on the volunteers supporting monitoring evaluation and learning frameworks that improved ongoing PO improvements, while a volunteer described how they had shifted the way the organisation had thought about resilience, to be more holistic rather than sector focused. This shift in how the PO considers resilience is likely to support the PO achieve longer lasting outcomes, as it considers important interconnections that support sustainable outcomes.

5.4.2 Limitations to sustainability

There were three main limitations to ongoing benefits being sustained. These are described below.

Reliance on external funding limits sustainability. Two POs noted that they would be able to continue work in the CC-DR-FS area with the support of external funding. One PO noted:

If we did have funding then that will be ongoing. So really, we depend mostly on donors, so if we have donors that are still interested in meeting those kind of projects, then definitely (PO interviewee).

Staff turnover limits sustainable organisational capacity building. Within the online survey, POs noted that staff turnover within their organisation was a challenge to sustainability. This was particularly the case for POs in the NGO sector, as the following online survey respondent noted:

Improving the skills of staff may only remain with the organisation as long as that staff stays. There may be some residual benefits based on that staff members professional influence within operations but because NGOs for the most can't compete with the UNs, DFATs, EU's and private sector, it will always be the NGO's lot to be the platform where many staff learn, get very valuable hands-on experience and then leave for the better paying international organisations and private sector. So learning and capacity building is an on-going exercise for NGOs (PO online survey respondent)

POs who do not integrate CC-DR-FS into their organisational objectives may face challenges to sustainability of their work. Progress for POs who do not prioritise climate change in their work may have challenges with sustainability for two reasons. Firstly, without direct and targeted actions and activities, climate change impacts may undermine the long-term sustainability of PO progress (e.g. the ability of POs to support communities access a sustainable water supply, in the face of climate change). Secondly, if the PO does not value or prioritise climate change as a factor needing consideration, it is unlikely the organisation will take steps to maintain any progress in this area. Australian Volunteers Program staff could play a role in supporting POs who do not integrate climate change into their work, provided they are adequately upskilled themselves in concepts such as risk informed development and possible ways to integrate climate change considerations in sectoral work.

Volunteer assignments do not prompt consideration of climate and disaster risk to achieving objectives as standard practice. DFAT's Climate Change Action Strategy notes that climate change should be integrated across the government's development assistance program. The evaluation found that the lack of integration of risk informed development – including climate change risk – presented a limitation to the sustainability of PO impacts. Lessons can be learned from the Programs' prioritisation and efforts to mainstream GESI in volunteer assignments, which has correspondingly led to positive outcomes being achieved by POs. Prompting consideration of climate and disaster risk within volunteer assignment reporting would similarly result in more consistent approaches to risk informed development.

6 Recommendations

Recommendations provided below should be viewed in line with the purpose of the thematic impact areas, which is to act as a lens through which to view the Program's contribution to CC-DR-FS in the Pacific, and a way to "*demonstrate how the program can multiply the impact of Australian aid*"²⁶. Recommendations are structured towards the management of the Australian Volunteers Program, POs and volunteers.

Recommendations relating to Program management:

1. The Australian Volunteers Program should more effectively connect with other CC-DR-FS related DFAT funded programs²⁷, to leverage and consolidate existing Australian funded activities to strengthen impact in CC-DR-FS.
2. The Australian Volunteers Program should build, maintain and deepen relationships with influential Pacific regional organisations (e.g. SPC, SPREP, UNDP, PIFS), recognising the strategic roles these regional organisations play in connecting and supporting POs in CC-DR-FS within and across countries in the Pacific. This could be achieved by Australian Volunteers Program in-country staff and POs participating in regional events, conferences and dialogue on CC-DR-FS facilitated by regional organisations, and engaging regional organisations in any networking events with POs.
3. Where the CC-DR-FS thematic impact area is a priority within a country context, the Australian Volunteers Program should sharpen focus on selected sub-themes. This sharpened focus may be decided at the Pacific regional or country level, enabling more in-depth engagement for greater impact. Flexibility of assignments outside a narrower focus should be supported so long as they have a strategic contribution to CC-DR-FS.
4. The Australian Volunteers Program should provide capacity building opportunities for Pacific in-country Australian Volunteers Program staff on climate change, to improve support to POs in sustaining the continuation of PO development outcomes. Capacity building opportunities may relate to risk informed development and the integration of climate change considerations into sectoral programming, and could be provided by Australian-based organisations, DFAT-funded programs or regional partners such as SPC or SPREP.
5. The Australian Volunteers Program should begin to consider integrating climate change and risk informed development within volunteer assignments, in line with DFAT policy to integrate climate change across the government's development assistance program. This recommendation provides another entry point for integrating climate change across the Program, alongside pathways described in Recommendations 4 (focused on in-country staff) and 6 (focused on POs).

Recommendations relating to POs:

6. The Australian Volunteers Program should facilitate opportunities for knowledge sharing and capacity building for Pacific POs on climate change, to support POs who are less familiar with how climate change may influence progress towards their organisational objectives. This could be achieved through an opt-in approach, enabling willing POs to share existing knowledge and expertise relating to their own climate change objectives. External expertise (e.g. through the Australia Pacific Climate Partnership Alumni Network, or Australian universities) could complement PO knowledge sharing.
7. The Australian Volunteers Program should continue to value the contribution to CC-DR-FS through the diverse set of non-thematic impact area focused volunteer inputs, which strengthen PO's organisational capacity to achieve sustainable outcomes. The Australian Volunteers Program can continue to strengthen its impact in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific through volunteer assignments supporting capacity building for PO organisational effectiveness and efficiency.
8. The Australian Volunteers Program should continue to provide funds to strengthen impact of volunteer assignments and further sustain POs work in the Pacific.

²⁶ Australian Volunteers Program Global Program Strategy 2018-2022

²⁷ E.g. the Australia Pacific Climate Partnership, COSPPac2, Gov4Res, PIEMA, AHP Disaster READY, Pacific Women

Recommendations relating to volunteers:

9. The Australian Volunteers Program should continue to value volunteer cross-cultural competence, and ensure cultural awareness is a key selection criterion when recruiting volunteers, to ensure impact of volunteer assignments. Strengthened cultural awareness could also be achieved by improved training for volunteers to be better able to integrate into their Pacific Partner Organisation and new country location.

10. The Australian Volunteers Program should develop a decision-making system to critically assess whether or not remote volunteer assignments are likely to effectively support POs achieve their organisational objectives. A decision-making system that factors pre-existing relationships between the volunteer and PO, and other considerations such as available technology and connectivity of the PO, could support satisfying and impactful volunteer assignments for both POs and volunteers.

7 Conclusion

This report documents the third and final of three Deep Dives which evaluate the three thematic impact areas of the Australian Volunteers Program. The evaluation took place between May and November 2021, during which time the COVID-19 pandemic escalated, influencing ways of working in both Australia and the Pacific. At the time of the evaluation, all Australian volunteers involved in the Program had been repatriated to Australia, although some continued to support POs through remote volunteer assignments. Deep Dive three was conducted using online and remote technologies, as per the previous two Deep Dive evaluations. This was made possible through the support of the Australian Volunteers Program in Melbourne, the Regional Director for the Pacific and the Pacific Regional MEL Coordinator. Country Program Managers in the Pacific also provided welcome inputs and reflections at key points of the evaluation.

The evaluation identified impacts in the area of CC-DR-FS through the work of POs and contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program. Enhanced resilience to the impacts of climate change were reported, as a result of POs work in disaster risk reduction and longer-term climate and disaster resilience. Improved access to water and sanitation for Pacific communities was described by POs and volunteers. Water security was the focus of work for several POs, both in terms of improving physical access through the supply of water tanks, and also increased community knowledge about the impact climate change will have on access to water. POs contribute to improving gender and social inclusion outcomes in Pacific communities.

The evaluation revealed two main ways that volunteers contributed to these impacts. First, technical roles of volunteers provided POs with the ability to more effectively support beneficiaries on issues relating to CC-DR-FS. Second, volunteers contributed to broader organisational strengthening of POs. Both approaches were acknowledged by POs as supporting progress in CC-DR-FS.

There was a high degree of evidence of ongoing benefits in CC-DR-FS attributable to POs and the Australian Volunteers Program. Sustainability was more likely for POs who proactively recognised that climate change is a long-term issue needing to be addressed. The evaluation also found that capacity building provided by volunteers led to more effective and efficient organisational management, policies and processes. POs noted these changes were likely to lead to sustainable outcomes. Some limitations to sustainability were identified, including the POs who do not integrate CC-DR-FS into their organisational objectives. Without direct and targeted actions and activities, climate change impacts may undermine the long-term sustainability of PO progress.

The evaluation identified the existing strong efficiencies of the Program, and efforts are ongoing in response to COVID-19 as well as the growing climate emergency. Staff efforts to work with and support POs and volunteers were also acknowledged.

The evaluation revealed examples of efforts already being pursued by the Australian Volunteers Program to strengthen impact and sustainability. Recommendations offered in this report, whilst informed by findings related to the thematic impact area of CC-DR-FS in the Pacific, are applicable to other countries given the far-reaching influence climate change is having, and will increasingly continue to have, across the globe.

