



End-of-Programme Evaluation
Strengthening Resilience of Pacific Islands States through
Universal Social Protection

Evaluation Report

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Submitted to:
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List of Acronyms

CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DPO	Disabled Persons Organisations
DRG	Disability Reference Group
EQ	Evalutaion Question
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEEW	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labor Organisation
KII	Key Informant Interview
MIS	Management Information System
MCIL	Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labour
INTAFF	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MPI	Multidimensional poverty index
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSPP	National Social Protection Policy Agenda (
OPHI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PICT	Pacific Island Countries and Territories
PUNO	Participating United Nations organizations
PwD	Persons with Disabilities
SNEP	Samoa National Employment Policy
SNPF	Samoa National Provident Fund
SP-JP	Social Protection Joint Programme
SYB	Start Your Own Business
SC	Steering Committee
TC	Technical Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNEG	United National Evaluation Guidelines
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	UN International Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has launched a call to conduct an independent end-of-programme evaluation of the programme ***Strengthening Resilience of Pacific Island States through Universal Social Protection***, also called the Social Protection Joint Programme (SP-JP). This programme aimed to support efforts of four Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs); Samoa, Cook Islands, Tokelau and Niue, to strengthen their sustainable, inclusive and evidence-based social protection systems. It was jointly implemented by the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the four PICT governments and was convened by UNDP on behalf of the participating United Nations organizations (PUNOs)¹ between June 2020 and December 2022 with a total budget of US\$ 3,386,176.

Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

The end-of-programme evaluation was commissioned as part of a mandatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process for the Joint SDG Fund. The evaluation assessed the extent to which the SP-JP programme has achieved its purpose and outcomes in consideration of its design, scope and implementation, and where possible, assessed its potential impact and sustainability. The evaluation will inform the early design/ formulation and implementation stages of future joint programmes in the Pacific. The evaluation was conducted by a team of local consultants in Samoa, Niue, and Cook Islands. The work of the local consultants was coordinated remotely through the engagement of an international senior evaluation consultants. During the course of the evaluation, the team conducted key informant interviews with PUNOs as well as national stakeholders in each of the targeted countries. A total of 21 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted 6 of which were in Cook Islands, 4 in Niue, 1 in Tokelau, and 5 in Samoa. This is in addition to interviews with the 5 PUNOs in Samoa and Fiji.

Evaluation Findings

Relevance

JP was relevant to the needs and priorities of the islands as it aimed to strengthen the systems, increase coverage and ensure adequate systems are in place to support the vulnerable population. Despite the overall positive feedback provided by interviewed stakeholders about the relevance of the SP-JP, it was also explained in almost all interviews that those who were engaged in the implementation of activities from the government were never consulted during the formulation and design of the SP-JP. PUNOs interviewed maintained that this was indeed one of the main challenges encountered by the project. It was noted that the design was done either through consultants who ***assumed*** the needs and priorities of the PICTs or by international staff who have since moved to others posts and locations. The design of the SP-JP was overambitious with an unrealistic expectation that all activities outlined in the endorsed Program Document would be completed within the original designed period of 1.5 years. Most of these activities which concern the design, implementation, and institutionalization of reforms in the social protection areas take time, and that a minimum of five (5) years is needed for these types of institutional reforms to be designed, accepted by government and other key stakeholders and implementers, and to be implemented and institutionalized effectively.

Effectiveness

The JP implementation has been effective and all its intended outputs have been achieved. The division of roles between the PUNOs has enabled the effective implementation of the different activities and the achievements of the outputs as specified in the project document. The coordination modality

¹ The Participating UN organisations (PUNOs) of this Programme include the UNDP (UN Development Programme), UNESCAP (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), UNICEF (UN International Children's Fund), UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), ILO (International Labour Organisation), and the UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) in-country.

through the steering committees and the technical committees further supported the effective implementation of activities and achievement of results. These fora served as an adequate coordination mechanism where updates and workplans were shared with all stakeholders allowing for continuous information sharing, coordination, and synergies amongst the different stakeholders in the four PICTs. Changes in the operating environment affected the context in which the Program was implemented, and which required a review and change in the program design to respond appropriately. At the beginning, the delays in the government's endorsement of the social protection policy resulted in delays and non-implementation of activities in Samoa.

The JP was coordinated through UNDP which was implementing activities as well as assuming the overall coordination of the activities and amongst the PUNOs. Additionally, UNDP oversaw the reporting and liaising with the different government ministries across the four PICTs. The management and implementation were carried out through a steering committee and a technical committee in each of the PCITs. This modality helped bring all stakeholders together to discuss the activities and the progress of the JP.

Efficiency

The synergy between PUNOs joint programming was quite efficient in addressing progress jointly with the governments of the four countries and discussing how best to address implementation challenges together. There was, however, limited communication between the PUNOs during implementations except during the joint meetings. Some delays during program implementation would have been promptly addressed or avoided altogether if the joint activities were in fact implemented jointly. Interventions implemented by the SP ensured synergy between each country's development objectives along with regional (e.g., ILO/ESCAP Social Floor & Call for Action no SP) and the United Nations commitments reflected in the UN Pacific Strategy 2018-2022. The JP activities were designed to ensure that the activities implemented by the PUNOs is well within each PUNO's mandate and regular programming.

Impact

An estimated total of 574 persons with disabilities (PwDs) and 284 persons without disabilities (PWOD) were reached by the programme in 2020 through its component and activities specifically targeting PwDs. A total of 1,936 PwDs and 256 persons without disabilities in 2021² benefited from project activities. An estimated total of 515 individuals (60% females and 40% males) were consulted on the reviews and assessments in 2020.³ In 2021, a total number of 100 individuals were further consulted on the analyses and evaluations together with the remaining work of the programme. In 2022, a further 500 were consulted on the development and assessment of apps as the programme heads to completion. An estimated 300,000 persons of which 60% were women and girls were reached through the activities and interventions of the JP.

The SP had many positive outcomes and expected long term effects after the main outputs and outcomes are put in place. The groundwork has been established for the four PICTs under this JP. The longer-term effects of the JP will be the centralized system for PwDs programs and systems in the four countries to be further strengthened through continuous partnership under the benefit scheme program, policy implementation and community engagement between government and the Disability Reference Group which is a reference group of all PwDs associations in each country. Additionally, the policy revisions and the establishment of digital systems will yield positive outcomes on the long run. This will be beneficial for PwDs as well as other vulnerable groups in each of the targeted PICTs. SP-JP

² Joint Programme 2021 Annual Progress Report

³ Joint Programme 2020. Annual Progress Report.

was successful in raising awareness amongst different stakeholders regarding social protection. The JP helped build a unified understanding of social protection and enabled the adoption of its requirements as part of the government agenda in the PICTs. The outcome of this adoption remains to be seen as governments take this agenda forward after the completion of the JP. Additionally, the engagement of PwDs and discussions about vulnerabilities enabled the widening of understanding as well as development of safety nets for different vulnerable groups that includes an understanding of vulnerabilities and governments' role in the provision of support for them.

Sustainability

The JP on social protection worked predominantly on system strengthening through different modalities and approaches. Some of the activities resulted in direct support to vulnerable groups such as the benefit schemes for PwDs in different countries. However, the bulk of the activities of the SP has been on capacity building and system strengthening which enjoys some level of commitment from national governments making it most likely that these benefits will continue after the life of the JP. Government stakeholders from the four countries interviewed during the evaluation have expressed commitment and buy-in to the concepts introduced by the JP explaining that the activities form a core function of their mandates and that the project clarified what their role should be and how they can improve their services. In Samoa and Tokelau, much will depend on the adoption by Parliament of the SP framework in Samoa and the integration of the recommendations of the assessment in Tokelau to ensure the continuation of the benefits and rolling out of the SP framework in Samoa.

Inclusion, Gender and PwDs

The JP has made progress towards strengthening the sustainable and inclusive social protection agenda in the targeted countries. Through a series of the in-depth analyses and stock-taking reviews of the social protection systems in Samoa, Cook Islands, Tokelau, and Niue the JP supported by the strong data and evidences the JP has been able to pursue the recommendations to inform the national policy formulation and establishment of social protection floors and development reforms in national social protection systems.

Conclusions

Criteria	Conclusions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall objectives of the SP were directly relevant to the needs of vulnerable groups particularly PwDs. The project focused on improving access to social protection schemes for PwDs in the four PICTs. The activities of all PUNOs were directly relevant to this objective however, the SP also included specific activities by UNESCO that specifically engaged CSOs and associations focusing on PwDs to ensure that the services provided by government is well suited to their needs and priorities.
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of progress against indicators, the SP achieved most of its planned activities. Implementation modalities were generally well suited to the context and the coordination mechanisms through the technical committees and the steering committees ensured ongoing coordination and collaboration of relevant actors.
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination amongst the PUNOs ensured some level of efficiency in the implementation of the activities and the achievement of outputs and the outcomes. Coordination was ensured through the formation of two structures: the first, a steering committee at high level, and the second, a technical committee more focused on implementation. These committees were meeting on a monthly

	basis thus ensuring coordination and synergies amongst the implementing agencies from government, civil society and PUNOs. The modality of implementation ensured efficiency however, it did not go beyond information sharing amongst the stakeholders.
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The JP's intended outcomes could be said to have been achieved. While it is too soon to speak about impact yet, the JP benefited a large number of end-beneficiaries. The impact of the JP could be observed in the rolling out of the benefits for the PwDs in the four PICTs. It can also be observed in increasing awareness about the value and the importance of social protection amongst government stakeholders.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sustainability of the JP is contingent on the ability of governments to continue the benefits that were harnessed through the interventions of the SP-JP.
PwDs, Gender, and Inclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The design of the JP enshrined inclusion principles into its activities and approaches. The project specifically recognized the importance of working towards universal access to social protection by vulnerable groups particularly women, children, and PwDs. The focus of the PUNOs on PwDs and the integration of specific actions to increase access to social protection for this vulnerable group is one of the concrete outcomes of the JP.

Lessons Learned

- Novel projects and concepts such as social protection require time and widespread consultations with national stakeholders to ensure buy-in and common understanding of its value and implementation modalities. It is critical that enough time is allocated to this stage to ensure effective and efficient implementation.
- Short-term development projects (less than 5 years) often face challenges in the effectiveness of implementation as it does not allow for adequate time in consultation and engagement of national stakeholders who are the key persons responsible for the success and achievement of results.
- The success of social protection projects is contingent on the development of different systems and approaches. Hence, implementation should be conducted in stages and focusing on one key aspect and area at a time to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. Attempting to work on all pillars at the same time could lead to inadequate and ineffective implementation.
- When working in small PICTs strong coordination amongst PUNOs is necessary as the implementing agencies are often the same and they do not always have the capacity to work with all PUNOs at the same time.
- Joint projects that do not include the implementation of joint activities by the PUNOs are less likely to include strong synergies and complementarity.
- Social protection programmes are not a one size-fits all, also capacities in PICTs are not the same. Activities should be context specific to ensure the availability of capacities for implementation.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Continue to support social protection floors in the four PICTs to ensure the adequate continued implementation of the different activities have been initiated through the SP-JP.

Recommendation 2: Future similar projects should recognise that activities focusing on social protection require time to be well developed and integrated into national systems. Future JPs need to factor in time factors and ensure adequate duration of implementation to ensure the achievement of results.

Recommendation 3: Ensure adequate buy-in of implementing and technical units. This could be achieved by focusing during the inception phase of social protection projects on conducting wide-scale consultations that would promote common understanding and finetuning of objectives and approaches to increase relevance and effectiveness of interventions and promote long-term sustainability.

Recommendation 4: Ensure enough timeframe is allocated for the implementation of projects that focus on social protection and other system strengthening interventions. These types of projects cannot yield results within short periods of time especially when global conditions affect the implementation modality of the activities.

Recommendation 5: In order to increase collaboration and synergies between multiple partners, joint projects should include in their design joint activities and common results and outputs. This would ensure that partners in the same joint project are working together and in an integrated manner to achieve results. This is likely to reduce siloed approaches and ensure that the UN agencies are indeed delivering as one.

Recommendation 6: Ensure adequate activities are specifically targeting Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that are engaged with the vulnerable groups that the project is targeting. This would ensure the development of a critical mass that is able to continue to advocate for the rights and priorities of those vulnerable groups that the project is intending to serve. The role of CSOs should go beyond representation of vulnerable populations to playing an advocacy and oversight role vis a vis the government. This would require building the capacities of CSOs and the provision of adequate tools to strengthen their roles within their communities.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has launched a call to conduct an independent end-of-programme evaluation of the programme ***Strengthening Resilience of Pacific Island States through Universal Social Protection***, also called the Social Protection Joint Programme (SP-JP). This programme aimed to support efforts of four Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs); Samoa, Cook Islands, Tokelau and Niue, to strengthen their sustainable, inclusive and evidence-based social protection systems. It was jointly implemented by the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the four PICT governments and was convened by UNDP on behalf of the participating United Nations organizations (PUNOs)⁴ between June 2020 and December 2022 with a total budget of US\$ 3,386,176.

II. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

The Pacific Islands subregion includes 14 countries and territories with a total population of 2.4 million people, inhabiting thousands of islands that cover 15 per cent of the earth's surface. The subregion is not homogeneous, with key differences in geography, size, history, culture, economies and political systems. Fiji is the most populous country, with about 900,000 residents, and Niue the smallest, with about 1,200⁵. There are key differences in geography, size, history, culture, economies, and political systems across the region. Only eight of the countries are ranked in the Human Development Index, including Samoa which ranks 104th. PICTs face a wide variety of economic, social, environmental, and political challenges present threats to the region's development, including the achievement of the SDGs.⁶

2.1. Climate Change and Natural Disasters

The Pacific region is among the most vulnerable in the world to natural hazards and the effects of climate change and extreme weather events. In 2018, out of 281 natural disasters globally, 50 percent and 8 of the 10 deadliest disasters occurred in the region.⁷ Although fewer people have been dying from natural disasters, there has been an increase in the number of people affected. Disasters have significant impacts on economic growth, health, socio-economic well-being, and food security in the Pacific.⁸ The consequences of climate change pose huge threats to island countries, where weather extremes are also coupled with rising sea levels, their small land size, remoteness and fragile ecosystems.⁹

⁴ The Participating UN organisations (PUNOs) of this Programme include the UNDP (UN Development Programme), UNESCAP (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), UNICEF (UN International Children's Fund), UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), ILO (International Labour Organisation), and the UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) in-country.