8 Annexes

Annex 1: DFAT Standard 6 – Independent evaluation reports

No.	Element	Reference in Evaluation Report
Introductions		
6.1	A background to the evaluation summarises: the total value of the investment; the number of years of the investment; the stage of investment implementation; key outcomes of the investment; and the key issues identified in the terms of reference	Section 2.1
6.2	A brief summary of the methods employed is provided	Section 4 & Annex 6
6.3	Key limitations of the methods are described and any relevant guidance provided to enable appropriate interpretation of the findings	Section 4.2
6.4	The executive summary provides all the necessary information to enable primary users to make good quality decisions	Executive Summary
Findings and Analysis		
6.5	The evaluation report clearly addresses all questions in the terms of reference	Section 5
6.6	The relative importance of the issues communicated is clear to the reader	Section 5
6.7	There is a good balance between operational and strategic issues	Section 5 & 6
6.8	The report clearly explains the extent to which the evidence supports the conclusions and judgments made	Section 5 & 6
6.9	Alternative points of view are presented and considered where appropriate	Section 5
6.10	Complicated and complex aspects of issues are adequately explored and not oversimplified	Section 5
6.11	The role of context and emergent risks to investment performance are analysed	Section 5
6.12	The text uses appropriate methods/language to convince the reader of the findings and conclusions	Section 4 & Annex 6
6.13	There is an adequate exploration of the factors that have influenced the issues identified and conclusions drawn	Section 5
6.14	The implications of key findings are fully explored	Section 5 & 6
6.15	The overall position of the author is clear and their professional judgments are unambiguous	Section 5 & 6
Conclusions and Recommendations		
6.16	The conclusions and recommendations logically flow from the presentation of findings and any associated analyses	Sections 6 & 7
6.17	Individuals have been allocated responsibility for responding to recommendations	Section 6
6.18	Where there are significant cost implications of recommendations, these have been estimated (financial, human and materials costs)	Section 5 & 6
6.19	The recommendations are feasible	Section 6
6.20	The circumstances under which any important lessons are transferable are described	Section 5 & 6
6.21	The final evaluation report is published within the timeframes outlined in the DFAT Aid Evaluation Policy	Yes

Annex 2: Thematic impact areas

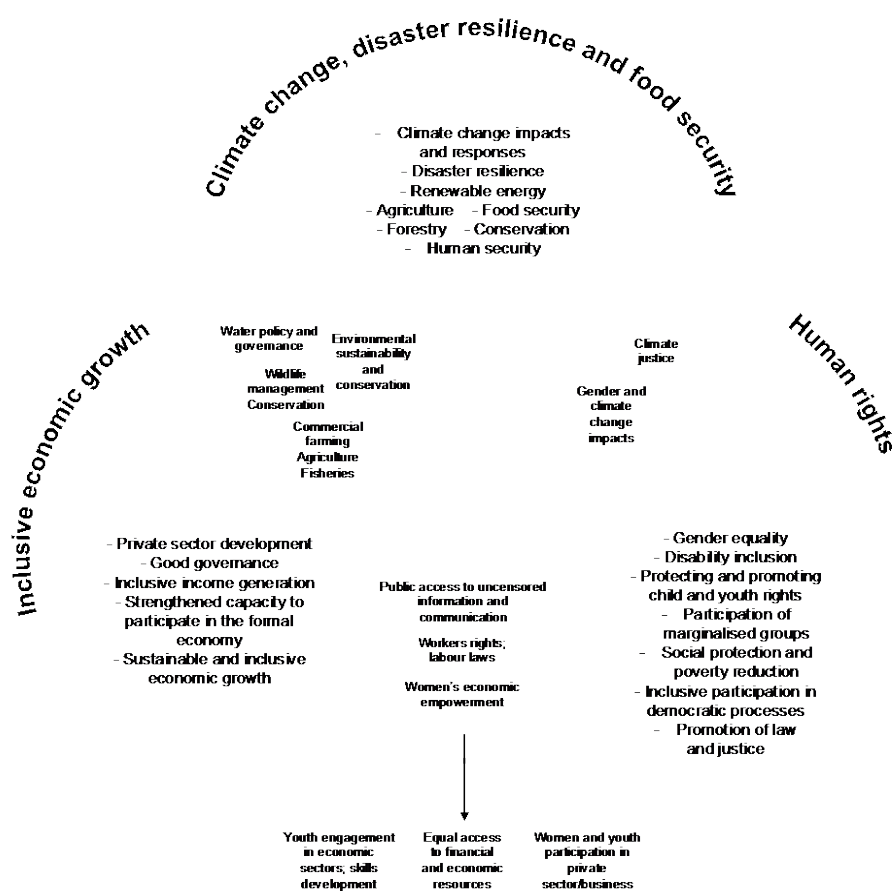


Figure 12: Sub-themes, showing overlap, for the three impact areas

Figure 12 shows the main sub-themes for the three impact areas. The figure also shows areas of overlap for the three impact areas, which are consistent with development practice that recognises the value and opportunities provided by sector interlinkages. The overlap of impact areas pertains to issues and themes that are relevant across different sectors and is an indication of real-world complexity. Development programming should recognise connections between different sectors and development objectives, and a key theme of the SDG agenda is to prioritise interlinkages as a means of enabling sustainable development. Note that the grey box at the bottom of the figure shows sub-themes overlapping both Inclusive Economic Growth and human rights (they did not fit within the main circles).

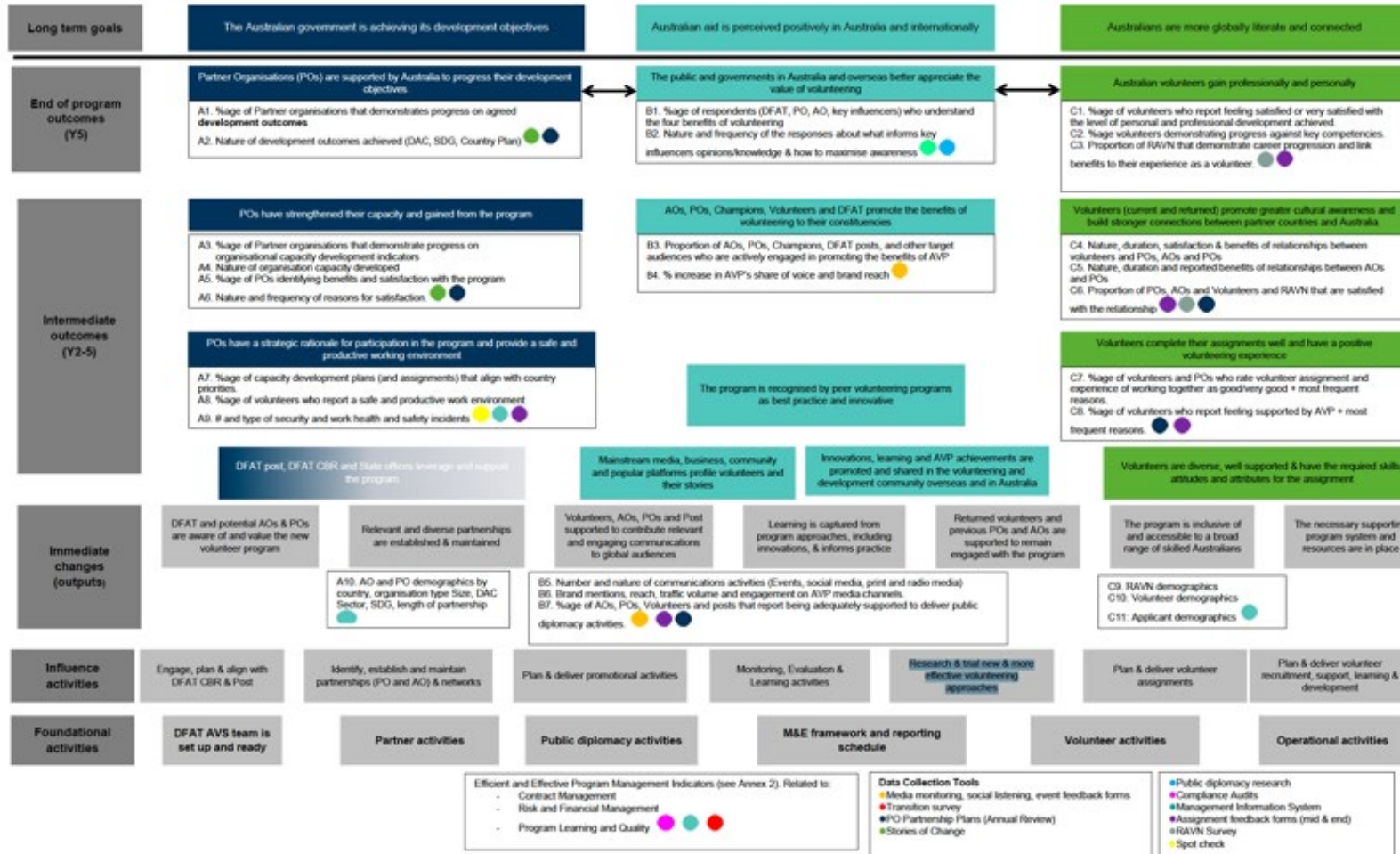
The overlap of impact areas highlights a layer of complexity associated with mapping assignments (i.e. assignments can map to more than one impact area). However, it also highlights an opportunity to contribute to progress beyond one sector. As the impact areas are operationalised within the Australian Volunteers Program, the value of, and opportunities provided by, interlinkages and overlaps will need to be communicated to key stakeholders.

Examples of areas of overlap include:

- Farming and fisheries (Climate Change + Inclusive Economic Growth)
- Environmental sustainability and conservation (Climate Change + Inclusive Economic Growth)
- Climate justice (Climate Change + Human Rights)
- Gender and climate change (Climate Change + Human Rights)
- Women's economic empowerment (Human Rights + Inclusive Economic Growth)
- Youth engagement in economic sectors (Human Rights + Inclusive Economic Growth)

Annex 3: Australian Volunteers Program – theory of change

Annex 1 Program Logic with Indicators and Data Sources – Australian Volunteers Program



Annex 4: Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions are as follows:

Relevance

1. To what extent has the Australian Volunteers Program been suitable for supporting Partner Organisations to progress objectives in Climate change and disaster resilience in The Pacific?

Effectiveness

2. To what extent and in what ways have Partner Organisations progressed their development objectives in Climate change and disaster resilience in the Pacific?
3. To what extent and in what ways has the Australian Volunteers Program contributed to progress achieved in Climate change and disaster resilience in the Pacific?
4. Were there contextual factors that helped or hindered progress overall?

Efficiency

5. To what extent has the Australian Volunteers Program operated in an efficient way and contributed to progress in Climate change and disaster resilience in the Pacific?
6. To what extent has the Australian Volunteers Program been able to learn about and improve its approaches to managing a volunteering program, including through partnerships, recruitment, communication, innovation and trialling new approaches to support Partner Organisation's development objectives in Climate change and disaster resilience?

Coherence

7. To what extent are Partner Organisations' development objectives in Climate change and disaster resilience in the Pacific consistent with other actors' interventions?
8. To what extent are there synergies or linkages between the Australian Volunteers Program and other DFAT interventions in Climate change and disaster resilience in The Pacific?

Impact

9. What higher-level effects have Partner Organisations contributed to in Climate change and disaster resilience in the Pacific and in what ways has the Australian Volunteers Program supported this?
10. Informed by the evaluation findings, what are prioritised recommendations on strategic options for the Australian Volunteers Program to strengthen impact in Climate change and disaster resilience in the Pacific, and what lessons can be learnt for other countries?

Sustainability

11. To what extent is there an indication of ongoing benefits in Climate change and disaster resilience in The Pacific attributable to Partner Organisations and the Australian Volunteers Program support?
12. Informed by the evaluation findings what are prioritised recommendations on strategic options for the Australian Volunteers Program to strengthen sustainability of outcomes or impacts in Climate change and disaster resilience in the Pacific, and what lessons can be learnt for other countries?

Annex 5: List of documents reviewed

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) (November 2019) Climate Change Action Strategy, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/climate-change-action-strategy.pdf>

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Annex 6: Evaluation methods

Details of evaluation methods are described below.

Social network analysis (SNA)

SNA is a quantitative and visual method for studying social relationships and interactions between individuals and organisations²⁸. SNA allows for a greater understanding of social systems, and provides critical insights into things like trust, social capital, information flows and collaboration. Visual maps can be created that highlight which nodes (individuals or organisations) have the most ties with other actors, and which are cut off or isolated, and importantly, who is connected to the ‘most connected’ actors²⁹.

The purpose of the SNA was to identify the organisations active in CC-DR-FS, and to map the relationships between these organisations. SNA questions were included in an online survey which was emailed to all active POs with development objectives related to CC-DR-FS over the period of 2018 – present. These POs were asked several questions, including which other organisations they work or interact with, therefore identifying the network of actors in CC-DR-FS. The SNA therefore helped to understand which ‘linked’ organisations were important for POs to achieve their objectives.

See “Deep Dive Evaluation 3 Social Network Analysis Report” for SNA results.

Online survey

Online surveys are data collection tools targeting a predefined sample of respondents on a specific topic. Structured questions are provided to respondents, including both closed (e.g. multiple choice or scalar) and open questions using online tools such as Survey Monkey or Qualtrics.

Our online survey was developed using Qualtrix survey software, comprised of 20 questions. The survey was sent to 39 POs, with 21 responses (two from the same PO). Results were analysed in Microsoft Excel and are presented in Annex 10.

Systems mapping

A system may be defined as: “a group of interacting, interrelated, and interdependent components that form a complex and unified whole”³⁰ (Coffman 2007). Mapping systems are useful in evaluations as they help to capture the system and sub-systems that are being evaluated. It also helps to unpack the level of complexity of the initiative being evaluated in a non-linear way and assists in identifying where the focus of the evaluation should be.

Systems-maps can also be used as an alternative to conventional theory of change diagrams (ToC) in order to overcome linear approaches that simplify complex situations of social change. Complexity includes things like non-linearity, iteration, adaptation and learning – elements that are difficult to represent with a ToC approach.

Our systems mapping was undertaken to scope CC-DR-FS in the Pacific. The systems map was informed by the results from the SNA, as well as the analysis of the Australian Volunteers Program data and the document review. The systems map was important to provide an overview of the key actors, policies and additional contextual factors that define CC-DR-FS in the Pacific.

Key informant interviews (remote)

Key informant interviews (KIIs) are a qualitative research approach that involve a one-on-one in-depth discussion between the researcher and the participant. This evaluation drew on a semi-structured interview

²⁸ Leppin AL, Okamoto JM, Organick PW, et al. Applying Social Network Analysis to Evaluate Implementation of a Multisector Population Health Collaborative That Uses a Bridging Hub Organization. *Front Public Health*. 2018;6:315. Published 2018 Nov 2. doi:10.3389/fpubh.2018.00315

²⁹ Laesecke, A and de García, D. (2017) Visualizing what connects us: Social network analysis in M&E, IREX, accessed 15 July at <https://www.irex.org/insight/visualizing-what-connects-us-social-network-analysis-me>

³⁰ Coffman, J. (2007) A Framework For Evaluating Systems Initiatives, Build: Strong Foundations for our Youngest Children.

approach as a primary data collection tool, guided by pre-defined interview questions. The semi-structured approach allowed for a conversational and informal style to gather data from participants.

KIIs were used for the Pacific-based stakeholders (POs associated with the identified sub-theme/s and beneficiaries of POs) as well as DFAT and the Australian Volunteers Program stakeholders. Given COVID-19 travel restrictions, all KIIs were conducted remotely over Zoom or phone. Interviews with POs were conducted in Bahasa the Pacific. After gaining informed consent, all interviews were recorded and transcribed. A breakdown of KII participants is found in Annex 7.

Document review

Document review supported the systems mapping approach and also provided secondary data supporting findings from the KIIs. A rapid qualitative review gleaned important details relating to sub-theme/s and POs development objectives. Documents included the Australian Volunteers Program (e.g. end of assignment data, where appropriate) and PO documentation as well as those relevant to CC-DR-FS in the Pacific (e.g. key government policies and strategies, development sector strategies and frameworks).

Annex 7: Evaluation participants

Table 3: Evaluation participants

	Total participants	Australia		Pacific	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Key informant interview participants:					
Australian Volunteers Program	3		1		2
DFAT	1				1
Partner Organisation	8			4	4
'Beneficiaries'	2			2	
Volunteer	7	2	5		
Survey participants:					
Partner Organisation	14 ³¹				

³¹ Online survey did not collect data on gender of respondents

Annex 8: Deep Dive terms of reference (ToR)

Australian Volunteers Program's thematic 'impact areas' summative evaluations

1. Introduction

The Australian Volunteers Program intends to carry out a series of separate summative evaluations of each of the program's 'impact areas'. This work builds on the formative evaluation of the impact areas carried out in 2019. This will be a long-term evaluation activity to run over the next three years up to the contract end in 2022, with at least one evaluation of an impact area carried out each year.

Each of these 'Deep Dives' are to be based on a similar analytical framework and methodology to enable comparability between them (and the baseline) and provide efficiencies and opportunities from learning from one to the other. These summative evaluations will contribute evidence to program mid-term and external evaluations that are not part of the scope of these terms of reference (ToR). This approach, with its longitudinal dimension, may also allow other research questions regarding, for example, approaches to partner capacity building, to also be examined.

This document sets out ToR for summative evaluations for the impact areas as a whole, informed by the earlier formative evaluation. The approach outlined here will inform future detailed evaluation design and planning as part of the inception phase of each of the individual summative evaluations.

2. Background and context

2.1 About the program

Since the 1960s, the Australian Government has, through its aid program, supported Australians to volunteer in developing countries. International volunteering promotes cultural understanding through people-to-people linkages and is a means of promoting both public diplomacy and development outcomes.

The latest chapter of the Australian Volunteers Program (formerly Australian Volunteers for International Development) commenced on 1 January 2018 as a \$190m Australian Government investment in 26 countries, over a period of five years. The Australian Volunteers Program is managed by AVI, in a consortium with Cardno Emerging Markets Pty Ltd and Whitelum Group. The program continues to match skilled Australians from all walks of life with organisations overseas to help these organisations to deliver on their own objectives. The program uses international volunteering as a people-centred approach to capacity development.

Over the next five years, the Australian Volunteers Program aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- a) Partner organisations (POs) are supported by Australia to achieve their own development objectives;
- b) The public in Australia better appreciates the value of international volunteering;
- c) Australian volunteers gain professionally and personally.

By successfully achieving these outcomes, the Australian Volunteers Program will have contributed to Australia's broader development and diplomacy goals:

- a) The Australian Government is achieving its development objectives;
- b) Australian aid is perceived positively in Australia and internationally;
- c) Australians becoming more globally literate and connected.

2.2 About the Impact Areas

The Global Program Strategy for the Australian Volunteers Program sets out three impact areas to which the Australia Volunteer Program contributes. As described in the formative evaluation findings, these impact areas are understood as just one lens through which to assess the contributions of the Australian Volunteers Program. For example, contributions to other sectors such as health, education, and technology are also valued as a result of the Australian Volunteers Program. The three impact areas are:

1) *Human Rights*: At its core, the Human Rights impact area pays special attention to marginalised groups and aims to secure human rights, and to improve access to, and civic participation in, democratic processes.

The Human Rights impact area promotes fulfilment of rights for particular marginalised groups including: women, gender and sexual minorities, people living with a disability, children, youth, and indigenous people. Inclusive in the fulfilment of rights is the ability of marginalised groups to participate and thrive in society, have access to a protective legal and justice system, and to have access to effective social protection and information and communications.

2) *Climate Change/Disaster Resilience/Food Security*: The CC-DR-FS impact area takes climate change and its impacts as its starting point. Responding to climate change impacts (including severe weather and disasters), adaptation and mitigation (including emissions reduction through renewable energy) are at the core of this impact area. Extending from this starting point are the resilience of agriculture and fisheries sectors and food security, all of which are directly affected by climate change. Environmental conservation is also included under this impact area, given the impact of climate change on the environment, and given that the preservation of healthy ecosystems provides a natural buffer to climate change. Furthermore, the inclusion of environmental conservation under this impact area acknowledges that healthy ecosystems are more productive, and are more able to sustain livelihoods (linking to Inclusive Economic Growth).