⁵ UNDP. Subregional programme document for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (2018-2022).

⁶ WFP. 2023. Pacific Country Brief. https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000148524/download/?_ga=2.12995959.1726174754.1682495937-889432129.1673962108&_gac=1.161805518.1680519884.Cj0KCQjw8qmhBhCIARIsANAtbof3vpie2BgI9l7CZEHrsrohYJDCuyPs8bBFqjABNO6hTPlqdcB7sDMaAm7ZEALw_wcB

⁷ Mangalorean. 2020. Building Resilience is Critical to Minimise the Impact of Humanitarian Crises. <https://www.mangalorean.com/building-resilience-is-critical-to-minimise-the-impact-of-humanitarian-crises/>

⁸ WFP. 2022. Pacific Islands Annual Country Report 2021 https://www.wfp.org/operations/annual-country-report?operation_id=XP01&year=2021#/23430

⁹ Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft. 2021. World Risk Report 2021, Focus: Social Protection <https://www.welthungerhilfe.org/news/press-releases/2021/worldriskreport-2021/>

The World Risk Index 2021 ranks several countries in the Asia Pacific as the highest in the world for disaster risk, namely, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Tonga. Samoa, Cook Islands, Tokelau and Niue as well have the most exposure, susceptibility and limited coping and adaptive capacities to disasters and climate change, particularly cyclones. Samoa, for instance, has been hit by several major cyclones in recent years, such as Cyclone Yasa in 2020, which caused significant damage to infrastructure, homes, and agriculture. The cyclone also triggered flooding and landslides, and many communities were left without access to power, water and communication networks. Similarly, in 2021, Cyclone Lucas hit the Cook Islands and Cyclone Zazu hit Tokelau.¹⁰

Further, the Pacific Island countries all score in the bottom 50 countries in terms of pandemic readiness out of the 195 assessed countries.¹¹ In the medium to longer term, climate-related disasters are expected to increase in number and scale. Eight out of 20 countries with the highest average disaster losses scaled by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are Pacific Island countries, with US\$ 284 million estimated average disaster losses per year in the South Pacific. One-third of the Pacific cannot meet their basic human needs.¹² Evidence shows that pre-existing inequalities mean that women and marginalised and vulnerable groups in the Pacific are disproportionately impacted by climate change. Further, in several countries, conflict disrupts the provision of Sexual Reproductive Health Rights, exacerbates Gender Based Violence and leads to displaced populations.¹³

2.2. Socio-economic Situation

Across the Asia and the Pacific region, humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities are increasing. The impacts of climate change, protracted crises, and the health and economic shocks of COVID-19 continue to take a heavy toll on the world's most populated region. The COVID-19 economic and social ramifications in 2020 and 2021 have been severe with an average 20 percent decrease in GDP. Border closures, lockdowns, and travel restrictions had wide-ranging effects; from closing local businesses to preventing farmers from accessing agricultural inputs to disrupting the travel and tourism sector. However, GDP growth in the Pacific for 2022 was predicted at 4.7 percent, according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The inflation forecasts for the region were maintained at 5.9 percent for 2022, expected to be upset as the war in Ukraine continues to increase the prices of imported goods, especially fuel, and transport costs.¹⁴

The Pacific region suffers from significant unemployment and under-employment, particularly amongst youth, estimated at 23 percent, who also have low capacities and skills. Subsistence farming continues to be the primary economic activity for several countries, evident wide disparities in male and female employment are in most countries, with the ratio being almost 2:1 in Samoa.¹⁵ In addition, there are limited social protection measures in place to provide a safety net for vulnerable populations. While the Pacific Island Countries have enjoyed progress in recent decades, with an increase in life expectancy and a decline in infant mortality rates. However, economic growth has been well below the

¹⁰ The World Bank. 2022. Climate Change Knowledge Portal. <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/cook-islands/vulnerability>

¹¹ Jessica A. Bell and Jennifer B. Nuzzo, Global Health Security Index: Advancing Collective Action and Accountability Amid Global Crisis, 2021. www.GHSIndex.org

¹² WFP. 2022. Pacific Country Brief. <https://www.wfp.org/countries/pacific>

¹³ UNFPA. 2021. Global Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/board-documents/main-document/ENG_DP.FPA_2021.8_-_UNFPA_strategic_plan_2022-2025_-_FINAL_-_14Jul21.pdf

¹⁴ ADB. 2022. Asian Development Outlook, Supplement July 2022 <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/811076/ado-supplement-july-2022.pdf>

¹⁵ ILO. 2021. <https://www.ilo.org/suva/areas-of-work/employment-promotion/lang-en/index.htm>

global average. Poverty rates are increasing in the Pacific. Approximately 13 percent of the population in Niue, 19 percent in Samoa and 28 percent in Cook Islands live below the national poverty line. Women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly are disproportionately represented among the poor. Poverty prevalence among children in Samoa and Cook Islands is higher than the national average, 22 percent and 31 percent respectively. Matriarchal households, elderly women and men are more likely to be poor in Samoa. Higher rates of poverty among the elderly are evident in urban areas in Samoa. In Cook Islands, populations in remote outer islands are more likely to be vulnerable to income and food insecurity and to climate-related risks. In all countries, PwDs are among the most vulnerable.¹⁶

Reducing maternal mortality remains an unfinished agenda, with almost 10 women dying every hour due to complications of pregnancy and childbirth, the second-highest absolute number of maternal deaths among regions.¹⁷ Geographic isolation is a key challenge in the Asia-Pacific region for people's access to health services who often encounter barriers to healthcare that limit their ability to obtain the care they need. Almost 10 women dying every hour due to complications of pregnancy and childbirth, the second-highest absolute number of maternal deaths among regions and violence against women and girls is among the highest in the world.¹⁸ UN Women estimates that 60-80 percent of women and girls in the region experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetimes. Rates vary across states, territories, and cultures; in Tonga (79 percent), Samoa (60 percent), Vanuatu (72 percent) and Solomon Islands (64 percent).¹⁹ In the Asia Pacific region, 1 in 8 adolescent girls aged 15-19 years, and 1 in 50 boys, are married or in union.²⁰ Moreover, during the time of the pandemic, pre-existing gender-based violence (GBV) harmful practices exacerbated and are likely to have longer-term consequences for women's health and well-being, safety and security, and economic participation and empowerment.²¹

2.3. Social Protection

The lack of social protection measures in the Asia-Pacific region leaves vulnerable populations at risk, particularly during crises such as natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic. In Pacific island countries, social protection programmes are limited, with only a few countries having formal social protection systems in place.²² The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for social protection programmes to support vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, people with disabilities and those who lost their livelihoods due to lockdowns and travel restrictions.

Ad-hoc and fragmented programmes to address vulnerabilities are being implemented without an explicit and comprehensive social protection framework, lack of coverage for large parts of the

¹⁶ UNDP. 2019. SP-JP Project Description of Action

¹⁷ WFP. 2022. Pacific Islands Annual Country Report 2021 https://www.wfp.org/operations/annual-country-report?operation_id=XP01&year=2021#/23430

¹⁸ WFP. 2022. Pacific Islands Annual Country Report 2021 https://www.wfp.org/operations/annual-country-report?operation_id=XP01&year=2021#/23430

¹⁹ UN Women. 2018. Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: Evidence, Data and Knowledge in Pacific Island Countries.

²⁰ UNFPA. 2021. *Diversity of Types of Child Marriage and Early Union in Asia Pacific*. https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/asrh_factsheet_1_child_marriage_and_early_union.pdf

²¹ UNDP. 2021. *UNDP's regional response to gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic*. [https://www.undp.org/pacific/press-releases/undp%E2%80%99s-regional-response-gender-based-violence-during-covid-19-pandemic#:~:text=In%20Pacific%20island%20countries%2C%20violence,Solomon%20Islands%20\(64%20percent\)](https://www.undp.org/pacific/press-releases/undp%E2%80%99s-regional-response-gender-based-violence-during-covid-19-pandemic#:~:text=In%20Pacific%20island%20countries%2C%20violence,Solomon%20Islands%20(64%20percent))

²² ILO and ESCWAP. 2021. Social protection responses to COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific: The story so far and future considerations. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_753550.pdf

population resulting in burden on families. Most importantly, people lacking social protection coverage are the most affected by climate change and natural hazards.²³ According to UNDP, Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau are one step closer to ensuring that it leaves no one behind with the completion of comprehensive stock-takes and reviews of their social protection systems. In Samoa, the social protection system is limited, with the majority of the population relying on subsistence farming and informal employment. The government has introduced a social protection programme for the elderly and people with disabilities, providing financial support to assist with living expenses.²⁴ Both Samoa and Tokelau have developed draft social protection strategies, whereas both Cook Islands and Niue have reviewed their current social protection measures.²⁵

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION BEING EVALUATION

According to the Joint Programme Document,²⁶ the overall goal of the programme was to ensure that all people in need have access to social protection in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. The strategic outcome was to establish inclusive and equitable social protection floors in the four countries, with the expected outcomes shown in Figure 1. They aim to reduce household-level vulnerabilities to natural disasters and its related economic shocks through increased resilience, while also contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE).

In line with national strategies and the UN Pacific Strategy 2018-2022, the pertinent outputs of the four programme's outcomes were:

➤ **OUTCOME 1- Universal, inclusive and equitable Social Protection systems Leave No One Behind.**

Output 1.1 [Samoa] - Data-informed, nationally consulted, comprehensive and equitable social protection floors designed and costed.

Output 1.2 [Samoa] - Multi-year social protection implementation plan adopted and budgeted.

Output 1.3 [Samoa] - Social protection pilot programmes implemented with the objective of national scale-up.

Output 1.4 [Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau] - Existing social protection floors for the four countries of

Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau fully reviewed to strengthen inclusiveness, equity and financial sustainability.

➤ **OUTCOME 2: Social Protection floors are efficiently and effectively administered.**

Output 2.1 - Digital data systems in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau will be strengthened to support registration and robust administration of the social protection floor and programmes.

Output 2.2 - Integrated administrative systems such as registries and redress mechanisms are strengthened, in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau.

Output 2.3 - Evidence-based financial management of social protection systems in place.

²³ UNDP. 2019. SP-JP Project Description of Action

²⁴ ILO. 2022. Social Protection: Samoa. <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/ShowCountryProfile.action?iso=WS#:~:text=The%20social%20protection%20system%20in,extended%20family%20and%20sometimes%20churches.>

²⁵ UNDP. 2022. Social Protection Moves Forward in the Islands. <https://www.undp.org/samoa/news/social-protection-moves-forward-islands>

²⁶ UNDP. 2019. SP-JP Programme Document

- **OUTCOME 3: Financial inclusion in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau enables low transaction cost transfers of Social Protection benefits.**

Output 3.1- Robust payment systems through the banking system designed and costed.

- **OUTCOME 4: Increased resilience as disability, gender, youth and climate related contingencies are being mainstreamed.**

Output 4.1 [Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau] - Labour market services designed and scalable in Samoa to improve working age populations' access to jobs and incomes with specific focus on ensuring access for persons living with disabilities, women and young people.

Output 4.2 [Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau] - Disaster-risk informed social protection benefits and services integrated in social protection floor.

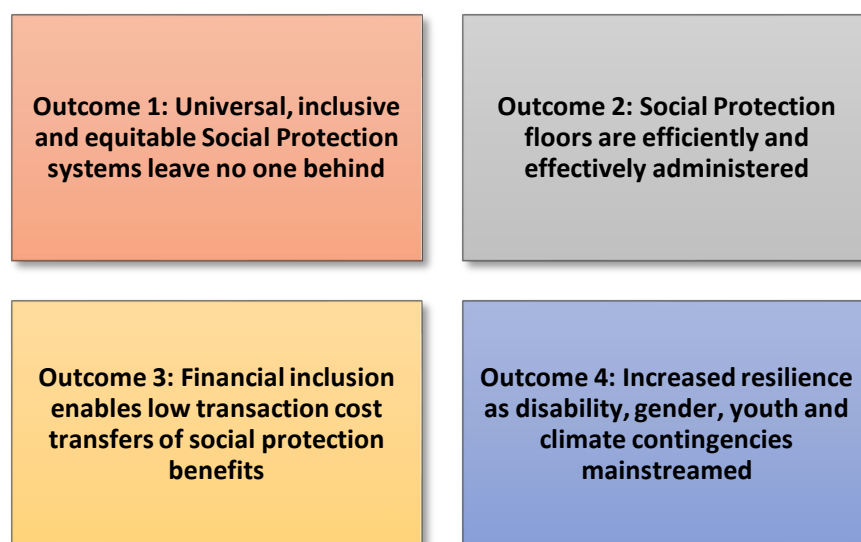


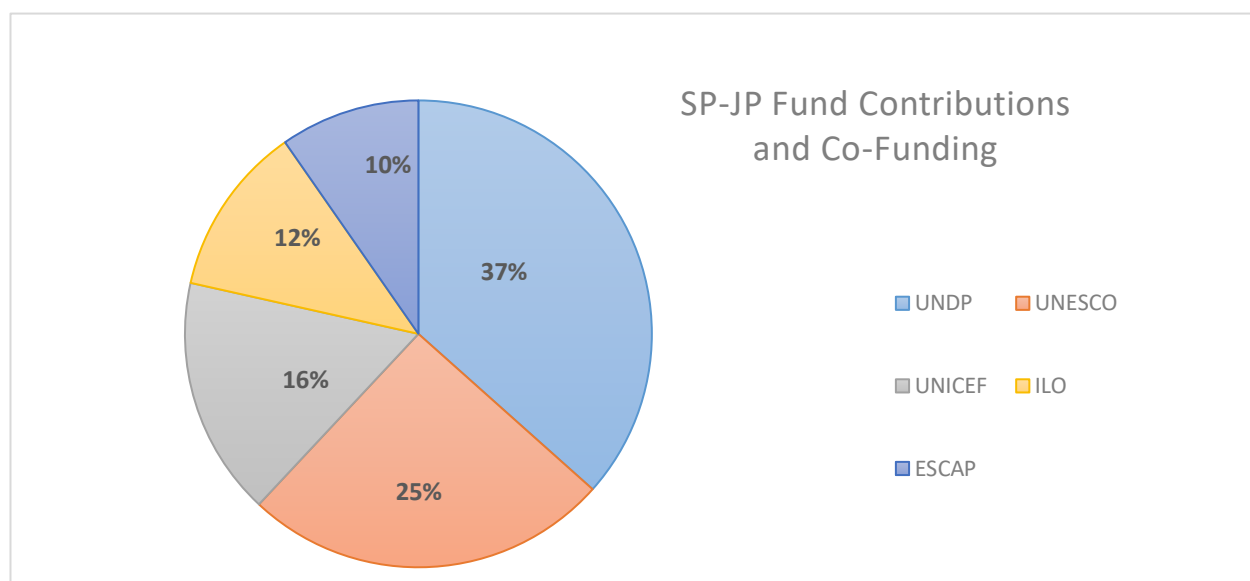
Figure 1: SP-JP programme outcomes

The project worked on developing evidence-based nationally-owned social protection systems to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically, SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, SDG 13: Climate Action, SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

The programme worked towards inclusive social protection systems with fiscally sustainable social insurance schemes for the active population seeking or holding jobs, self-employed or voluntarily contributing, non-contributory social welfare in the form of child allowance, social safety nets and social services for people in need and labour market interventions to facilitate access to jobs and incomes.