3) *Inclusive Economic Growth*: The Inclusive Economic Growth impact area centres around growing and embedding inclusivity and sustainability within developing economies. This includes supporting a strong enabling environment through good governance for private sector development, fair work practices, and vocational and technical training. The Inclusive Economic Growth impact area also highlights the need to support the inclusion of women, youth and other marginalised groups typically excluded from full participation in the formal economy. Key to inclusive economic growth is the equitable sharing of economic benefits. This impact area includes sectors which contribute to poverty reduction and provide significant income generation within the countries the Australian Volunteers Program supports. These sectors include tourism, hospitality, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, which are often relevant to marginalised groups. The role of entrepreneurship and small-scale enterprises in developing economies is also recognised within this impact area, again for its relevance to marginalised groups.

3. Evaluation purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the outcomes and contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to the three impact areas.

This objective relates primarily to the first outcome of the program: 'Partner organisations are supported by Australia to progress their developmental objectives'.

As a secondary consideration, the Impact Areas evaluation will also aim support the second outcome, such that the 'public in Australia better appreciates the value of volunteering' through the communication of outcomes from the evaluations by the Australian Volunteers Program.

4. Evaluation scope

The scope and focus of the evaluations will be informed by a number of sampling decisions.

Impact Area Focus: Annual evaluations will be conducted relevant to each of the three impact areas. The sequence of the three impact areas is proposed by the Australian Volunteers Program:

Year 1 (FY20): Inclusive Economic Growth

Year 2 (FY21): Climate Change / Disaster Resilience / Food Security

Year 3 (FY22): Human Rights

This sequencing may vary but will be agreed upon prior to the inception phase of each individual summative evaluation.

As appropriate, a sub-theme relevant to an impact area might be an area of inquiry (depending on the country focus, and the development objectives of the partner organisations), or a broader area of inquiry which includes multiple sub-themes within an impact area may be chosen.

Country-level analysis: A country-level analysis will be carried out of each impact area to consider the contribution to the portfolio of partner organisations and their development objectives relevant to the specific impact area within a country context.

The precise sample will be confirmed with the Australian Volunteers Program Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) team, but it is proposed that a country is selected on the basis of providing best learning about the impact area.

For example, a country with highest proportion / highest number of assignments in impact area.

Partner organisations / assignments: Within a country context, partner organisations will be identified relevant to the impact area and the sample for inclusion will be identified. Priority for inclusion will be informed by the following criteria: assignments from 2018 onwards, single to multiple assignments within one partner organisation, relevant partner organisation staff available who have been supervisors or had working relationships with Australian Volunteers.

5. Key evaluation questions

The evaluation questions are informed by the OECD DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance and will form into five domains of inquiry: Relevance; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Impact, and Sustainability. The evaluation questions are also informed by the Australian Volunteers Program MEL Framework.

Relevance

1) To what extent has the Australian Volunteers Program been suitable for supporting partner organisations to progress objectives in [IMPACT AREA] in [COUNTRY]?

Effectiveness

2) To what extent and in what ways have partner organisations progressed their development objectives in [IMPACT AREA]?

3) To what extent and in what ways has the Australian Volunteers Program contributed to progress achieved in [IMPACT AREA]?

4) Were there contextual factors that helped or hindered progress overall?

Efficiency

5) To what extent has the Australian Volunteers Program operated in an efficient way and contributed to progress in [IMPACT AREA] in [COUNTRY]?

6) To what extent has the program been able to learn and improve its approaches to managing a volunteering program, including through partnerships, recruitment, communication, innovation and trialling new approaches?

Impact

7) What longer-term changes have partner organisations contributed to in [IMPACT AREA] in [COUNTRY]?

8) Have there been any unintended consequences, positive or negative, of the Australian Volunteers Program's work in [IMPACT AREA] in [COUNTRY]?

9) Informed by the evaluation findings what are prioritised recommendations on strategic options for strengthening engagement and outcomes in [IMPACT AREA]?

Sustainability

10) To what extent is there an indication of ongoing benefits attributable to the support of the Australian Volunteers Program to partner organisations in [IMPACT AREA] in [COUNTRY]?

10) How might the program strengthen its engagement in [IMPACT AREA] in [COUNTRY], and what lessons can be learnt for other countries?

6. Evaluation Approach

The evaluations seek to learn about the contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to development objectives in relation to each of the three impact areas. An important aspect of the evaluation is to situate the contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program support in relation to the broader country context and development issues.

It is expected the evaluation will employ a number of approaches as outlined below. The evaluation approach will be detailed in an Evaluation Design / Plan prepared in the first phase of the evaluation and agreed to by an Evaluation Reference Group.

Theory of change – to discern the contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to development outcomes (within an impact area), recognising the contribution of volunteer assignments to partner organisations achievement of development objectives, and in turn partner organisations contributions to broader development outcomes in the country.

Contribution analysis – to discern causal linkages and infer causality of the Australian Volunteers Program to outcomes achieved in the impact areas.

Systems thinking – to situate the Australian Volunteers Program portfolio (partner organisations and assignments) within the broader country context, to make sense of contribution within broader development.

Mixed methods – to ensure a ‘Deep Dive’ learning and assessment of outcomes and contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to the three impact areas the evaluation will employ:

- Social network analysis (SNA)
- Key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions with multiple stakeholders
- Focus group discussion (FGD) at a returned volunteer debrief for volunteer assignments aligned to that specific impact area
- Analysis of Australian Volunteers Program monitoring data and DFAT monitoring data as available
- Partner organisation monitoring
- Country data / statistics (to situate learning within country context)

The evaluation will draw on the program logic set out in the MELF (December 2017), with a focus on the first program outcome “Partner organisations are supported by Australia to progress their development objectives”. As noted the MELF, the Australian Volunteers Program seeks to support development outcomes “by strengthening partner organisation capacity (staff skills and capability, improving systems and contributing to improved organisational processes), partner organisations will be able to progress their development objectives”. This program logic will be assessed within the evaluations to identify contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to impact areas.

The proposed approach to learning about contributions to the impact areas outlined above could also be transferred to learning about other sectors. For example, given the large proportion of the volunteer program that focuses on health and education, the proposed methodology could equally be applied to learn about contributions to these sectors.

7. Phases and evaluation key deliverables

It is expected that the evaluation will be carried out through a sequence of phases and importantly these phases will support the development of a robust approach to impact evaluation which will be refined and applied for each impact area across a three-year period.

1) Preparation of Evaluation Design / Evaluation Planning

- a) Inception meeting with Australian Volunteers Program staff (MEL Team and Evaluation Steering Group) and DFAT AVS (Melbourne)
- b) Inception meeting with Australian Volunteers Program staff for in-country planning (after sampling) and with DFAT Post in sampled country (remote via video link)

2) Document review relevant to Australian Volunteers Program in-country context / focus of impact area

3) In-country data collection / analysis / sense making

- a) Stakeholder consultations
- b) Social network analysis
- c) Contribution analysis / sense making with in-country Australian Volunteers Program staff

4) *Sense-making workshop with Australian Volunteers Program staff (MEL Team, Melbourne-based and in-country staff) and DFAT AVS (Melbourne)*

5) *Preparation of draft and final Evaluation Reports*

6) *Refinement of Evaluation Design*

It is proposed that key deliverables for each of the (three) impact area evaluations will be:

- 1) Evaluation Design / Plan
- 2) Sense-making workshop / Presentation of emerging findings
- 3) Draft Evaluation Report
- 4) Final Evaluation Report
- 5) Refined Evaluation Design / Plan

The final report shall be of an agreed length and structure, as determined in the inception report. It will summarise the methodology and address the evaluation objectives and questions. It will provide evaluation findings and prioritised recommendations on strategic options for strengthening engagement in the impact area in question. Recommendations for improving the evaluation methodology will be covered in the Refined Evaluation Design / Plan deliverable.

It is expected that the sequential nature of the annual evaluations will enable learning from one impact area evaluation to inform a refined approach for subsequent evaluation activities. It is expected that through the use of the evaluation approach in subsequent years a robust evaluation approach with transferrable set of methods will be developed that could be used by the Australian Volunteers Program for future evaluations of the impact areas or other areas of focus of the Program, such as the health or education sectors.

8. Evaluation audience and end-users

The impact area evaluations will have a diverse audience base and will support outcomes of learning, accountability and public diplomacy.

Internal audiences and interests within the Australian Volunteers Program include:

Program Leadership, Regional Directors and Country Management Teams

- Better understand contribution to impact areas.
- Consider options for developing partnerships with new organisations and supporting existing partner organisations in order for the Australian Volunteers Program to contribute to outcomes in impact areas.
- Use evaluation deliverables to inform communications activities to promote the program in Australia and marketing / recruitment of volunteers and partners in specialist roles related to the impact area.

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Team

- Better understand theory of change for the Australian Volunteers Program's contribution to impact areas.
- Have a baseline assessment that can be reviewed over time.
- Consider options for refinement of ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
- Have a robust impact evaluation approach that could be used across multiple focus areas within the Program.

Volunteers

- Better understand contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to the Australian Aid Program.
- Better understand contribution of partner organisations to development outcomes.

DFAT

- Better understand contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to the Australian Aid Program.
- Use the evaluation findings in a broad range of communications (public diplomacy).

Partner organisations

- Better understand contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to the Australian Aid Program.
- Better understand contribution of partner organisations to development outcomes.
- Use of evaluation findings in a broad range of communications.

Country governments

- Better understand contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to the Australian Aid Program.
- Better understand contribution of partner organisations to development outcomes.
- Use of evaluation findings in a broad range of communications.

9. Management Arrangements

The evaluation will be managed by the Australian Volunteers program MEL Manager with the support of a dedicated Evaluation Steering Group. It is anticipated that the contracted team would meet initially weekly (either in person or via telephone) with the evaluation manager to discuss progress and facilitate access to the organisation.