It implemented five strategic and interlinked interventions critical in leading to the development and strengthening of coherent social protection policy frameworks, which will support either directly or indirectly 250,000 households. These interventions focused on evidence-based social protection, developed and implemented through participatory consultations, having equitable financing mechanisms, forging strong partnerships with stakeholders including faith, community-based organizations and the private sector, inducing smarter institutional coordination and bolster capacity for implementation and expand outreach.

The SP-JP programme was implemented between January 2020 and 1 September 2022 (33 months) with a total budget of USD 3,386,176, funded by the Joint SDG Fund and co-financed by PUNOs with percentages shown in Figure 2.



IV. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation

Purpose

The end-of-programme evaluation was commissioned as part of a mandatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process for the Joint SDG Fund. The evaluation assesses the extent to which the SP-JP programme has achieved its purpose and outcomes in consideration of its design, scope and implementation, and where possible, assess its potential impact and sustainability. The evaluation will inform the early design/ formulation and implementation stages of future joint programmes in the Pacific.

Objectives

According to the end-of-programme evaluation Terms of References (ToRs) in **Annex 1**, the evaluation objectives are to:

1. Assess the contribution of the SP-JP to achieving its main expected transformative results.
2. Assess the contribution of the SP-JP to the jointness of the UNCT/PUNOs engagement under the Resident Coordinator (RC) leadership.
3. Assess the contribution of the SP-JP to SDG acceleration, focusing on SDG targets identified in the SP-JP Programme Document.
4. Assess the extent to which the SP-JP has been inclusive, including its effective contribution to socio-economic inclusion, particularly of persons with disabilities (PwDs).

Information from the evaluation will be used to:

- Improve the design and implementation of similar future joint programmes by the PUNOs and implementing partners in the Pacific.
- Identify lessons learnt and offer a deeper understanding on how joint programmes position agencies vis-à-vis the national governments.
- Inform PUNO's further efforts in the field of social protection in the Pacific islands and other similar contexts, with particular focus on programmes that are managed and delivered through the UN system and implemented through joint partnerships with governments and other key stakeholders for improved ownership, sustainability and impact.
- Provide useful information on social protection for programming plans addressing 'post-COVID-19' and other similar crises, as Pacific countries need support to recover from the unfolding impacts of the pandemic and other crises, shocks, stresses and emerging contingencies.

4.2 Scope and Primary Users of the evaluation

Scope

Thematic scope: The independent end-of-programme evaluation cover all activities undertaken within the programme examining different lenses; design, implementation, results and objectives. Using conceptual frameworks and understanding of social protection, a specific focus will be on addressing needs of vulnerable groups including PwDs, women, and children. The evaluation will specifically examine the (i) institutional strengthening and capacity building efforts by the PUNOs, and (ii) the overall process of collaboration amongst them and their work at the national level. This is in consideration of the limited time and resources available for this evaluation and the particular interest by the partners.

Temporal scope: The evaluation cover the programme's original duration and the extension periods implemented from June 2020 to December 2022.

Geographical scope: the evaluation assess the work of the PUNOs at the national level in Samoa, Cook Islands, Tokelau and Niue.

Primary users

The evaluation findings are intended for the Governments of the four PICTs and the UN system in the Pacific towards improving social protection programming in the countries, strengthening UN reforms, to contribute to the acceleration of SDGs, and to inform learning from results of this programme.

4.3 Evaluation Criteria and Questions

As indicated by the ToRs, the independent evaluation systematically used the OECD/DAC criteria²⁷ of relevance, coherence, effectiveness and sustainability and considered whether aspects of human rights, GEWE and disability inclusion were integrated. It adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Guidelines and Evaluation Norms and Standards,²⁸ including UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Review, UNEG Standards and Norms for Review in the UN System, and UNEG Guidance on disability inclusion.

²⁷ OECD.2021. *Evaluation Criteria*.

<https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

²⁸ UNFPA. UNEG/UNFPA review norms and standards <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/guidance-documents>

Additionally, it will adhere to UNDP Evaluation Guidelines and will be transparent, inclusive and participatory.

Following a review of the evaluation ToRs and the initial review of the documents shared by UNDP, the consultant ensured that the evaluation questions (EQs) proposed are relevant for the objectives and purpose of the evaluation. Table 1 provides an overview of the EQs as presented in the ToRs against the suggested modifications by the consultant.

Table 1: Evaluation questions as per the evaluation ToRs and proposed adjustments by the consultant

RELEVANCE, COHERENCE	
EQ1 – To what extent is the JP design relevant and coherent?	
	1.1. To what extent was the scope and estimation of required resources of the JP realistic and relevant to the needs and priorities of the four PICTs? To what extent does this way of designing a JP lend to its efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and support UN Reform?
	1.2. 1.2 To what extent did the design of the JP ensured synergies between the different activities implemented by the PUNOs? What value added has been generated through these synergies?
	1.3 To what extent was the design of the intervention relevant to the wider context (including national policies and work carried out by other actors)?
	1.4 To what extent was the JP in line with the needs and priorities of the most vulnerable groups such as people living with disabilities, women, and children?
EFFECTIVENESS	
EQ2 – EQ 2: How effective was the implementation modalities of the JP and what has been the results of the JP?	
	2.1 To what extent were the expected outcomes and three main expected transformative results of the JP accomplished or are likely to be accomplished?
	2.2 What major factors influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the outcomes and expected transformative results?
	2.3 To what extent is the achievement of the outcomes and expected transformative results leading to meeting of JP goal and further objectives related to acceleration of SDGs and contributing to the UN Reform?
	2.4 To what extent were the PUNOs able to adapt the implementation of the JP to the COVID-19 context?
	2.5 What were the implementation modalities of the JP? How have the synergies between the PUNOs effective in increasing the implementation effectiveness?
EFFICIENCY	
EQ3 – How efficient was the partnership of the PUNOs in view of implementing the JP and leveraging further resources?	
	3.1 Which factors facilitated or hindered the collaboration and efficiency of the JP?
	3.2 The extent to which the JP served as a link between other development efforts implemented by the PUNOs and the social protection systems in the four PICTs?
	3.3 To what extent were funds deployed against plan by activity and PUNO in timely and effective manner?
IMPACT	
EQ4 – What are the long term changes that could be attributed to the JP? Where could they be observed?	
	4.1 To what extent has the JP contributed to improving the situation of vulnerable groups identified in the programme document and particularly that of people living with disabilities, women, and children?

	4.2 What macro level changes have been induced by the programme within the social protection systems of the four PICTs?
	4.3 What are the longer-term effects of the JP on the four PICTs and UNCT work on social protection?
	4.4 what are the positive/negative; intended/unintended impact/outcome of the JP?
SUSTAINABILITY	
EQ5 – To what extent are the benefits of the JP sustainable?	
	5.1 To what extent is it likely that the benefits of the JP at the national level will continue after its implementation ceases?
	5.2 To what extent is there government buy-in in the interventions that contributes to their sustainability?
	5.3 To what extent are the synergies and collaboration created through the JP between the PUNOs likely to persist after its completion?
	5.4 to what extent the governments of the four PICTs have allocated resources for the continuation of the activities/benefits of the JP?
PwDs, GENDER, AND INCLUSION	
EQ6 – To what extent did the JP take into account and contribute to social inclusion, equity, gender and equality?	
	6.1 To what extent was the JP design, implementation and monitoring sensitive to gender, equity, inclusion of persons with disabilities and social inclusion?
	6.2 To what extent have persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities, been consulted through their representative organizations?
	6.3 What are the concrete results of the JP in terms of gender equality, women's empowerment, equity, inclusion of persons with disabilities and social inclusion?

4.4 Evaluation Approaches

Theory-Based Approach

The Theory of Change (ToC) presents the causal conditions that must be in place to achieve the results of the interventions and the causal linkage between conditions and results, with the risks and assumptions that may impede the results chain from occurring. The ToC was an essential building block of the end-of-programme evaluation throughout, from the design and data collection to the analysis and identification of findings, as well as the articulation of conclusions and recommendations.

Participatory Approach

In line with the evaluation ToRs, the end-of-programme evaluation was based on an inclusive, transparent, and participatory approach. This preserved the sense of ownership and set the stage to openly discuss issues and challenges and propose solutions or corrective measures to be addressed in the future programmes. All efforts were exerted by the consultants to speak to a wide range of stakeholders involved in the project's identification, formulation, and implementation. These stakeholders include key UNDP staff in the Pacific, the PUNOs, government ministries in Samoa, national authorities in Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau, civil society organizations, private sector companies and international finance institutions. The comprehensive list of stakeholders interviewed is provided in the Stakeholders list in **Annex 4** of this Report. Interactions with the stakeholders were conducted using both virtual and face-to-face means.

Mixed-Method Approach

The end-of-programme evaluation used different methods for data collection, with emphasis on qualitative data collection techniques to answer the EQs, including document review and Key

Informant Interviews (KIIs). The qualitative data was complemented with quantitative data from secondary resources (such as progress reports).

Integration of human rights, GEWE and inclusion

The evaluation integrate considerations of human rights, equity, gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) and inclusion in the scope of data collection and analysis.

4.5 Evaluation Matrix

The evaluation matrix is the center piece to the methodological design of the end-of-project evaluation as articulated in the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines. The Matrix is presented in **Annex 2** describing what was reviewed (EQs for all evaluation criteria and key assumptions to be examined), and (ii) how it was reviewed (data collection methods, sources of information and analysis methods for each question and associated assumptions). By linking each EQ (and associated assumptions) with the specific data sources and data collection methods required to answer the question. The evaluation matrix played a crucial role before, during and after data collection. In the inception phase, the matrix helped the consultant to develop a detailed agenda for data collection and analysis and to prepare the structure of interviews and group discussions. During the field phase, the matrix served as a reference document to ensure that data is systematically collected for all EQs and documented in a structured and organized way. At the end of the field phase, the matrix was useful to verify whether sufficient evidence had been collected to answer all EQs and identify data gaps that require additional data collection. In the reporting phase, it facilitated the drafting of findings per question and the articulation of conclusions and recommendations.

4.6 Data Collection Methods

The end-of-programme evaluation utilized several data collection methods, including document review and key informant interviews.

Desk Review: Review of documents was an on-going process throughout the different phases of the evaluation. It informed the evaluation design, established the understanding of the implementation framework for the SP-JP programme, and supported the analysis and report writing. It was further used to triangulate with the data provided by primary sources and enrich the evidence base and content of the final report.

Key Informant Interviews: Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with PUNOs, governments and civil society actors in the four PICTs. Stakeholders were identified in consultation with UNDP Samoa and included national and regional levels across the four countries that are part of the programme. Semi-structured guides were designed and used based on the agreed EQs, outlined in **Annex 3**. The intention was to get feedback and inputs on the processes and results of the programme from those who interacted with and benefited from the interventions.

4.7 Data Analysis and Validation

The data analysis for this end-of-programme evaluation is qualitative in nature, organized around the project's four expected outcomes. Analysis used in the evaluation examines the criteria and questions generated in the evaluation matrix and its indicators and assumptions (**Annex 2**), and addressed by data sources, mapping the facts, perceptions and opinions across the full spectrum of the assumption's enquiry. Cross-checking and integration of different information sources was the guiding principle for

this evaluation, using a variety of information sources to increase the validity and reliability of results that will be presented by the consultant.

Analysis was done through:

- Review of the documents to provide contextual information and data that, in combination with primary data from KIIs, would permit the consultant to provide detailed and credible answers to all the EQs; and
- Qualitative data from primary sources analysed using the content and analysis framework described in the evaluation matrix, which involves organizing data according to the criteria, evaluation objectives, EQs and the SOs of the project. Some quotes and human stories were also cited anonymously in the findings to support the analysis. Notes of KIIs were coded for analysis of qualitative data informed by the evaluation matrix. Quantitative secondary data was analysed to ensure the validity of the collected data.

As such, data validation was a continuous process throughout the evaluation phases, where the consultant checks/checked? the validity of data and verifies/verified the robustness of findings at each phase. All findings will be firmly grounded in evidence.

4.8 Evaluation Stakeholders

Information gathering through stakeholder participation was a key element in the design of this evaluation. In identifying the categories of stakeholders, the consultant aims to be inclusive and engage wide range of stakeholders who have direct involvement with the SP-JP programme, as well as engage with other stakeholders.

A total of 21 KIIs were conducted; 6 in Cook Islands, 4 in Niue, 1 in Tokelau, and 5 in Samoa. This was in addition to interviews with the five PUNOs in Samoa and Fiji.

PICTs	Type of Stakeholder	Number of KIIs
Samoa	Government State Owned Enterprise Civil Society	2 (one was attended by 2 people) 2 1 (3 people attended)
Cooks Island	Government	6 KIIs (8 people attended)
Niue	Government Civil Society	3 1
Tokelau	Government	1

The list of stakeholders initially identified is presented in Table 2 and in the actual people interviewed during the evaluation are presented in **Annex 4**

Table 2: End-of-Programme Evaluation Participants

Stakeholder	Description
UNDP and PUNOs teams	Programme officers of UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, ESCAP in the four countries and RCO multi-country office in Samoa, and the SDG Fund representatives

Government	<p>Samoa: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labour, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology</p> <p>Cook Islands: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Education</p> <p>Niue: Ministry of Social Services and Ministry of Education</p> <p>Tokelau: National Office of the Council for the Ongoing Government of Tokelau, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Statistics, Ministry of Finance</p>
State-Owned Enterprises	<p>Samoa: Samoa National Provident Fund, Samoa Accident Compensation Corporation</p>
Civil Society	<p>Samoa: Samoa Chamber of Commerce, Samoa National Tripartite Forum, Nuanua-o-le-Alofa (NOLA) and SUNGO</p> <p>Niue: NIUANGO, Niue USP, Niue Chamber of Commerce</p>

4.9 Evaluation Limitations

- The time allocated for conducting the evaluation in four PCITs was inadequate in terms of level of effort as well as calendar days allocated for data collection, verification, triangulation and report writing. This made it very challenging for the local experts to contact the stakeholders and ensure collection and documentation of quality data.
- No local expert was identified in Tokelau making it challenging to acquire sufficient data regarding the JP in Tokelau
- The list of stakeholders for the interviews was provided by UNDP and did not match the initially identified list of stakeholders (presented in Table 2 above) and there wasn't enough time available to refine the list and ensure that a comprehensive list of stakeholders is identified and interviewed to inform the findings of the evaluation.

V. EVALUATION FINDINGS

5.1 Relevance

EQ1 – To what extent is the JP design relevant and coherent?

5.1.1 Contextual Relevance

The Social Protection Joint Programme (SP-JP) addresses key challenges encountered by small Pacific Islands. According to the project document Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau are among the most fragile small island developing states due to their geography, size of the economy and exposure to climate change and extreme weather events. In the absence of economic opportunities, the quality of life for many of the persons living in these countries has deteriorated with incidence of NCDs, alcohol abuse and domestic violence rising at a high pace. This Joint Programme aimed to increase resilience through viable and financially sustainable social protection systems that will address life cycle vulnerabilities, strengthen social protection floors, and enhance employability while also ensuring

consistency with other programmes implemented by the UN Country Team (UNCT) to secure access to basic services, strengthen institutional responsiveness and improve disaster risk management.²⁹

The social protection situation in the targeted Pacific Islands and Territories (PICT) indicated that the social protection systems in Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau constituted a set of fragmented programmes without an explicit and comprehensive social protection framework, lack of coverage for large parts of the population resulting in burden on families.³⁰ In Samoa, interviews with stakeholders indicate that there was no social protection programme or policy to address the needs of vulnerable populations. It was noted that people lacking social protection coverage are the most affected by climate change and natural hazards. According to the 2014 Human Development Report, building resilience requires (1) universal provision of basic social services, (2) addressing life cycle vulnerabilities, (3) strengthening social protection, (4) promoting full employment, (5) responsive institutions and cohesive societies, and (6) building capacities to prepare for, and recover from, crises.

As such, the SP-JP aimed to address the key gaps in the social protection landscape in the selected four PICTs. According to interviewed government officials in Niue and the Cook Islands, Island, the JP was relevant to the needs and priorities of the two islands as it aimed to strengthen the systems, increase coverage and ensure adequate systems are in place to support the vulnerable population. According to stakeholders interviewed in Niue, the SP-JP was relevant to the vision and strategic approach of Niue. The relevance of the JP stems from it being anchored in Niue social services pillar of the National Strategic Plan. The plan includes social protection and welfare. For Samoa, it was pointed out by government that the SP was relevant and timely as it coincided with changes in government who prioritised the social pillar. Interviewed government official from Tokelau also confirmed the relevance of the SP-JP.

For the Cook Islands, interviewed government stakeholders also maintained that the SP-JP was relevant to the Social Development Policy and Services as it helped deliver social services to vulnerable population such as the Are Pa Metua (the elderly, Cook Islands National Disability Council³¹ and NGO partners such as Te Vaerua³² and their training of caregivers, rehabilitation services and help with the Disability Action Plan. The workplan for the partnership on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNPRPD) was prepared during this time

It resourced the Pa Enuu (communication services) to enable the Ministry to check on the impact of covid on each inhabited island. It provided the Pa Enuu with laptops, printers and stationeries required to carry out manual surveys in the villages. As for the welfare services, it helped staff in the Pa Enuu and in Rarotonga work on home improvement projects for the elderly by providing through Te Vaerua assisted devices, e.g., wheelchairs, clutches, hospital beds, walking frames and diapers. This is now an ongoing programme that is covered under the SIF as well as funding from government and other sources. The government has limited funds but this programme allowed them to be able to seek funding from other sources and to work with other agencies, e.g., Ministry of health, NGO partners like Te Vaerua

Government staff interviewed in Samoa confirmed the relevance of the SP-JP for the priorities and vision of the government of Samoa. It was clearly expressed to the evaluation that the SP-JP is in line with GoS commitment to implementing the SDGs and its theme of leaving no one behind and helping

²⁹ Joint Programme Document.

³⁰ Joint Programme Document

³¹ The Cook Islands National Disability Council is the governing body of all groups that do work in the disability space.

³² Te Vaerua is an NGO partner that looks after persons with disability and carry our work in this space aimed at bettering their wellbeing

first those who need it most. While the programme started under the last government, the new government also had social development and the well-being of people as its priority. Stakeholders from the government of Samoa explained that the focus of the new government elected in 2021 was on health, education and the welfare of the people. The SP-JP enabled the government to understand the informal aspects of social protection at family, village, and church levels and to understand the frequency and availability of these services.

5.1.2 Consultation with Stakeholders

Despite the overall positive feedback provided by interviewed stakeholders about the relevance of the SP-JP, it was also explained in almost all interviews that those who were engaged in the implementation of activities from the government were never consulted during the formulation and design of the SP-JP. PUNOs interviewed maintained that this was indeed one of the main challenges encountered by the project. It was noted that the design was done either through consultants who **assumed** the needs and priorities of the PICTs or by international staff who have since moved to others posts and locations making it difficult at times to understand the intervention logic and the linkages. According to one government official interviewed during the evaluation the people who implemented the project from the government side whether in Samoa, Niue, or Cooks Islands were not involved in the programme in the beginning/design phase. In Samoa for example it was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) that was part of the initial discussion while the implementation was done by the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labour (MCIL). One of the concerns voiced by stakeholders in all countries as well as by interviewed PUNOs was: “trying to get an understanding - a uniform understanding for everyone, of what social protection was, what the programme was about, what it was trying to achieve, and what the outcome we were seeking was.”

According to stakeholders interviewed, consultations in Cooks Island were just to introduce the programme. There was little input from the Cook Islands. However, the Cook Islands already had policies in place for each of its strategic areas designed to improve the wellbeing of Cook Islanders, with government providing through the Ministry of Internal Affairs (INTAFF) two funding mechanisms to provide support to those strategic areas (the cash benefit transfers in the welfare division and the Social Impact Fund) for its implementing NGO partners.

In Niue, all the stakeholders that were interviewed were not consulted during the planning and design phase. All felt like there should have been some consultation with the departments and groups involved during this phase to get a better understanding of what the needs were; in the context of Niue, some activities may have been better suited for other countries but not Niue due to its size. Despite this, all departments and organizations involved tried their best to make the most out of the programme as it was relevant to Niue and its national objectives to improve social protection and enhance the livelihood of its people. In fact, this is the first social protection programme in Niue that has had a wide focus encompassing all things relating to social protection and it has broadened the view of many involved and given a better understanding of why strengthening social protection is important.

For Tokelau, consultations were perhaps done with government at a senior level, but this was not confirmed by the implementing agency during the evaluation.

PUNOs interviewed maintained that during the first six months of the SP-JP there was a strong push back from government staff who were not consulted in the design of the JP and its activities. This naturally resulted in some delays in implementation. It was a challenge to reach a common

understanding of what social protection was and why it was important to strengthen the existing systems or develop new ones. This naturally resulted in some delays in implementation. PUNOs explained that: “the first year was focusing on building the relationship with government counterparts who constituted the . main implementors of the SP. This was the focus, and we did workshops and one on one meetings to get their buy-in of the programme and we were successful.”

5.1.3 Design Approach and Available Resources

The design of the approach of the JP was not conducive to ownership, effectiveness and efficiency as reported by PUNOs and other stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation. Although available data and research indicated the importance and the need to strengthen the social protection systems in the PICTs and to support them in meeting their SDG commitment, the lack of consultation with key government entities is an incorrect approach in programme design and implementation. Additionally, it was noted by PUNOs and government stakeholders that the project was overambitious trying to achieve too much in many locations and during a short duration (1.5 years that were extended twice). The allocated resources especially time wise were inadequate for the efficient and effective implementation of the activities. This was compounded by the fact that the implementation started with the onset of COVID-19 which came with its own set of challenges and delays.

The design of the SP-JP was overambitious with an unrealistic expectation that all activities outlined in the endorsed Program Document would be completed within the original designed period of 1.5 years. Most of these activities which concern the design, implementation, and institutionalization of reforms in the social protection areas take time, and that a minimum of five (5) years is needed for these types of institutional reforms to be designed, accepted by government and other key stakeholders and implementers, and to be implemented and institutionalised effectively. For instance, support was earmarked under the programme towards the development and implementation of a Management Information System (MIS) for social protection and that an MIS was expected to be completed for all four PICTs. However, Samoa does not have a national focal agency for social protection whose role is to coordinate, monitor and evaluate social protection measures including driving the required policy directions and regulatory functions. As well, there is no explicit social welfare function and there is no policy direction for social protection which should direct the development of a national MIS in Samoa. A national policy for social protection developed with support under the programme, but it has taken more than a year for the policy to be considered and endorsed by government. The political support for the programme is critical for its effective and efficient implementation but this was lacking from the outset. One of the key challenges with the programme is its rigid design – any major change in its design (25% and above in the original design and activities) has to be submitted to the funder (SDG Secretariat) for approval. The movement of funds between outcome areas was not allowed.

5.1.4 Synergies amongst PUNOs

The design of the project ensured absence of duplication amongst the PUNOs considering the small size of the PCITs and the limited capacity in some areas including human resources of the PCITs. The design and workplan were developed in a siloed manner where each PUNO assumed the responsibility for specific activities and outcomes and engaged the relevant stakeholders in the implementation and workplan.

The division of labor amongst the PUNOs was a positive approach in the implementation of the JP, but more efforts needed to be exerted to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the roles, responsibilities and activities of each PUNO. In Niue, the JP was often confusing. According to one stakeholder “the relationship between the PUNOs was good to some extent, but there were still some

gaps because of limited discussions and coordination. For example: when we did the MIS with UNICEF, and the CRVS Vital Stats with UNESCAP we believed that they are two different activities at the beginning, as we progressed we realised that they could have been combined to produce the different outputs without having to do the work twice each time for a different PUNO. .”

5.1.5 Alignment with policies and programmes implemented in target PICTs

Prior to the JP there were limited or no projects/programmes specifically targeting strengthening the social protection landscape in target countries. Some initiatives were undertaken by the World Bank, but they do not appear to have been systematic or engaging the different stakeholders in the four PCITs.

The design of the JP involving five PUNOs is what ensured the alignment with other policies and programmes implemented by the PUNOs in the targeted four PCITs. The work of UNICEF within the SP-JP is built on previous engagement of UNICEF with the four PCITs. In the Cook Islands, UNICEF conducted an evaluation in 2019 about social protection floors whose recommendations fed into the design of the JP. In other words, the JP enabled the implementation of the recommendations of the evaluation.

According to UNICEF, the same applies for Niue where the organisation works on shock-responsive social protection and ensuring no child is left behind and that the social protection financial amount is appropriate to meet the needs of the vulnerable population. UNICEF has ongoing programmes in Tokelau and Cook Islands focusing on child protection, education and health. In Samoa there is a programme funded by DFAT which is focusing on Early Childhood Development and on social protection. The JP enabled UNICEF to make the business case on the importance of investing in social protection in early childhood development. Additionally, the labor market survey which is supported by ILO included aspects related to child labor and child vendors. Hence, child protection department of UNICEF is able to use that information to work with line ministries to see how they can be supported in Samoa.

UNDP components of the JP were aligned with UNDP’s knowledge society programme where UNDP works with the National University of Samoa. Additionally, the JP was supported by UNDP’s gender programme, the Spotlight Initiative.

The work of UNESCO compliments the work of the UNCT to understand the overall context and the root causes of highly interconnected adverse factors such as income insecurity, precarious health, vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events that, all together, contribute to poverty and exclusion. The JP addressed multiple social risks through introducing fiscally sustainable social protection floors to reverse exclusion and ensure an inclusive approach to sustainable development that improves living standards for all. For UNESCO, the JP was done together with the Samoa Employment Pathway Project for PwDs funded by another donor. This project developed two recognised training packages for PwDs which were Leadership and Management and Entrepreneurship Training. These training modules were developed and will continue to be administered by the National University of Samoa’s Oloamanu Training Centre and the Samoa Business Hub and officially recognised by the Samoa Qualifications Authority for PwDs who wish to learn basic office administration skills to apply for an office job and learn how to start their own small business. The JP was the overarching workplan for PwDs which allowed for this Employment Pathway project to further assist the outcomes of the JP for PwDs not only in finding employment but also further developing their entrepreneurship skills to earn a living.

5.1.6 Alignment with the needs of vulnerable groups

Social Protection systems in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau have evolved at different trajectories without any explicit SP framework. Consequently, the social protection landscape is ad-hoc, fragmented and reveals gaps along gender and the life-cycle. The programme addresses these disparities by promoting active and universal SIDS context-specific social protection interventions. Costing alternative scenarios is an integral part of the support envisioned in addition to examining legislation, implementation and M & E arrangements. UN objectives, approaches and outcomes are strongly aligned with the proposed programme. Agencies such as ILO, WFP, UNDP, UNWOMEN, UNICEF, IFAD, UNESCO & UNESCAP, active in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau support evidence-based and integrated SP systems for climate resilience, labour markets and job creation, food security, culture and heritage preservation, human rights, equitable development, gender equality and disability inclusion. They are also engaged in ensuring appropriate staff and experience are deployed for these.

Interviewed stakeholders in the four PICTs believed that the design ensured the integration of the needs and priorities of vulnerable groups. The JP was responsive to the needs of vulnerable groups, and people with disabilities were particularly targeted. The JP enabled the development of a special pension fund for them in Samoa. Gaps in data and capacity have had some improvements with work done to help the most vulnerable. Traditionally, SP programs in the PICTs are generic and not tailor-made for a particular group; the JP has highlighted the need for programmes to be designed with the specific needs of vulnerable groups (the different groups) in mind. People with disabilities and NGOs representatives were on the Technical Committee as an avenue for their voices to be heard.