Roles and responsibilities are below:

Stakeholder	Main areas of responsibility
Evaluation Contract Manager MEL Manager	Ensuring the evaluation approach is technically sound and answers the objectives of the ToR. Managing the contractual relationship with the evaluation team. Convening the Steering Group and ensuring key stakeholders are engaged as required in the process.
Evaluation Steering Group	Provide guidance and advice from the perspective of evaluation use and technical input from the group members' individual areas of responsibility. The Steering Group will provide feedback on evaluation products including the evaluation plan and draft products, and will assist with facilitating access to key documents and informants. Membership of the group to be reviewed for each Impact Area evaluation to also ensure subject matter expertise from DFAT and/or partner organisations is also brought in as relevant.
Contracted evaluation team	The evaluation team will work cooperatively and closely with Australian Volunteers Program throughout the evaluation. The team will be responsible for delivering evaluation products in accordance with terms of the contract and the agreed evaluation plan, to an acceptable standard of quality (DFAT M&E Standards). The evaluation plan and reports will be assessed for quality (particularly around methodology and use of evidence to support findings and recommendations) by the Australian Volunteers Program prior to payments being made on related contract milestones.

10. Professional guidelines and ethics

It is expected that the evaluation will be undertaken in accordance with the AES Guidelines for Ethical Conduct of Evaluations and the ACFID/RDI guidelines for ethical research in evaluation and development. Products will meet the DFAT standards for monitoring and evaluation.

The evaluation team will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement, and will be aware that the produced material is the intellectual property of the Australian Government. All materials must be treated sensitively, and team members must maintain strict confidentiality of all data, information and documentation provided or obtained during the project.

Annex 9: Limitations

Additional limitations of the evaluation, and mitigation strategies, are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Limitations and mitigation strategies

Limitation	Mitigation strategy
Limited engagement of Pacific POs in the evaluation	<p>The evaluation team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • worked closely with the Australian Volunteers Program in the Pacific to understand the best way to effectively communicate and engage with POs; • employed simple surveys (quantitative) to reduce burden of participation of POs and also KIIs with only a select number of POs relevant to the sub-themes selected for the impact assessment; • worked with the Australian Volunteers Program on arranging meeting times and locations convenient to POs; • and promoted the value of the evaluation to POs for their own learning about the contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to their development objectives.
Low response rate to survey and online data collection methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys were kept short, requiring no more than 40 minutes to respond. • ISF provided an ample timeframe for respondents to complete the surveys / SNA questionnaire.
Scope of evaluation in relation to scale of country and topic area of Climate change, disaster resilience and food security in the Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation was planned within scope and budget set out for the evaluation and all activities were framed to respond to the evaluation purpose and key evaluation questions. • Analytical frameworks guided the evaluation data collection and analysis, for write up of the evaluation report. • Activity Two was designed to provide a snap shot only of the context Climate change, disaster resilience and food security in the Pacific for the purpose of exploring Australian Volunteers Program contribution to POs.
Contribution of the Australian Volunteers Program to Climate change, disaster resilience and food security is difficult to discern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation was informed by the theory of change which sought to identify progress to achieve objectives and areas to strengthen in the future, in line with the causal chain set out in the theory of change. • Outcome and impact assessments were focused on a smaller sub-group of POs, to enable triangulation of perspectives to increase credibility of evaluation findings.
Findings may be specific to Pacific context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pacific was selected as the focus region for the Climate change, disaster resilience and food security Deep Dive given the large number of assignments overall, and also because it had many that aligned with the impact area. Given the range of types of Climate, disaster and food security assignments and POs, and that Australian Volunteers Program works in similar ways with POs across all its participating countries, there will be lessons for other countries.
Method developed for Pacific context has limited transferability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISF-UTS developed the evaluation methods, and tested these in Deep Dives 1 and 2 with a view to replicate for Deep Dives Three (this evaluation). By working in close partnership with the Australian Volunteers Program MEL Team and the ESG, the approach developed stands a high chance to be relevant to other impact areas.

Annex 10: Survey results

Survey results are presented for each question below. Countries represented in the survey results are as follows:

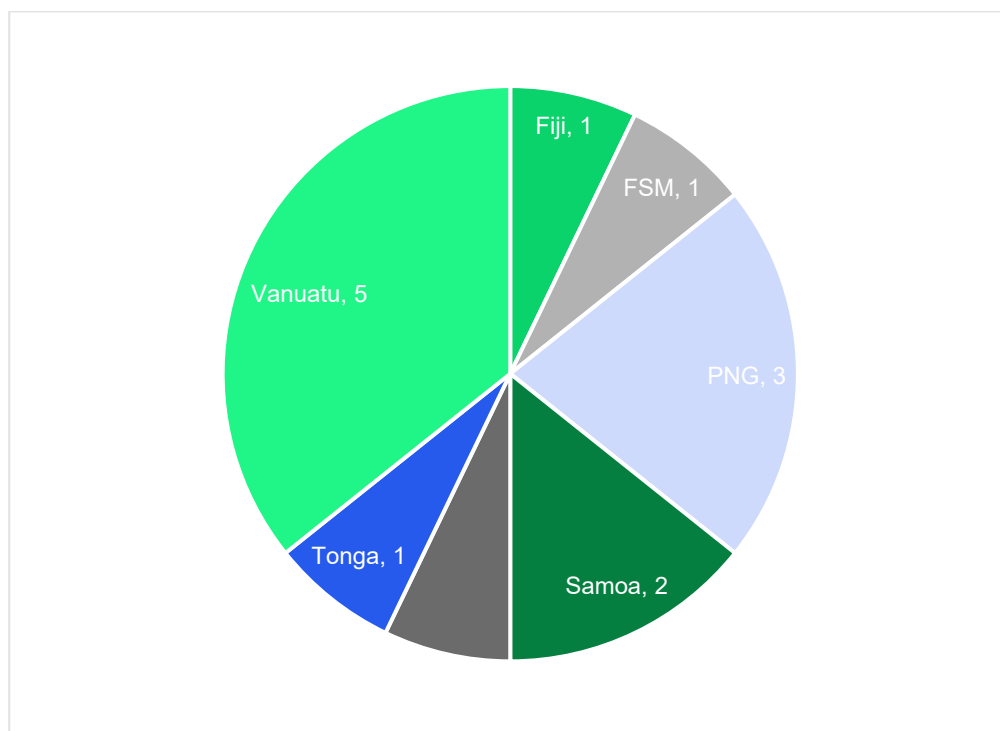


Figure 13: Countries of Partner Organisations

6. What is your organisation's name?

Responses to question 1 provide a list of the POs in the Climate Change, Disaster Resilience and Food Security (CC-DR-FS) Impact Area who responded to the survey.

Table 5: PO survey respondents and country location

Organisation	Country
Department of Water Resources	Vanuatu
ADRA	PNG
Ecological Solutions	Solomon Islands
Samoa Fire and Emergency Services	Samoa
Solar Solutions	PNG
Ministry of Climate Change	Vanuatu
Water Aid	PNG
MEIDECC	Tonga
Micronesia Conservation Trust	FSM
Habitat for Humanity	Fiji
Department Agriculture and Rural Development	Vanuatu
Tanna Coffee	Vanuatu
Samoa Independent Water Schemes Association	Samoa
Vanuatu Department of Forests	Vanuatu

2. What is your role within the organisation?

Question 2 asked respondents what their role within their organisation was. Respondents described a range of roles:

- Acting Manager
- Manager Forestry Operations
- Program Manager (2)
- Program Director
- National Director
- Managing Director (2)
- Deputy Director (2)
- Planning Director
- Paramedic /Commander of the Emergency medical response officer
- To build a resilient Tonga with an efficient and effective services
- Ensure provision of safe and secure water to the population

Responses to question 2 enable us to understand the type of work the respondent undertakes within the PO, which provides an indication of their awareness of the PO's operations. Most respondents held senior roles within their organisation, such as Director or Manager, so we expect respondents to have a comprehensive awareness of their organisation and its operations.

3. How many years have you worked for this organisation?

The number of years worked for the organisation provides an indication of how much respondents know about the organisation – including its hosting of volunteers over the past years. The majority of respondents (71%) have worked for the organisation for longer than 5 years, which shows these respondents would likely understand the roles and contributions volunteers have played within the organisation.

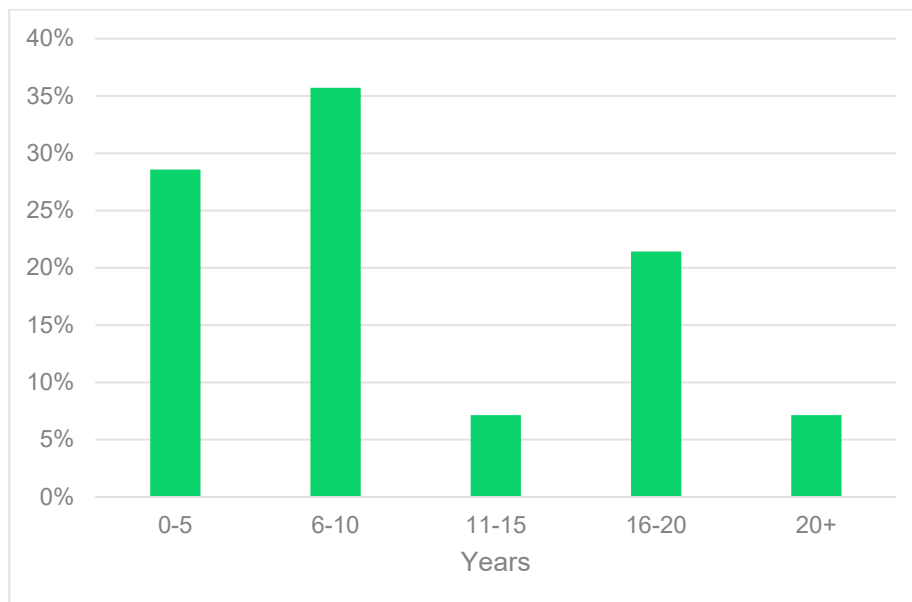


Figure 14: Years worked for organisation

4. What is the size of your organisation in numbers of paid employees:

Question 4 gives contextual information about the size of organisation volunteers are placed in. The most common responses were organisations of 5 - 19 employees (29% of respondents), organisations of 20-49 employees (21% respondents) and organisations of 50-199 employees (36% respondents).