In Tokelau, the JP was important because it informed policies in terms of the health services, and ensured that Tokelau develops adequate coverage for everyone from birth and education, and for social protection. The JP ensured that the coverage of social protection focused on the three communities of Tokelau and taking in consideration how isolated each community is and ensured that the government has systems in place to ensure the protection and social coverage of vulnerable communities within Tokelau. .

5.2 Effectiveness

EQ 2: How effective was the implementation modalities of the JP and what has been the results of the JP?

5.2.1 Overall Effectiveness of Implementation Modalities

The JP implementation has been effective. The division of roles between the PUNOs has enabled the effective implementation of the different activities and the achievements of the outputs as specified in the project document which ensured absence of duplication amongst the PUNOs. Some of the activities were refined and reprogrammed (especially as a result of the no-cost extensions) as will be discussed in the following paragraphs. The coordination modality through the Steering committees and the technical committees further supported the effective implementation of activities and achievement of results. These fora served as an adequate coordination mechanism where updates and workplans were shared with all stakeholders allowing for continuous information sharing, coordination, and synergies amongst the different stakeholders in the four PICTs.

The JP addressed an important development issue in the 4 PICTs. Social protection was fragmented with no clear synergies and collaboration between relevant stakeholders. The activities of the JP ensured effective communication amongst relevant stakeholders as well as established the necessary

infrastructure for effective social protection programming and work. This infrastructure was in the form of improved social protection systems, the development or review of social protection framework, training, awareness raising, and capacity building, digitalisation of social protection systems, and ensuring that social protection systems are based on empirical and evidence through the development of adequate understanding of the gaps through research and assessments including the multi-dimensional poverty indexes and fiscal space analysis. Stakeholders interviewed in the 4 PICTs believed in general that the JP was effective and many of the activities were implemented. The maintained that the JP laid the groundwork through studies and capacity building that would enable the governments to take the social protection agenda forward. However, several (as will be discussed below) maintained that effectiveness was constraint by conflicting agendas between the PUNOs, COVID-19 which caused delays in implementation, and the novelty of Social Protection which necessitated more time to ensure that the activities creating the base is allowed sufficient time for implementation and achieving results.

5.2.2 Progress towards outcomes and achievement of “transformative results”³³

According to the project final report³⁴, the activities under the four expected results/outcomes have been implemented. The project progress reports 2020, 2021, and 2022 show that the rate of implementation of the outcomes/results was ranked at 100%³⁵ The Social Protection Joint Programme had four expected outcomes as follows:

Outcome 1: Universal, inclusive & equitable SP systems Leave No One Behind

Outcome 2: SP floors are efficiently and effectively administered.

Outcome 3: Financial inclusion enables low transaction cost transfers of SP benefits,

Outcome 4: Increased resilience through mainstreaming of disability, gender, youth and climate related contingencies

Concerning the first expected result/outcome 1: **Universal, inclusive & equitable SP systems Leave No One Behind**, the JP aimed to ensure that *in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau the review and stocktake of existing social protection systems are undertaken and the JP will provide country-specific recommendations of new/additional social protection programs and interventions for people left behind due to geography, multidimensional poverty, vulnerability to shocks, and discrimination*³⁶. To achieve this, the JP focused on creating both collective understanding of social protection through engagement with national stakeholders while also developing strong evidence to ensure that changes in social protection approaches in the four PICTs is based on empirical evidence and actuarial studies. To this effect, the implementation modality of the first outcome focused on conducting a thorough understanding or a stock take of the social protection context and identifying gaps in the existing systems. These resulted in the ability of the JP to identify the areas of improvements needed for these gaps.³⁷

The JP was able through this outcome/result to support the development of a draft social policy framework for Samoa. The draft social policy in Samoa required additional work by the PUNOs because it was the only island amongst the 4 PICTs targeted by the project that had no experience or history working on issues of social protection. For Samoa in particular the project aimed to “*develop a nationally owned, inclusive, forward-looking and sustainable social protection policy, inclusive of social*

³³ The term transformative result is used in the ToRs of this evaluation. After discussion with UNDP to identify the transformative results it was pointed out that it is a term used interchangeably with the project results and outcomes. The term “transformative” was maintained in the evaluation report to ensure alignment with the ToRs.

³⁴ Joint Programme Final Narrative Report 2022.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Project Document

³⁷ SP-JP progress reports 2020 and 2021

*protection floors and a comprehensive long-term social protection development to be submitted for approval and implementation by the government of Samoa.*³⁸ The first National Social Protection Policy Agenda (NSPP) is aligned with Samoa's social protection development agenda. The Samoan government received the Revised Draft National Social Protection Policy for assessment and approval. The adoption and implementation of transformational reforms in the areas of social protection in this Pacific Island nation will be encouraged by the government's approval of the NSPP, which will give social protection priority consideration as a key development public policy agenda for the first time in Samoa. Stakeholders, especially government officials interviewed during the evaluation, strongly commended the effectiveness of the development of this policy believing that its implementation (after its adoption by parliament) will be of great benefit to all people in Samoa.

Other policy specific achievements in under this outcome has been the advancement made in Tokelau. Following the conclusion of the studies of Tokelau's social protection systems, a Draft National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) was completed, which included a costed action plan and an M & E framework, to meet Tokelau's social protection development objective. The review report and draft policy will be validated by Parliament and that would pave the way for its implementation in the future.³⁹

In parallel to policy related research and development, the activities under this result ensured a high level of inclusivity and direct benefits to people through the enshrinement of the principle to *leave no one behind*. This was done first by establishing a Disability Reference Groups (DRGs) in all 4 of the 4 PICTs. According to the project documents and interviews with stakeholders, the Disability Reference Group served as a link between the SP initiatives and PwDs as they were well represented in the steering committee meetings resulting in a more inclusive approach to the design and implementation of specific activities targeting PwDs in the JP. The JP managed to design and implement four specific projects targeting PwDs in the 4 PICTs and their achievements are listed in the SP final report as follows⁴⁰:

Cook Islands: 'Rise and Shine Employment Program' which focused on building the capacity of PwDs to enable them to find employment. The project provided a training course that lasted for 20 weeks in close coordination with potential future employment. The SP supported the development of inclusive-sensitive development of the social protection policy of Cooks Island (in braille and audio versions) to promote understanding of rights to PwDs.

Niue: The activities of the JP focused on supporting the Tolomaki Aulo Disability Association⁴¹ in growing its membership base by providing support to the development of the national register of PwDs in Niue and strengthening the linkages between the association and the Disability Reference Group (DRG) in Niue. The association through collaboration with the DRG has been able to expand its activities as well as its membership.

Samoa: The JP specifically focused on programmes that could benefit PwDs through the development of two non-contributory universal disability social security benefit which started to be implemented. According to different stakeholders interviewed in Samoa, the Disability Allowance initiated by the government of Samoa was a direct outcome of the activities of the project. As explained by one of the stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation, "Previously we only had allowances for the elderly in Samoa; now thanks to the project we have financial allocations for PwDs and the elderly which is a big

³⁸ Project Document

³⁹ Project Progress report 2021

⁴⁰ Achievements regrouped based on data available in the Social Protection Final Narrative Report 2022 as well as testimonies from stakeholders provided during the evaluation interviews.

⁴¹ [Niue Tolomaki Aulo Association - Niue Disability Organisation | Facebook](#)

achievement.”. The SP also supported the development of a business case that was submitted to Cabinet and now awaiting feedback from government. The JP also worked with the Samoa Bureau of Statistics to attempt to merge the existing databases to form a national registry for PwDs in order to enable adequate and effective monitoring of services provided to PwDs.

Tokelau: Several studies and assessments were conducted in Tokelau. These included the cognitive assessment of children with intellectual disabilities and a survey of PwDs in Tokelau. These activities enabled the development of a national register of PwDs with clearly disaggregated data. The government was reassured through the activities of the project that it was “approaching the needy people and that we need to better integrate PwDs in our services” as explained by a government official interviewed remotely in Tokelau during the evaluation. According to project documents, Tokelau is focusing on developing a national policy targeting PwDs and to increase training for teachers to enable them to provide disability-inclusive education.

In order to improve the integrity, equity, and responsiveness of the social protection systems, including the inclusive distribution of resources, **Outcome 2: SP floors are efficiently and effectively administered** focused on improving the digitalization of data management systems in the 4 PICTs. The JP aimed to improve the systems in order to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery systems which were considered under Outcome 3: *Financial inclusion enables low transaction cost transfers of SP benefits*. Under outcome/result 2, several activities took place by the PUNOs in the 4 PICTs which focused on improving systems as well increasing capacities in data management. Some of these activities according to the project progress reports and final report include:⁴²

- Analysis on Samoa and Niue Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system.
- Multidimensional poverty index (MPI) training conducted in collaboration with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) on MPI in the 4 PICTs to raise awareness and application of poverty analysis and measurement that goes beyond monetary assessments.
- Developing the MPI for Samoa which will enable stakeholders to ensure the development of public policies that addresses poverty based on empirical and evidence-based data.
- In Cook Islands: The development of SP MIS was completed.
- In Niue: The development of SP MIS progressed well with the system was planned to go live in the second quarter of 2022.
- In Tokelau: The development of the SP registry was completed.

Other relevant studies, assessments, and initiatives taken by the JP under this outcome included:

- Samoa National Employment Policy 2021-2026 and presentation to Cabinet.
- The development of a video to raise awareness on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in Samoa workplace.
- The delivery of Social Protection Training in Samoa and Tokelau including a Train the Trainer (TOT) Component.
- Child labor assessment in Samoa.⁴³

Additionally, two key activities were implemented under this outcome which helped pave the way for the implementation of outcome 3. These included the regional social protection Training of Trainers for Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) which aimed at enhancing capacity of DPOs to advocate and contribute to the development of country SP from a disability inclusive SP floor. The second was the completion of a gap analysis of the Mobile Banking Systems in Samoa. This assessment intended to

⁴² Social Protection Final Narrative Report 2022

⁴³ Social Protection Final Narrative Report 2022

identify solutions that would coverage by the different targeted populations by reducing transaction costs and facilitating access to other social protection and financial services.

Outcome 3: *Financial inclusion enables low transaction cost transfers of SP benefits* goal was to improve payment mechanisms for all benefits through banks and mobile banking. It was planned that individual accounts could be used to collect remittances, and monthly income which could guarantee access to finance and credit for new small businesses. Indirect benefits were to increase the efficiency owing to decreased transaction costs. The outcome included four activities: a study of the accessibility to SP payments by PwDs in all four PICTs, a gap analysis of mobile banking systems, the creation and testing of a universal mobile banking system, and the reduction of remittance transfer costs (Samoa only).

According to the JP final report of 2022, the JP was able to make progress on profiling of persons with disabilities and providing capacity development and training programmes for them. The JP was also able to hold consultations with community members regarding the design of social security benefits for persons with disabilities. The activity aimed to support the financial inclusion of vulnerable groups whose social protection benefits can be distributed through the banking system to reduce transaction costs and to facilitate access to other social protection and financial services. The JP developed a mobile application through the Samoa National Provident Fund (SNPF) enabling SNPF members (35,742: 16,393 females 19,349 males) to access information pertaining to their accounts as well as existing and new social protection benefits. A similar tool was also developed in the Cook Islands enabling citizens to report cases of unavailability, delays in and quality of delivery of public services in addition to accessing information and benefits. The training provided by the JP to the DPOs under outcome 2 and the banking gap analysis enabled DPOs to have a say in the development of the digital systems that would serve PwDs and ensured that the developed applications are well suited to the needs and priorities of PwDs.

Concerning the ***increased resilience through mainstreaming of disability, gender, youth and climate related contingencies*** which was Outcome 4 of the JP, the activities focused on supporting job seekers access accurate and up to date information about availability of employment. The focus was specifically targeting PwDs, school dropouts, women and youth. To this end, the JP conducted a study on the informal and traditional social protection systems in Samoa to help increase complementarity between formal and informal social protection to increase the resilience of the target groups. The JP continued to engage the private sector and other business actors to develop and implement internship programmes for youth employment which resulted in the full employment of interns under the Green Jobs for Green Works Internship Programme on Waste Management, also internships for youth were hosted by the Samoa Chamber of Commerce. Other activities under this outcome included:⁴⁴

- Engagement with key government agencies (e.g., Samoa Business Hub) on engaging interested and potential local people on the 'Start Your own Business' (SYB) Programme.
- Upgrading of the Job Seekers Registry in Samoa
- Review of the Samoa National Employment Policy (SNEP) 2016/2020
- The implementation of training programmes for vulnerable women in the agriculture sector
- The development of a policy brief on
- Development of policy briefs to enhance stakeholder understanding about disaster resilience and investment in social protection. The first policy brief on mainstreaming disaster responsiveness in social protection was developed to co-published with Samoa Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE).

⁴⁴ Social Protection Final Narrative Report 2022

5.2.3 Factors affecting Effectiveness of Implementation

According to the JP final report, the results of the JP-SP were achieved. Stakeholders who were interviewed had explained that the JP experienced some delays but that overall, almost all activities were implemented. It is important to point out that despite the implementation of all activities, **it is difficult to consider the implementation of activities as resulting in achievement of outcomes and results**. This is due to several structural and operational challenges that affected the JP as well as some core design shortcoming in the expected outcomes of the project.

In terms of challenges in the design, the JP has many planned activities, studies, trainings, updated systems, development of digital systems, etc. and was intending to complete all activities and ensure the accomplishment of results within a project duration of 1.5 years which was not realistic for a project of this size in terms of budget, geographic scope, complexities of the topic, and the state of social protection in each of the target PICTs. The planning was done in extreme haste not allowing the development of common understandings and capacity building that would allow respective government and CSO entities to take the process forward. Hence while the JP paved the way through trainings, studies, and system strengthening it is premature to speak about “results” and concrete outcomes of the JP beyond the direct benefits that target populations such as PwDs have acquired or the internship programmes that young people benefited from.

One of the major factors contributing to the delay in JP implementation was the fact that two months into the implementation of the project, COVID-19 led to closures across the world making travel restricted if not possible. PICTs lack many of the skills required to strengthen social protection systems making it imperative for the JP to rely on consultants and experts from outside the PICTs. In the context of COVID-19, this meant that most work had to be conducted online with limited exposure by consultants to the realities of the PICTs including their sizes, contexts, and challenges. The Covid-19 epidemic negatively impacted the effectiveness of the JP. The pandemic impeded activity delivery by preventing technical help from being in-country to collaborate with important counterparts. As a consequence, local equivalents were identified who were already working full-time but took on extra duties to guarantee operations were carried out, albeit not as quickly as hoped due to conflicting priorities. In the planning, management, and implementation of activities, programme personnel and technical assistances had to work remotely with counterparts. This was a challenge in terms of programme delivery efficacy and performance – in ensuring that the support offered is targeted and adjusted to the unique development requirements of the counterparts and the actions that are being done.