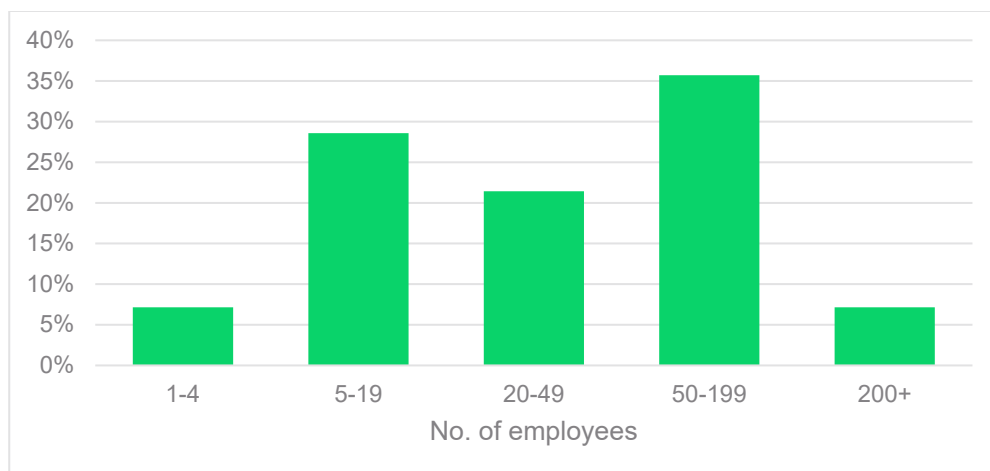


Figure 15: Size of organisation

5. What is your organisation type: Select from:³²

Question 5 gives contextual information about the type of organisation volunteers are placed in. POs could assign themselves to more than one type of organisation. 36% were non-governmental organisations, 21% were small businesses/private sector and 43% of organisations were government (national).

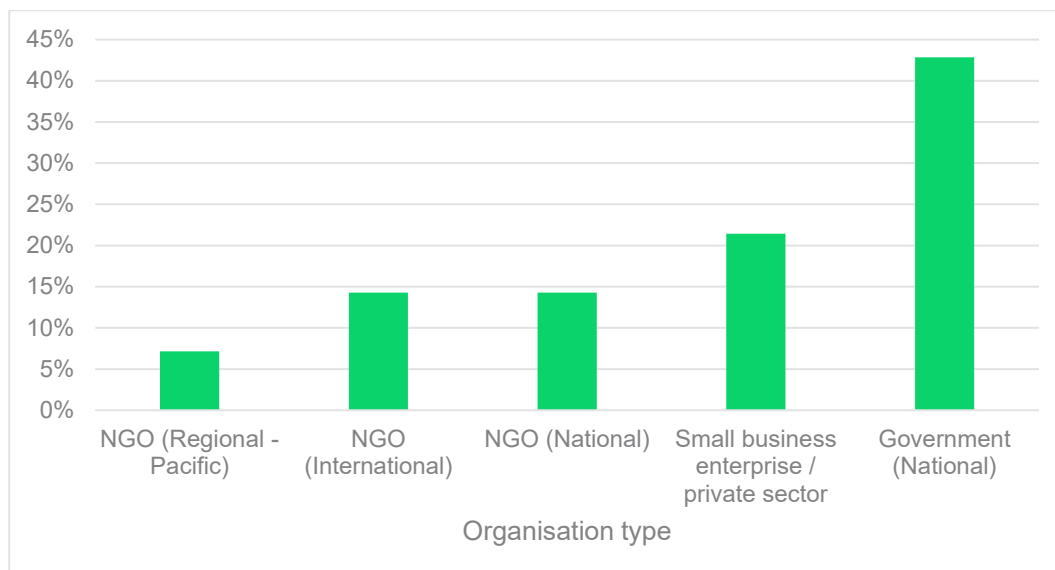


Figure 16: Organisation type

6. In which geographic areas does your organisation operate? List more than one as needed.

Question 6 gives information about geographic areas where the POs are located. POs were situated across a range of locations in the Pacific. The highest number of organisations worked in Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea.

³² Note these types are 'Partner Organisation categories' from Australian Volunteers Program Dataset from Formative Evaluation.

Table 6: Location of POs

Location	Number of organisations
Federated States of Micronesia: Chuuk	1
Federated States of Micronesia: Kosrae	1
Federated States of Micronesia: Pohnpei	1
Federated States of Micronesia: Yap	1
Fiji - rest of Fiji	1
Fiji - Suva	1
International	1
Pacific regional	1
Papua New Guinea - Port Moresby	2
Papua New Guinea - rest of PNG	3
Samoa - Apia	1
Solomon Islands - Honiara	1
Solomon Islands - rest of Solomon Islands	1
Tonga - rest of Tonga	1
Vanuatu - Port Vila	3
Vanuatu - rest of Vanuatu	4

7a. Please consider the top 10 organisations your organisation has worked or interacted with since 2018 within your own country, to achieve your organisation’s development objectives / mission (e.g., government, local NGO, religious organisation etc)

7b. Please consider the top 10 organisations your organisation has worked or interacted with since 2018 outside your own country at regional or international level, to achieve your organisation’s development objectives / mission (this might include Pacific regional NGOs (e.g. PIANGO, Pacific Council of Churches), Pacific regional organisations (e.g. SPC, SPREP, PIFS), UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF), other Pacific governments, or international organisations)

7c. From your list of top organisations in the previous questions, please identify each organisation type as one of the following:

7d. From your list of top organisations, please identify where you work with this organisation from the following list:

Please see “Deep Dive Evaluation 3 Social Network Analysis Report” for SNA results

8. What are your organisations’ development objectives / organisational mission?

9. Please provide examples of how your organisation has progressed its development objectives / organisational mission over the last five years.

Responses to question 8 and 9 were analysed together, which relate to the Evaluation Question 2 “To what extent and in what ways have Partner Organisations progressed their development objectives in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific?” Responses to these questions identify which particular elements (sub-themes) of CC-DR-FS the PO is focused on. POs may work on additional issues beyond their responses to these questions, however we have assumed their primary objectives have been recorded in the survey responses.



Figure 17: POs working in a sub-theme of CC-DR-FS

PO responses to these open text questions were assessed alongside the CC-DR-FS definition, in particular the sub-themes identified during the formative evaluation. Sub-themes were attributed to a PO by the researcher if there was they did not provide relevant responses to survey questions 8 and 9. PO responses were allocated to one or more sub-themes which matched the description. Figure 6 shows the counts of the number of POs allocated to each sub-theme. Note that a PO can work across multiple sub-themes. Combined responses from question 8 and 9 were only counted once.

10. To what extent has the Australian Volunteers Program been suitable, to help strengthen your organisation’s capacity to progress its development objectives / organisational mission? slider

Question 10 asked respondents to rate the suitability of the Australian Volunteers Program to support the PO’s objectives. This question relates to Evaluation Question 1: “To what extent has the Australian Volunteers Program been suitable for supporting Partner Organisations to progress objectives in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific?”

The most common response was ‘very high’ (43% - 6 out of 14). Other responses were ‘high’ (21%, or 3 out of 14), ‘medium’ (14%, or 2 out of 14), ‘low’ (7%, or 1 out of 14) and 2 POs (14%) didn’t respond to the question.

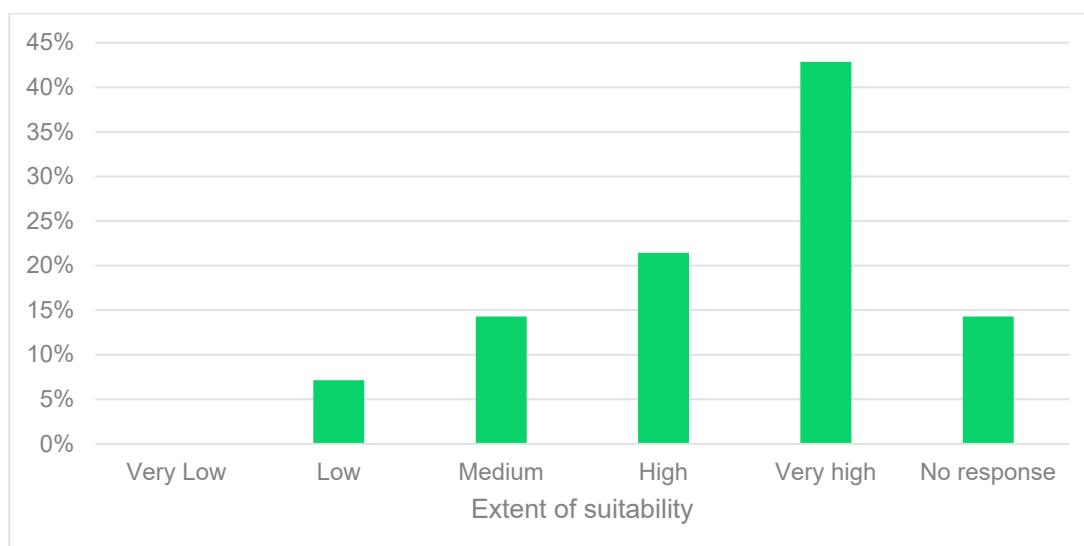


Figure 18: Suitability of Australian Volunteers Program to support PO objectives

11. In what ways has the Australian Volunteers Program been suitable to strengthen your organisations capacity? Please list up to 5 examples of the program’s suitability.