The no-cost extension for the JP was only for one year which again was not realistic in view of the expected outcomes and planned results that the project was seeking to achieve. The novelty of the topic of social protection and the state of social protection especially in Samoa required extensive consultations and capacity building as well as creating necessary linkages between ministries and departments that are not accustomed to working together. For example, one of the constraints raised by many stakeholders interviewed during this evaluation was the fact that the Ministry of Finance (MoF) was not initially engaged in the work of the JP but that in the end the MoF was tasked with taking the dossier and the agenda forward without initially being engaged with all stakeholders. Hence, stakeholders in Samoa expressed doubt about the future of the SP framework developed. Additionally, and as reported by the final report of the project, the no-cost extension required reprogramming of activities which was also time consuming.

The social protection policy's approval by the government of Samoa was delayed, and this delay and lack of execution of operations in Samoa persisted at the beginning of the JP. The endorsement and

approval of the policy was an important pre-requisite for the advancement of the activities which were not possible as a result of the political stalemate following the 2021 General Elections in Samoa.

Other challenges identified by interviewed stakeholders in the four PICTs include the apparent lack of commitment of some key stakeholders which was a result of the absence of initial clarity about the objectives of the project and a solid understanding of what social protection entails. It was also pointed out that at times there was absence of leadership within government on social protection which had implications throughout the process. Stakeholders in Samoa for example explained that other stakeholders such as the ministry of finance and the World bank contributions came late in the life of the project which created some level of confusion.

Despite the challenges that were identified that have negatively affected the effectiveness of the JP, there are other factors that have positively contributed to the effectiveness of the implementation. For example, the fact that the project was implemented in 4 PICTs enabled the exchange of knowledge amongst the countries. As explained by one of the interviewed stakeholders in the Cook Islands, *“I would say the project was effective and enabled the building of good relationship with our donor partners and those that were supporting us. Our partners were seeing how it is in other countries and by sharing those with us like, “in Niue this is how they deal with that particular problem”, it helped us to understand our problems and enabled us to find solutions.”*.

5.2.4 The contribution of the JP goal and the acceleration of SDGs and contribution to the UN Reform

The participation of government agencies in the Technical Committee (TC) where various consultations were conducted as part of the implementation strategy of the JP ensured that the activities implemented under the SP-JP were aligned with national objectives and priorities and achievement of the SDGs. For example, in the Cook Islands, UNESCO coordinated the Pilot Project with the urgent goal of the government to make the Cook Islands Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2020–2024 accessible and in braille. The creation of concept notes and TORs for the various activities, which offer a preliminary evaluation of the present circumstances and the direction for the implementation of activities, further strengthens this realignment. The consistent conveying of the Steering Committee (SC) and the TC ensured a continued relevance of the JP to the priorities of the 4 PICTs. The JP-SP contributes to Pillar II - Social Protection, which is in line with the UN's Socio-Economic Response Plan (SERP) for nations. The SERP focuses on combating poverty by ensuring among other measures that everyone has access to benefits and services.

The SP-JP expected to contribute towards SDG acceleration as follows:⁴⁵

SDG outcome 1 (Integrated multi-sectoral policies to accelerate SDG achievement implemented with greater scope and scale)

Implement nationally appropriate SP systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable. The findings of comprehensive stocktakes and reviews of the social protection systems in Samoa, Cook Islands, Tokelau, and Niue have informed the establishment of social protection floors and development reforms in national social protection systems across the four countries. The costing exercise of the informal social protection system in Samoa UNDP undertook a costing exercise of informal contributes to social protection in Samoa helps to determine the monetary value of the informal social protection system in Samoa which till now has been left unrecorded.

⁴⁵ Social Protection Final Narrative Report 2022

SDG outcome 2 (Additional financing leveraged to accelerate SDG achievement). The programme was expected to address the following SDG targets:

♣ 2.1: By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

♣ 4.2: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education. The JP has been promoting the establishment of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in Samoa, Cook Islands, and Tokelau. The MPI looks at poverty in different dimensions according to nationally defined indicators. The MPI will enable policymakers, implementers, and advocates as well as development partners to evaluate the effectiveness of existing public policy efforts and programmes (including social protection measures), and whether they are addressing the needs of different people who are living in the most vulnerable conditions in Samoa.

♣ 5.4: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, and SP policies. Studies and analyses on the contribution to social protection of remittances and the contribution of informal and traditional systems in Samoa were conducted and have contributed towards building the evidence-based analysis and knowledge to inform ongoing social protection developmental work. UNDP undertook a costing exercise of informal contributions to social protection in Samoa which helped to determine the monetary value of the informal social protection system in Samoa which continues to be undocumented.

♣ 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities. ILO reaffirmed its commitment to enhance rights of workers and improve working conditions and entitlements completed Samoa's second National Employment Policy 2022-2027 and Cook Islands Labour and Employment Relations Act ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in Workplaces has passed the Report on the "Legal Review of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work" focus on the Assessing the scope for law and policy report in Fiji pursuant to the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2009 and provided recommendation towards the ratification and application of C190 in Samoa that Samoa National Tripartite Forum has supported the ratification of this instrument.

♣ 10.4: Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and SP policies, and progressively achieve greater equality. For Samoa and Tokelau, a nationally owned, inclusive, forward-looking and sustainable social protection policy, inclusive of social protection floors and a comprehensive long-term social protection development has been developed, and submitted to the Governments of Samoa and Tokelau, for approval and implementation. The approval of Draft Social Protection Policy by the Samoa and Tokelau Governments will give social protection priority consideration as a key development public policy agenda for the first time, with political leadership solicited for the adoption and implementation of transformational reforms in the areas of social protection in these small Pacific Island countries.

♣ 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

♣ 17.1: Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection. Reviews and assessments of SP in the 4 PICTs have helped built an understanding about existing SP systems and key gaps, which have informed the proposed SP systems and improvement areas that countries need to adopt and implement to accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

5.2.5 Adapting the implementation of the JP to the COVID-19 context

There was repurposing of funds for Covid-19 adaptations. The expectation was that adaptations will be clearly identified and implemented following the completion of the SP reviews and assessments across the four PICTs, however, the reviews of SP in Samoa and Cook Islands have identified the need for SP policies and systems to address this, including future disaster and social-economic and climate-related risk-responsive social protection systems. The impacts of Covid-19 have added strain and

competing priorities for government counterparts, resulting in delays of implementation of some activities. Due to travel restrictions, programme staff and engaged consultants have been unable to travel to the 4 PICTs to assist with the initiation and implementation of activities including the pilot projects. Therefore, programme staff and consultants have had to collaborate with counterparts remotely in the design, management and implementation of activities. For some activities where national expertise and technical assistance are available, preferences were given to the recruitment of national consultants to provide technical assistance. Compliance with COV-19 State of emergency rules (e.g., below 50 number of people in a gathering and social distance) made it difficult to ensure efficient and effective implementation of some activities.⁴⁶

5.2.6 Effectiveness of management and Implementation modalities

The JP was coordinated through UNDP which was implementing activities as well as assuming the overall coordination of the activities and amongst the PUNOs. Additionally, UNDP oversaw the reporting and liaising with the different government ministries across the four PICTs. The management and implementation were carried out through a Steering committee and a Technical committee in each of the PICTs. This modality helped bring all stakeholders together to discuss the activities and the progress of the JP. The frequency of the meetings of the technical committees varied between PICTs – in Samoa it took place almost monthly while in Niue and Cooks Island it was not regular. It was noted by stakeholders that the technical committees were useful in creating a common understanding amongst the stakeholders, clarifying roles and responsibilities of different actors and supporting synergies between the work of the different PUNOs. The Technical Committee meetings ensured the absence of duplication and enabled the PUNOs to adjust some of their activities to ensure that the progress of the project is completed in an efficient, effective, and complementary manner. Nonetheless, the siloed approach of the JP was at times problematic when activities required a sequential order. For example, some of the activities of UNDP were contingent on UNICEF finishing their planned activities. As such, these delays affected the work of UNDP which was out of their control.

A second key challenge in the implementation modality is the reliance on external firms that were not based in the Pacific and, as a result of COVID, were unable to travel to the Pacific to understand the context and the situation. For example, stakeholders interviewed from Niue explained that the company that worked with them on the development of a mobile application did not understand the context in Niue and initially proposed a complex application that was beyond what was required in Niue. Hence, it took time and effort to explain the needs and priorities of Niue to the company which was based overseas. This concern was also voiced by some PUNOs who explained during the evaluation that the lack of coherent understanding amongst the PUNOs of social protection was often a challenge, “Not all PUNOs have a solid understanding of social protection and not all of them work systematically with clear programmes on social protection which often made it challenging at times to even have an internal understanding of what the JP is trying to achieve and what the best approaches and modalities are to do so.”

5.3 Efficiency

EQ3 – How efficient was the partnership of the PUNOs in view of implementing the JP and leveraging further resources?

5.3.1 Efficiency of Coordination Mechanisms

⁴⁶ Social Protection Final Narrative Report 2022

Feedback from PUNOs and stakeholders in the four countries indicates that although there was some level of coordination amongst the PUNOs to ensure absence of duplication, the project was implemented by each in a siloed manner that is considered a missed opportunity for the concept of a joint project. The synergy between PUNOs joint programming was quite efficient in addressing progress jointly with the governments of the four countries and discussing how best to address implementation challenges together. There was, however, limited communication between the PUNOs during implementations except during the joint meetings. Some delays during program implementation would have been promptly addressed or avoided altogether if the joint activities were in fact implemented jointly.

The whole structure of the project was that the Resident Coordinator team was supposed to coordinate the SP, but this was delegated to UNDP as the leading agency that organizes the coordination. The coordination between the PUNOs was observed by national stakeholders who reported that there was no duplication during the evaluation. There were monthly coordination meetings, and updates on monthly basis to ensure progress of the different activities. However, as previously discussed the commitment of the national stakeholders was not always guaranteed even from the PUNOs side. “The problem was in the participation. If we call the task force composed of the PUNOs and some organizations, then they might not attend maybe 2 or 3 PUNOs would come and not all,” explained one representative from the PUNOs interviewed continuing that, “the participation in the Technical Committee was poor, but participation and engagement in the Steering Committee was fine and sharing the Chair with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at a higher level ensured good attendance.” This view was not collectively shared by all PUNOs who maintained that in most TCs meetings, most PUNOs were present (only 5 PUNOs plus RCO). RCO attendance in the TCs was patchy (choose to either attend or not).

There was coordination and collaboration amongst the PUNOs. but it was deemed as not sufficient by stakeholders interviewed. Additionally, not all PUNOs were based in Samoa which meant that many of the coordination activities had to be done online. UNICEF and ESCAP are based in Fiji while UNESCO, UNDP and ILO are based in Samoa. It was pointed out that the design of the JP itself was not conducive to collaboration as each PUNO had its own set of activities and objectives with specifically allocated budget which did not allow for collaboration and was more conducive for siloed approach to implementation. The SP did not envisage joint activities within its design or resource allocation. Despite this design issue, the PUNOs did engage in collaborative activities such as collaboration between ESCAP and UNDP and collaboration between UNDP and ILO. The PUNOs also collaborated in the review in Tokelau which was led by UNICEF and UNDP. As the JP did not intend a partnership modality, the PUNOs collaborated and coordinated to avoid duplication. Despite this obvious challenge, the PUNOs coordinated their activities in the four countries. For example, in the Cook Islands, UNICEF worked with UNDP on MIS. The activities were carried out closely with UNICEF implementing the feasibility work and UNDP developing the digital application. The same approach was carried out in Niue where UNICEF carried out the feasibility and the MIS and UNDP developed the application. Additionally, UNICEF and ESCAP collaborated in Niue on working with the same consultant to coordinate with government agencies in Niue. In Samoa, UNICEF conducted the child labor survey with the ILO.

Government stakeholders interviewed in the four PICTs confirmed that there was obvious coordination amongst the PUNOs and that this was conducive to ensuring synergies and absence of duplication. However, they maintained that the PUNOs often overlooked the fact that the capacity of government is limited. For example, in Tokelau government officials explained that there were conflicting priorities for the PUNOs and this caused pressure on government staff, “Everyone of working age is working with government or local council and the social protection project is not the only project that we had. We have different projects at any given time so the demand on the communities was a huge challenge”

explained government official in Tokelau. The same sentiment was voiced from government officials in Niue who found that the demands of the PUNOs at times was too demanding and that the PUNOs needed to work better together. *“It is important for the agencies to work together like we do with our inter-agencies because then there will be no duplication of efforts on our side. Like us, they need to know who is doing what, but if they do work together they should know how important it is to know what each other is doing,”* explained interviewed government officials from Niue.

Some government representatives in Samoa found that the PUNOs were each working alone with its traditional government counterparts. The representatives of the government of Samoa believed that the PUNOs were working independently and there was no coordination. They maintained that UNDP was the link and indirectly coordinating what they referred to as “different projects” as opposed to identifying that these projects were all part of the JP. For example, the Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS) listed during the interview three different activities being implemented with three PUNOs reflecting that *“Maybe the PUNOs were coordinating amongst themselves and they worked with us in the three activities”* explained a representative from SBS.

5.3.2 Factors facilitating or hindering the collaboration and efficiency of the JP

Several factors were conducive or hindering to the efficiency of the collaboration between the PUNOs. These are directly related to the factors that have enabled the achievement or non-achievement of the outcomes of the project previously discussed and that could be summarised as follows:

- a. COVID19: countries had more pressing priorities at the time including multiple lockdowns, key national staff contracting Covid19 and dealing with the impacts of loss and deaths of family members which took staff members off from work for most of the Covid19 period. Moreover, the closing of borders meant technical staff were not able to travel to the four countries to drive the work on the ground. As such, progress was solely dependent on the availability of country focal points which was not easy to come by.
- b. Capacity and national priorities: there was no specific staff to allocate the JP workplan in the countries. The activities were added onto the workload of existing staff in these focal Ministries/Institutions who, for most of the time, prioritised their own normal work. For national focal points, passing the workplan to different staff members was not abnormal for this JP. This created numerous briefings whenever new staff members were assigned to the tasks, as well as confusion when old staff members take on the project again causing further unnecessary delays and frustration for all involved.
- c. Communication: technological advances in Zoom and online meeting platforms are still a challenge for in the Pacific. Many meetings had to be postponed and cancelled halfway due to the unreliable internet and the lack of resources in some of the offices to connect online. This posed many problems with communication, follow-up, and reporting.
- d. Political will and unrest: for Samoa, the key Ministry for this project lost its CEO halfway through the JP and did not leave any record of the JP to her successor. Samoa was undergoing a constitutional crisis and did not have a proper Government for months. Recruiting of the current CEO took months as it needed a sitting Cabinet to approve the position. During that time, each Assistant CEO of the Ministry took turns as Acting CEO of the Ministry. This proved more disadvantageous to the JP as there was no stable leadership to follow through with the priorities of the JP.
- e. PUNO system of implementation. Although there was regular reporting and networking for all PUNOs, there was no proper alignment of activity to present to countries. Most of the work under the JP had the same national focal points. What was observed was the bombardment of these national bodies with the many workplans presented under the same JP. In hindsight, a more comprehensive approach by the PUNOs on their mandated workplans to better plan their

implementations nationally would have worked better to alleviate the delays observed in the implementation phase. The presence of some PUNOs in Fiji necessitated that coordination be done remotely which was not always very conducive for increased collaboration.

5.3.3 JP as a link between other development efforts implemented by the PUNOs and the social protection systems in the four PICTs

The JP activities were designed to ensure that the activities implemented by the PUNOs is well within each PUNO's mandate and regular programming. This is likely to strengthen the likelihood of continued action by the PUNOs. For example, some of the activities implemented by the ILO are a baseline for the work of ILO. According to the ILO, some of the activities serve as the stepping stone for long term plans especially concerning the labor mobility and the national employment policy and the implementation of the labor-act. These are funded by the ILO and will continue because they are national programmes. The project paved the way and developed the plans and not just one-year plans, but they are 3 or 5 year plans that will continue with support from the ILO especially that they were set as priorities by the constituents that the ILO traditionally works with.

Likewise, social protection is a traditional domain for UNICEF that has maintained during the evaluation that their work with the four PICTs is long term and that the SP provided additional venues for engagement by UNICEF in an area that is traditionally part of their country programmes. In Cook Islands, UNICEF, in managing the ICT component introduced by the SP, developed a background paper to help the ministry ensure the functionality of the MIS. In Niue and Cooks Island, UNICEF is intending an evaluation of the SP system which would help increase the work of the SP especially concerning the needs of children and increasing the financial support provided to them. In Tokelau, the development of a new registry through the project will enable Tokelau to systematically update the registry every five years.

The work of UNESCO compliments the work of the UNCT to understand the overall context and the root causes of highly interconnected adverse factors such as income insecurity, precarious health, vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events that, all together, contribute to poverty and exclusion. The UN Joint Programme addressed multiple social risks through introducing fiscally sustainable social protection floors to reverse exclusion and ensure an inclusive approach to sustainable development that improves living standards for all. Through the JP, UNESCO focused on inclusive social protection systems for the 4 countries.

UNESCO's mandate in education for persons with disability was further strengthened under this project focussing on country pilot programs that developed national platforms in the form of national policies, data systems, institutional strengthening, capacity building and welfare systems to support the development of the disabled population to address discrimination and systemic challenges that hinder access to services and opportunities of this population in the 4 countries. UNESCO prioritised activities that are aligned with its mandate in support for the development and/or advancement of instruments that promote the rights and access of persons with disability to social protection systems in the 4 countries

5.3.4 Timely and effective disbursement of funds

According to PUNOs there were some constraints in funds transfers because it often required a government signed letter of agreement which did not always happen in a timely manner. The SDG fund provided the funds from the onset and each PUNO had its own allocation transferred.

Fund allocation was often a challenge for some PUNOs. For example UNDP procurement process is lengthy and although the funds were available from the donor, the procurement processes and contracting took long time which affected the timely implementation of activities. These processes in the Cook Islands took a few months and sometimes they had to use their own funds while waiting for UNDP transfers. UN requirement from governments for funds disbursement was always a challenge for some of the implementing agencies. These, however, did not apply to all agencies. UN systems were stringent in some areas where it does not recognise how island countries operate and their systems of reporting financially.

5.4 Impact

EQ4 – What are the long-term changes that could be attributed to the JP? Where could they be observed?

5.4.1 Improvement in the situation of vulnerable groups particularly that of people living with disabilities, women, and children.

The JP set the groundwork for future improvements that could benefit vulnerable groups including PwDs, women, youth, and the elderly. As previously discussed under other sections of this report, it is premature to speak about impact including long term effects of the JP taking in consideration that it was initially planned to be a 1.5-year project that was extended to another year. These types of projects which target both systemic level change as well as behavioural change and actual downstream pilot projects require time to enable adequate and realistic measurement of results. Many of the expected results/benefits will be determined based on how governments in the 4 PICTs chose to use the studies and the refined digital systems to improve their understanding of poverty and their ability to design and implement poverty reduction programmes as well as effective social protection systems that ensures reaching the furthest left behind. Stocktakes, capacity building, digitalisation will all, in the future ensure, an improvement in the situation of vulnerable populations provided the presence of political will and continued advocacy by PUNOs and other actors who were brought on board during the life of the JP.

The pilot projects targeting PwDs, the commencement of disbursement of disability benefits by the government of Samoa, and the internship programmes targeting youth are likely to all contribute to improvements in the situation of vulnerable populations.

According to the Joint Programme Final Report 2022, the following number of people were positively affected by the JP:

According to the final report of the JP it is estimated that 30,000 persons were reached by the activities of the JP of which 60% were women and girls. The final report highlights certain categories that directly benefited from the JP as follows:

- 574 PwDs and 284 persons without disabilities were reach by the JP in 2020 while 1,936 PwDs and 256 were reached in 2021.
- 515 individuals were consulted on their views during assessments conducted by the JP in 2020 while in 2021, 100 individuals were engaged in consultations. In 2022, the project reports that

consultations were carried out with 500 individuals during the assessment for the development of the mobile apps.⁴⁷

A review of the activities of the JP, whether in the area of fiscal space analysis or the development of the different PwDs projects in each of the PICTs, indicates that special attention was rendered to raising awareness about the needs and priorities of this vulnerable group and ensuring that their views and priorities are integrated in the policy formulation work. The capacity building of the DPOs will also ensure that advocacy for the rights and priorities of PwDs will continue to be part of the national agenda in the 4 PICTs.

It could also be argued that the new MPIs in Samoa and the updated ones in Cooks Island, Niue, and Tokelau will eventually lead to improved situations for vulnerable population.

5.4.2 Macro level changes have been induced by the programme within the social protection systems of the four PICTs

Through an inclusive and nationally-driven process, UNDP supported Samoa to develop forward-looking sustainable social protection policy, inclusive of social protection floors and comprehensive long-term social protection systems. The approval of the policy will enable prioritization of social protection as a key development public policy agenda for the first time, with political leadership solicited for the adoption and implementation of transformational reforms in the area.⁴⁸

The development of the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau do not have national social protection information systems. The JP supports the development of national MIS to ensure there is a national registry of all citizens and their essential information (e.g., income levels, dependents, employment status, current benefits, and health) which are needed to assess their life cycle conditions and vulnerabilities and are to be used to determine social protection schemes and programs they need. The MIS provides information for social welfare, active labour market, disaster and resilient, and other social protection policy and programming responses. Further efforts were made to ensure equal and easy access to social protection services through the development of a mobile application enabling members of Samoa National Provident Fund (SNPF) to access information pertaining to their accounts and also register online for existing and new social protection benefits. Similar tool was developed in Cook Islands broadening access to information on social protection and improving citizen reporting mechanisms to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, thereby increasing accountability of the related institutions.⁴⁹

5.4.3 Longer-term effects of the JP on the four PICTs and UNCT work on social protection; the positive/negative; intended/unintended impact/outcome of the JP

The SP had many positive outcomes and expected long term effects after the main outputs and outcomes are put in place. The groundwork has been established for the four PICTs under this JP. The longer-term effects of the JP will be the centralised system for PwDs programs and systems in the four countries to be further strengthened through continuous partnership under the benefit scheme program, policy implementation and community engagement between government and the Disability Reference Group which is a reference group of all PwDs associations in each country. Additionally, the policy revisions and the establishment of digital systems will yield positive outcomes on the long run. This will be beneficial for PwDs as well as other vulnerable groups in each of the targeted PICTs.

⁴⁷ Social Protection Final Narrative Report 2022

⁴⁸ Social Protection Final Narrative Report 2022

⁴⁹ Social Protection Final Narrative Report 2022

In Samoa, interviewed stakeholders during the evaluation explained that the entire social protection system was a new activity in the island. They maintained that the most important achievement of the programme has been the establishment of benefits for PwDs in the form of cash allowance. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and labor explained during the evaluation that the benefits of the JP were manifold and included:

- Increased understanding of social protection and work to start developing a formalised SP system.
- Development of a baseline data with work of Statistics and initial situational analysis,
- The Rapid Assessment on Child Vendors which increased understanding of the situation of this vulnerable group.
- Increased awareness work with communities on the Convention on Sexual Harassment and Workplace Safety that has been ratified and amendments of the Labour and Employment Relations Act
- Database for Occupational Health and Safety
- Development of the Social Protection Policy which has been turned into the Social Protection Framework
- Cash Pension/Allowance for PwDs

For the Cook Islands, stakeholders explained that the capacity building through this JP and the understanding of the need to transfer the knowledge through the induction training, the internship programme are all activities that can cause long term changes in a positive sense. One of the interviewed stakeholders explained that the capacity building was very useful “[I can write concept notes and I feel confident that I have the capacity to manage and implement other projects. I did not have any project management experience before I took on this job, and thank you to this JP, I feel confident to do this, and I think some of my colleagues also feel the same.](#)”

The completion of the MIS and the associated applications is another that will be part of the activities that will cause long term changes. The amalgamation of the Social Development and Services with Family Protection and Social Impact Funds is another outcome that will bring staff previously separated under one umbrella and working together with their NGO partners. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (INTAFF) accommodates the Cook Islands Civil Society Organization (CISO), a main force in coordinating NGO partners and giving them access to funding sources, so improving the ability of INTAFF staff to do project management and documentation enables them to work closely with their NGO partners. It was also maintained that there has been improvement in the customer services area at the Social welfare office which is located at the entry point into the INTAFF office. This revamped area and improved servicing by the staff is perhaps the most outstanding change and how it has helped many beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries.

Interviewed stakeholders in Niue maintained that the JP will increase accessibility to social services for vulnerable groups as well as raising public awareness on disabilities and encouraging the inclusion of all youth in employment opportunities regardless of their abilities. It has also prompted the Niue government to work on social protection areas that require immediate attention such as the need for a superannuation scheme for new workers. However, there is concern that the MIS system may remove some of the services offered by the Community Affairs Division which may leave the elderly worse off. There are also concerns pertaining to the Niue Inclusion Employment Scheme, that it should start much earlier at intermediate level to include a larger number of students.

In Tokelau, the social protection review that was carried out by the JP gave the government a reassurance that its plans were on the correct path. It confirmed that the social protection system in Tokelau was satisfactory and that adjustments were needed in terms of improved process and systems. It is expected that once Parliament reviews the studies then the recommendations would be taken forward which will yield positive long-term results for the people in Tokelau.

5.5 Sustainability

EQ5 – To what extent are the benefits of the JP sustainable?

5.5.1 Likelihood of continuation of benefits of the JP at national level

The JP on social protection worked predominantly on system strengthening through different modalities and approaches. Some of the activities resulted in direct support to vulnerable groups such as the benefit schemes for PwDs in different countries. However, the bulk of the activities of the SP has been on capacity building and system strengthening which enjoys some level of commitment from national governments making it most likely that these benefits will continue after the life of the JP. According to UNESCO for example, national policies have been developed and will be implemented in the years to come. Benefit schemes developed under this JP will also continue as governments have expressed the will to continue. Training packages that have been developed will likely be used in the future with training institutions vesting an interest to formalise these packages into their training packages each year.

The views expressed by UNESCO and other PUNOs during the evaluation were mirrored by government officials interviewed as well. For example the MCIL in Samoa maintained that Social Protection Policy Framework is in place and that the Ministry of Finance (MOF) is now the lead agency on the file. It is a matter of time before the government would be able to “[identify other activities that are needed to build on work from this program.](#)” Informants from the MCIL also explained that the SP framework is in place, “[each Ministry should now implement that social lens perspective in next round of sector and ministry plans. If there is a phase 2, that will continue the work to sustain what has been started already.](#)” Other stakeholders interviewed in Samoa believe that the benefits of the SP will continue because the newly-elected government is specifically focusing on the social pillar and less on economic pillar which presents an opportunity for the continuation of benefits of the SP-JP. Additionally the SNPF explained that the digital applications that have been developed will be maintained by the SNPF because it is part of their plans, “[We will continue to develop the app as it’s part of our own plans. We will have the allowance for PwD paid from SNPF systems. So we are preparing for all that establishing capacity of SNPF to be able to do that](#)” maintained interviewed SNPF officials during the evaluation.

For Cook Islands, response from government reveals that activities will continue. Interviewed government officials maintained that activities implemented under this programme except for food packages and lunches will continue at the national level as these were activities that were an improved version of core functions in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Government staff interviewed explained that they will continue to look for funding and develop some activities to fulfil their goals for this area as long as they can report on them. It was also explained that the implementation will continue with NGO partners. however, they explained that some activities will be challenging to maintain. “[I don’t think we can sustain the mobile app device, we have no IT person inhouse to maintain the app, now we are having problem with our ICT Department in the Office of the Prime Minister to get our MIS to start. What happens if the internet is down? IT parts or personnel will cost \\$20k.](#)” Nonetheless, they also recognised that it is in the interest of Cook Islands to keep the current system operational or as a standby.