The responses to question 11 (which relate to Evaluation Question 1: “To what extent has the Australian Volunteers Program been suitable for supporting Partner Organisations to progress objectives in CC-DR-FS

in the Pacific?") are provided in the table below. These responses will be analysed alongside interview responses during Activity 6 of the evaluation.

Examples of ways Australian Volunteers Program has been suitable to strengthen PO capacity
Media, filming
Policy development and advice
Human resources
Strategic development
Administration
Capacity building and training of staff
Resource development
Research data collection and analysis
Enhanced PO monitoring, evaluation and learning systems
Business development and fundraising
Financial management
Project management
IT support
Enhanced PO processes / programs
Specialist knowledge transfer

12. How likely are you to recommend the Australian Volunteers Program to organisations similar to your organisation?

Responses to question 12 help answer the Evaluation Question 1: "To what extent has the Australian Volunteers Program been suitable for supporting Partner Organisations to progress objectives in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific?" The majority of respondents gave the score of 'very likely' (64%, or 9 out of 14).

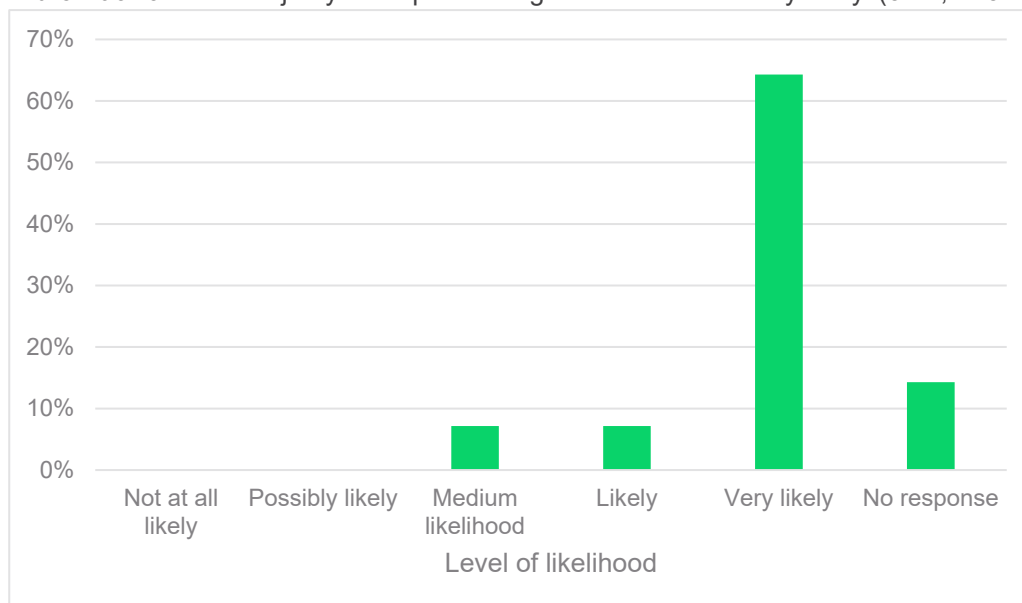


Figure 19: Likelihood of POs to recommend Australian Volunteers Program to similar organisations

Responses to question 12 help answer the Evaluation Question 1: "To what extent has the Australian Volunteers Program been suitable for supporting Partner Organisations to progress objectives in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific?" The majority of respondents gave the score of 'very likely' (64% - 9 out of 14).

13. How would you rate the timeliness of the Australian Volunteers Program in how it supports organisation?

This question relates to Evaluation Question 5: "To what extent has the Australian Volunteers Program operated in an efficient way and contributed to progress in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific?" Responses indicated

that the program's timeliness was at least satisfactory, with 50% (7 out of 14) responses indicated the program was 'very timely'.

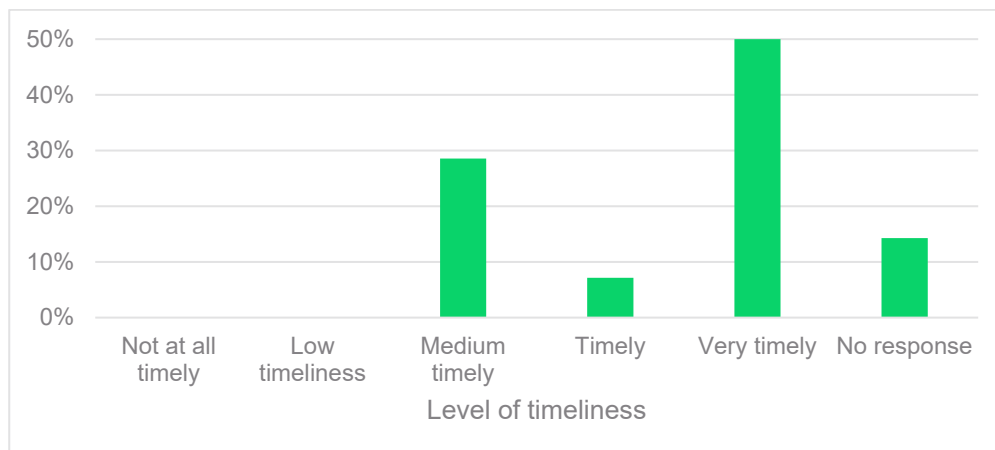


Figure 20: Timeliness of Australian Volunteers Program's support to POs

14. Have you provided any feedback to the Australian Volunteers Program on how it can improve its support to Partner Organisations?

Question 14 and Question 15 links with Evaluation Question 6: "To what extent has the Australian Volunteers Program been able to learn about and improve its approaches to managing a volunteering program, including through partnerships, recruitment, communication, innovation and trialling new approaches to support Partner Organisation's development objectives in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific?" Most POs (83%, or 10 out of 12) reported that they had provided feedback to the Australian Volunteers Program. 17% (2 out of 12 POs) had not provided feedback. 2 POs did not respond to the question.

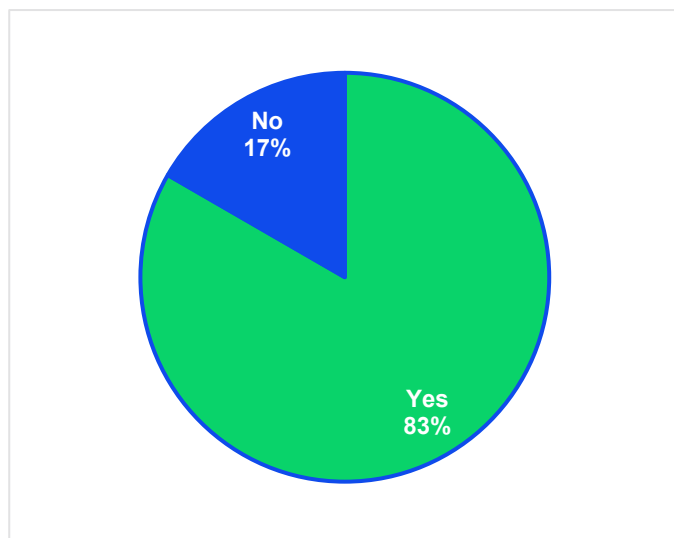


Figure 21: PO provision of feedback to Australian Volunteers Program

15. When you gave feedback to the Australian Volunteers Program, how do you rate the response provided?

Question 15 shows how the Australian Volunteers Program responded to PO feedback (these results help to answer Evaluation Question 6 as noted above). Out of the 10 respondents who had provided feedback, they all rated the response to feedback favourably, with 10% (1 out of 10) 'medium', 30% (3 out of 10) and 60% (6 out of 10) responses 'very good'.

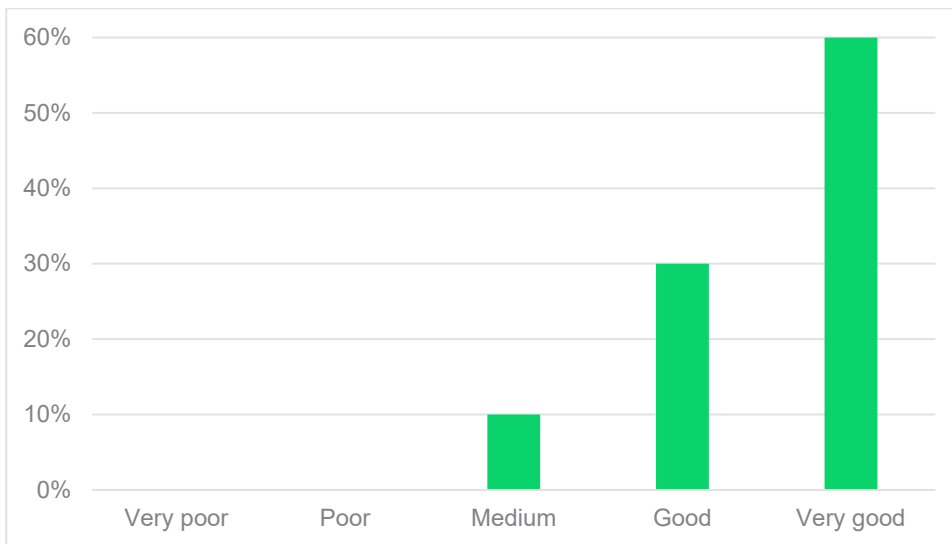


Figure 22: Australian Volunteers Program's response to PO feedback

16. To what extent has the Australian Volunteers Program supported your organisation to strengthen organisation's capacity to progress its development objectives / organisational mission?

Question 16 helps to answer Evaluation Question 3: "To what extent and in what ways has the Australian Volunteers Program contributed to progress achieved in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific?" Responses were quite favourable with 21% (3 out of 14) of POs responding the Program support was 'medium', 29% (4 out of 14) of POs responding support was 'high' and 29% (4 out of 14) of POs responding support was 'very high'. 7% (1 out of 14) POs responded support was 'low'. 14% (2 out of 14) of POs did not respond to the question.

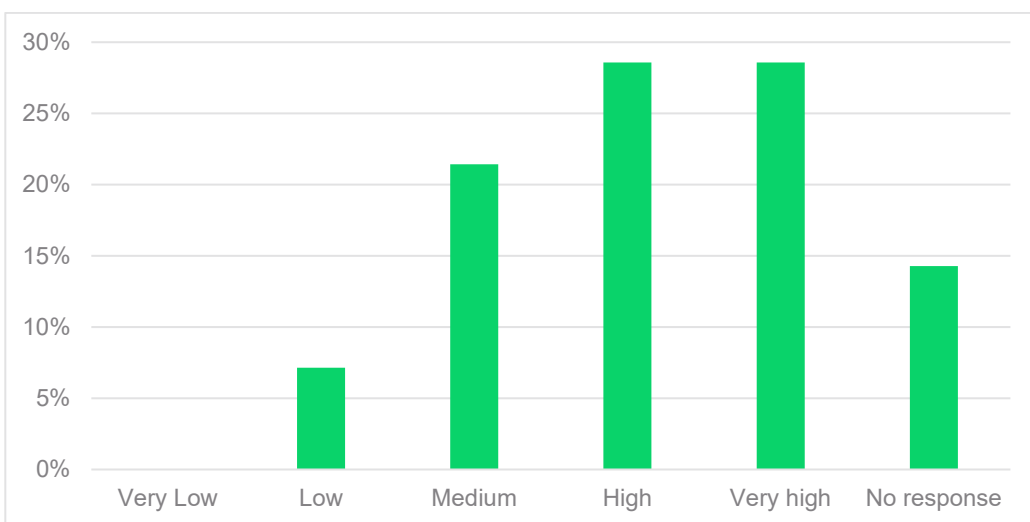


Figure 23: Australian Volunteers Program's support to strengthen PO capacity

17. Please provide examples of how the Australian Volunteers Program supported your organisation to strengthen organisation's capacity to progress its development objectives / organisational mission. Text box

Responses to question 17 (which helps to answer Evaluation Question 3: "To what extent and in what ways has the Australian Volunteers Program contributed to progress achieved in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific?") are provided in the table below. These responses will be analysed alongside interview responses during Activity 6 of the evaluation.

Q17. Examples of Australian Volunteers Program support to strengthen PO capacity to progress their objectives

Training and institutional capacity building
Building project management skills
Business planning support
Build human resources skills and processes
Encouragement to apply and utilise an Australian Volunteer
Enhanced PO processes / programs
Specialist knowledge transfer
Mentoring
Research support
Enhanced monitoring, evaluation and learning systems
Additional people to perform key functions
Editing and reporting
Strategic development
Making videos
Participating in research and surveys
Established good network and relationships

18. How likely is it that benefits from the Australian Volunteers Program will continue for your organisation, to progress your development objectives / organisational mission?

Question 18 relates to sustainability, and helps to answer Evaluation Question 11 “To what extent is there an indication of ongoing benefits in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific attributable to Partner Organisations and Australian Volunteers Program support?” 21% of responses (3 out of 14) were ‘medium likelihood’, 36% of responses (5 out of 14) were ‘likely’ and 21% of responses (3 out of 14) were ‘very likely’. Only 7% of responses (1 out of 14) was ‘not at all likely’. 21% (3 out of 14) POs said ‘don’t know’ or didn’t respond to the question.

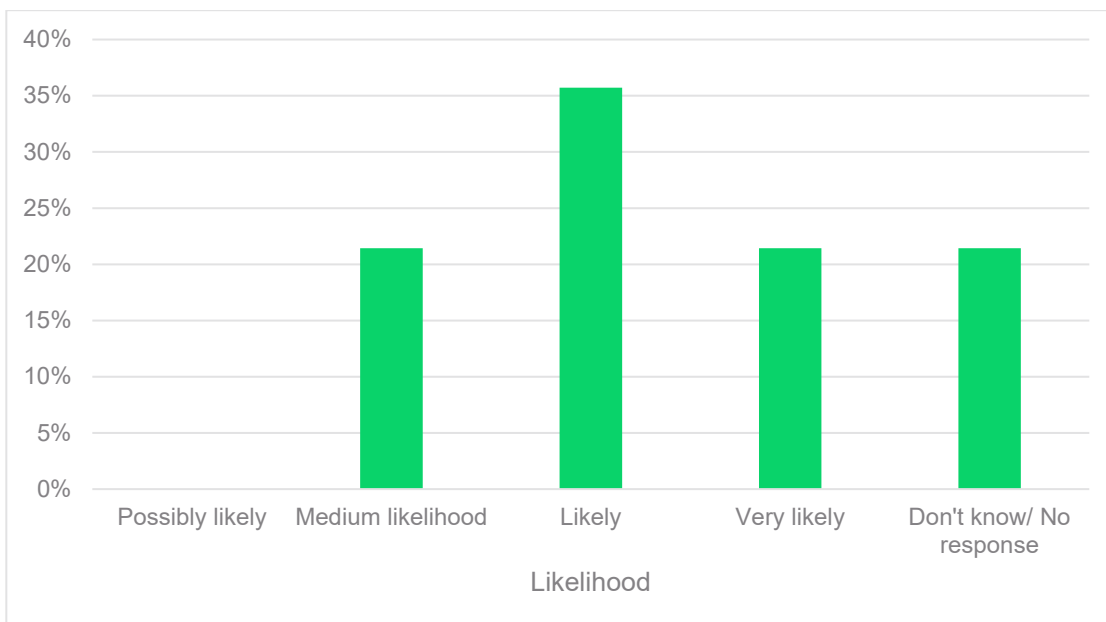


Figure 24: Likelihood of benefits from Australian Volunteers Program to continue

19. Why did you provide this rating? Why will benefits continue / not continue?

Responses to question 19 helps to answer Evaluation Question 11 (“To what extent is there an indication of ongoing benefits in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific attributable to Partner Organisations and Australian Volunteers Program support?”) and are provided in the table below. These responses will be analysed alongside interview responses during Activity 6 of the evaluation.

Likelihood of benefits from Australian Volunteers Program to continue	Why will benefits continue/not continue?
Not at all likely	I am not in a position to answer this question as we (WAPNG) currently do not engage any AVI volunteers and have not since 2019. WAPNG have only had two AVI volunteers in my time with them. One was mainly assisting with finance and office administration and we have since been able to recruit local staff to fulfil these roles. The other volunteer had experience with maternal and child health which did prove beneficial in linking with some hygiene and child health initiatives but this work was not realised when the volunteer had to leave.
Medium likelihood	<p>AVI should continue to support Department of Forests</p> <p>Some benefits have longer shelf-life than others. The improvement of processes may be around longer because they end up in policy. On the other hand improving the skills of staff may only remain with the organisation as long as that staff stays. There may be some residual benefits based on that staff members professional influence within operations but because NGOs for the most can't compete with the UNs, DFATs, EU's and private sector, it will always be the NGO's lot to be the platform where many staff learn, get very valuable hands-on experience and then leave for the better paying international organisations and private sector. So learning and capacity building is an on-going exercise for NGOs.</p> <p>To gain the capacity of the staff members</p>
Likely	<p>Mentoring conducted by volunteers successful and put to good use by staff</p> <p>We are hopeful of continuing the program</p> <p>Volunteers capacitate our staff</p> <p>It will continue because we have new capacities that build on what has been put in place by working with volunteers</p> <p>Benefits will continue, but skills will always need to be updated as we grow</p>
Very likely	<p>The support provided by the AVIs was of a high calibre and in line with existing organizational priorities, so that continuing support internally and from other sources was "built in."</p> <p>Benefits have continued to national level whereby our volunteer as hired to work in our National Emergency Management Office (NEMO), and still work to help us when we requested</p> <p>The support of volunteers has improved different levels of our programming in a positive and dynamic way</p>

20. Do you have any connections or relationships with other Australian organisations / beyond the Australian Volunteers Program?

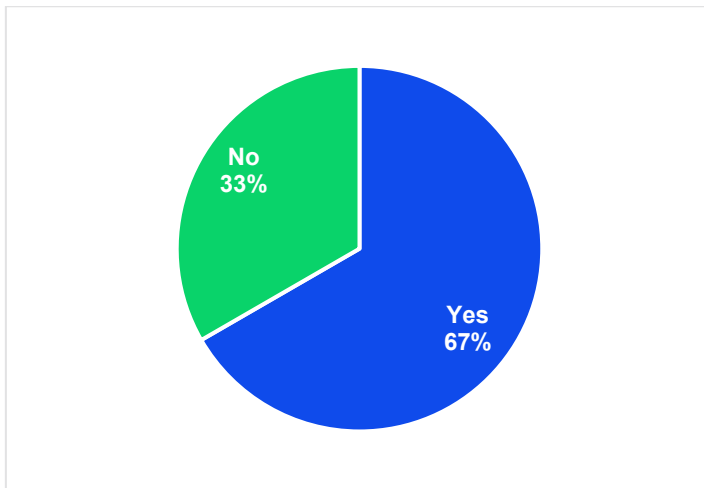


Figure 25: POs connected or who have relationships with other Australian organisations

Responses to questions 20 and 21 link to Evaluation Question 4 “Were there contextual factors that helped or hindered progress overall?” and Evaluation Question 8 “To what extent are there synergies or linkages between the Australian Volunteers Program and other DFAT interventions in CC-DR-FS in the Pacific?”.

67% (8 out of 12) POs responded favourably that they did have connections or relationships with other Australian organisations. 33% (4 out of 12) said they did not have connections or relationships with other Australian organisations. 2 POs did not respond to the question. These responses will be analysed in Activity 6 alongside the results from interviews and SNA.



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