Overall response from stakeholders in Niue regarding the potential continuation of benefits after the end of the project has been positive. Government officials interviewed maintained that the activities will continue because the benefits introduced by the JP are considered an improvement to the work that is already being implemented by the government. It was noted that the JP highlighted gaps in the social protection systems and raised awareness of the community regarding social protection. According to the officials interviewed from the Ministry of Education in Niue the explained that the systems developed such as the Build Teaching Capacity for Inclusive Education (BTCIE) pilot project will continue as the ministry will continue to find ways to complete the drafting of the Inclusive education as soon as possible. The same views were voiced by the Ministry of Social Services in Niue who maintained that there are no activities introduced by the project that cannot be continued. “the beauty of this programme, is that it identified gaps in the system that we are already doing and then we developed ways to address those gaps to just be integrated seamlessly into the way that we do business” explained stakeholders from the ministry of social services in Niue. NGOs interviewed in Niue also believed that the activities will continue although they pointed out the need to see more funds put towards activities that would strengthen NGOs and CSOs to enable them to take the work on SP forward.

5.5.2 Government buy-in in the interventions that contributes to their sustainability and allocation of resources.

In Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau the data for SP for all vulnerable groups has been strengthened and 2 countries have an accessible and inclusive mobile app. In Tokelau, they have a registry and data information has been strengthened. The policy and the legal environment in the Cook Islands, Tokelau and Samoa has been strengthened with an action plan; some are even costed.

Government understanding, acceptance and buy in of social protection has been enhanced in Tokelau and Samoa. According to stakeholders, when the JP started stakeholders did not understand what is social protection and why it was important. The value of the cash transfers was made clear to governments and other stakeholders during COVID as they realised that this was the only way for some vulnerable groups to sustain themselves during lockdowns. It was easier to showcase the importance of SP as countries were surviving because of SP.

Government buy-in of the interventions of the SP-JP could be observed at several levels. On one level, the actual implementation of the SP-JP shows a commitment to the issues around SP. According to PUNOs interviewed social protection and social welfare was already present in Niue, Cooks Island, and Tokelau but the systems needed strengthening and improvements. In Samoa, no social protection system existed in the first place and why the JP was important. The second level that shows government buy-in is the continued implementation of activities following the initial reluctance of the implementing and technical units in the four countries that were directly implicated in the implementation process.

It is worth noting that PUNOs engaged implementing and technical partners that are traditional partners e.g. social constituents for ILO. Hence, through the awareness raising and capacity building provided through the JP, the PUNOs ensured a continuous and deeper understanding of government agencies of social protection and what it entails. The evaluations conducted by UNICEF of the social protection platforms in Niue and Tokelau were conducted in close coordination with government stakeholders in both countries showing a level of commitment and buy-in to the concepts of social protection.

Government stakeholders from the four countries interviewed during the evaluation have expressed commitment and buy-in to the concepts introduced by the JP explaining that the activities form a core function of their mandates and that the project clarified what their role should be and how they can improve their services. In Samoa and Tokelau much will depend on the adoption by Parliament of the SP framework in Samoa and the integration of the recommendations of the assessment in Tokelau to ensure the continuation of the benefits and rolling out of the SP framework in Samoa.

In terms of resource mobilisation and allocation, this is an issue that also remains to be seen. At present, the government of Samoa has allocated 3 million for disability allowances based on the advocacy of the project led by UNESCO. The governments of Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau already had systems and allocations in place, the JP helped them strengthen these systems. The ability of these governments to continue to use the digital platforms and applications will be contingent on their ability to ensure the regular updating of these systems and the maintenance and updating of registries.

5.5.3 Likelihood of continuation of synergies and collaboration created through the JP between the PUNOs

As explained under the efficiency section of this report, synergy and collaboration between the PUNOs under this JP were effective but minimal to ensure absence of synergy and duplication. However, these synergies were not based on mandate-focused areas of interest or designed to be collaborative with joint implementation modalities. For example, social protection is one of the core mandates of UNICEF which is very likely to continue to be engaged in with the relevant stakeholders in the future. Likewise, the work of the ILO is likely to continue to focus on social protection especially in as much as it impacts labor laws and labor acts and pension funds and other key focus areas that the ILO traditionally focuses on. Traditional partners amongst the PUNOs are likely to continue to develop some activities together especially that they often work with the same government partners while untraditional partnerships are more likely to cease after the end of the JP unless a phase two is envisaged/implemented.

5.6 PwDs, Gender and Inclusion

EQ6 – To what extent did the JP take into account and contribute to social inclusion, equity, gender and equality?

5.6.1 Gender, equity and inclusion in the JP design, implementation and monitoring

The JP has made progress towards strengthening the sustainable and inclusive social protection agenda in the targeted countries. Through a series of the in-depth analyses and stock-taking reviews of the social protection systems in Samoa, the Cook Islands, Tokelau, and Niue, the JP (supported by the strong data and evidences) has been able to pursue the recommendations to inform the national policy formulation and establishment of social protection floors and development reforms in national social protection systems. One of the good examples of targeting the most vulnerable groups was the Fiscal Space analysis that looked at strengthening the space for persons with disabilities as one of the most priority considerations for the social protection. The support to establishing the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in the targeted countries further strengthened the capacity of the national partners in the decision making. Capacity building and knowledge sharing among the national partners in four countries has been a primary focus since the start of the JP implementation. The efforts have led to not only building the technical capacity of the partners of various aspects of the social protection services, but also helped to shape an understanding of the partners regarding the need for inclusivity, better targeting, and sustainability of the social protection systems. One of the achievements of the JP was the efforts to strengthen an access of wider population, including the most vulnerable groups

through digital devices, new and promising partnerships have been established with local mobile providers. Support in the establishment of the Management Information Systems (MIS) has been instrumental and will help the national partners in Niue, Cook Islands and Tokelau to provide better targeted support to the vulnerable groups in need.

Fiscal Space analysis conducted with the support of JP in all four targeted countries has looked at strengthening the space for persons with disabilities as one of the most priority considerations for the social protection systems. Dedicated capacity building to the PwDs helped with an access to social protection services through the mobile devices. Child Labour Survey findings will be serving a food for thoughts to the national partners to agree on decisive actions to eliminate the child labor trends. The focus of the JP on helping the national partners to establish the MPI will support the governments' efforts to look at the nature and trends of poverty from a broader perspective and give the partners a clearer picture of the types of poverty. All of these will contribute to decision making and development of decisive measures to alleviate poverty and vulnerability.

The advocacy of the JP to adopt a life-cycle approach has ensured the integration of inclusion concepts into the newly developed policies and frameworks. For example, in Samoa, the JP advocated for the adoption of an inclusive social protection system addressing the life cycle risks of all citizens. The main tenet the proposed social protection may include the following features: (i) adoption of the lifecycle approach to cover lifecycle risks as well as addressing poverty/vulnerability, (ii) horizontal and vertical expansion of social assistance schemes to cover vulnerable citizen, (iii) introduction or expansion of social insurance to cover the affordable middle class, and (iv) determining institutional arrangements to ensure efficiency and better value for money.

Stakeholders in Niue have confirmed that the JP enabled them to develop a disability reference group. The JP also supported civil society organisations working with PwDs in strengthening their membership. From the government side, the presence of the MIS app enables them to manage the information of beneficiaries much more efficiently. CSOs interviewed in Niue explained that the JP did include and cater for vulnerable groups; however, the activities were mainly for strengthening the operating systems within government to support these groups. The activities under the NTAA targeted people with disabilities but not to a large extent, particularly the employment scheme which only targeted those aged 18-25. CSOs would like to see children with disabilities supported earlier in life to best equip them for when they finish school and start working.

5.6.2 Consultations with persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities

UNESCO's work focused specifically on persons with disabilities which resulted in specific benefits for persons with disabilities in both Samoa and Tokelau. The new programmes increased the coverage as well as the amounts available to persons with disabilities. In Niue, the JP supported persons with disability to a high extent, as they were involved directly in the design of the new schemes. They were consulted, and not just represented through their organisations, but they were directly involved. They were invited to all of the workshops in consultations. They were invited to comment and to add things that they wanted changed in terms of the social protection framework, or the activities that the government is providing.

5.6.3 Concrete results of the JP in terms of gender equality, women's empowerment, equity, inclusion of persons with disabilities and social inclusion

The analysis of the Gender Responsiveness of the Social Protection system of Samoa commissioned by UNDP was conducted to assess whether the Samoa Social Protection system is gender responsive. The

analysis concluded that the systems need to include the improvements in women and women issues to be considered a gender-sensitive SP system. A gender transformative or gender sensitive approach has been included in all activities to ensure that women and girls and those with disabilities have equal access to programs, are able to fully and effectively participate and aims to ensure they equally benefit from the strengthening of policy and planning frameworks. This approach will strengthen gender mainstreaming with the disability policy and frameworks.

PwDs were directly impacted through the different activities that were led by UNESCO. The JP enabled the establishment and implementation of National benefit scheme for PwDs. The JP further strengthened national policies related to PwDs in the four PICTs. The development of centralised databases for PwDs information and the training modules delivered all continue to improve services to PwDs. The Fiscal Space Analysis Baseline Study for 4 Countries and the establishment of Disability Reference Groups in the four countries would also improve the services and awareness of the needs of PwDs.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Criteria	Conclusions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SP-JP was relevant to the needs and priorities of the four PCITs. It identified key gaps in social protection systems in Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. The project also supported the development of a framework for social protection in Samoa which was much needed in the island. Although the project was relevant for the needs and priorities of the four PCITs, the consultations during the design was held at a high level within each country and did not involve implementing and technical ministries. This created an initial gap between the aims and objectives of the SP-JP and the vision and approaches of technical implementing agencies in all four countries. Absence of consultations with implementing and technical actors was one of the key shortcomings of the JP as expressed by stakeholders interviewed in the four PICTs. The overall objectives of the SP were directly relevant to the needs of vulnerable groups particularly PwDs. The project focused on improving access to social protection schemes for PwDs in the four PICTs. The activities of all PUNOs were directly relevant to this objective however, the SP also included specific activities by UNESCO that specifically engaged CSOs and associations focusing on PwDs to ensure that the services provided by government is well suited to their needs and priorities.
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of progress against indicators, the SP achieved most of its planned activities. Implementation modalities were generally well suited to the context and the coordination mechanisms through the technical committees and the steering committees ensured ongoing coordination and collaboration of relevant actors. The absence of consultations with implementing and technical actors during the design of the JP affected the effectiveness of implementation during the first six months of the programme. This was due to absence of joint and collective understanding of social protection, its definition, its objectives, and its implementation modalities which needed to be streamlined across actors before the actual implementation can start in the four countries.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project was implemented during COVID-19 which necessitated the adoption of alternate implementation modality such as the use of remote models for training and for implementation of activities. This posed a severe challenge to the effectiveness of the project. Many of the SP activities relied on consultants who were unable to travel to the PICTs due to the closure of borders to curb the spread of COVID-19. • Other challenges encountered during implementation and affecting the effectiveness of the project is the limited capacities within PICTs. The government capacities within the four countries are limited and often the same government actors were implementing the activities with multiple PUNOs as well as carrying on their own responsibilities. This conflict in priorities posed challenges for the smooth implementation of activities and at times caused delays in implementation.
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination amongst the PUNOs ensured some level of efficiency in the implementation of the activities and the achievement of the outputs and the outcomes. Coordination was ensured through the formation of two structures: the first, a Steering committee at high level and the second, a Technical committee more focused on implementation. These committees were meeting on monthly basis thus ensuring coordination and synergies amongst the implementing agencies from government, civil society and PUNOs. • The modality of implementation ensured efficiency however, it did not go beyond information sharing amongst the stakeholders. More coordination and joint activities would have ensured less pressure on government officials who were engaged in the implementation and increased the synergies between the PUNOs. • The JP was well situated within the core activities of the PUNOs which enabled an ongoing synergy between the regular programmes of the PUNOs and the JP. PUNOs partnered in the implementation of the JP with their traditional partners within governments in the four PICTs thus increasing efficiency and maximizing benefits.
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The JP intended outcomes could be said to have been achieved. While it is too soon to speak about impact yet, the JP benefited a large number of end-beneficiaries. The impact of the JP could be observed in the rolling out of the benefits for the PwDs in the four PICTs. It can also be observed in increasing awareness about the value and the importance of social protection amongst government stakeholders. • The long-term impacts of the SP-JP will become more apparent with the adoption in Samoa and Tokelau of the legislative reforms and new frameworks that the JP helped develop and is pending parliament approvals in both countries. • Capacity building of national stakeholders and the development of common understanding of the goals and objectives of social protection, the widening of the coverage, the use of digital platforms are all important outcomes which will improve the lives of vulnerable populations in the four PICTs.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sustainability of the JP is contingent on the ability of governments to continue the benefits that were harnessed through the interventions of the SP-JP. • There is evident commitment and buy-in from government stakeholders across the four PICTs. It is clear that governments and national stakeholders have developed solid understanding of the

	<p>different dimensions of social protection and are keen on ensuring its implementation as a stepping stone towards poverty eradication and the fulfillment of the SDGs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The JP predominantly focused on system strengthening of existing social protection schemes that were present in Cook Island, Niue, and Tokelau which are supported by New Zealand for the continuation of the social protection schemes. This is an important measure that would ensure sustainability. Concerning Samoa, the groundwork has been institutionalized and it is up to the government and other national and international actors to take the social protection agenda forward. The commitment of the new government to the social protection pillar could provide a level of assurance for the sustainability of the interventions implemented through the JP. The allocation of 3 million USD for the disbursement of benefits for PwDs in Samoa is a positive sign that shows the commitment and buy-in of the government.
PwDs, Gender, and Inclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design of the JP enshrined inclusion principles into its activities and approaches. The project specifically recognized the importance of working towards universal access to social protection by vulnerable groups particularly women, children, and PwDs. • The focus of the PUNOs on PwDs and the integration of specific actions to increase access to social protection for this vulnerable group is one of the concrete outcomes of the JP.

VII. LESSONS LEARNED

- Novel projects and concepts such as social protection require time and widespread consultations with national stakeholders to ensure buy-in and common understanding of its value and implementation modalities. It is critical that enough time is allocated to this stage to ensure effective and efficient implementation.
- Short-term development projects (less than 5 years) often face challenges in the effectiveness of implementation as it does not allow for adequate time in consultation and engagement of national stakeholders who are the key persons responsible for the success and achievement of results.
- The success of social protection projects is contingent on the development of different systems and approaches. Hence, implementation should be conducted in stages and focusing on one key aspect and area at a time to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. Attempting to work on all pillars at the same time could lead to inadequate and ineffective implementation.
- When working in small PICTs strong coordination amongst PUNOs is necessary as the implementing agencies are often the same and they do not always have the capacity to work with all PUNOs at the same time.
- Joint projects that do not include the implementation of joint activities by the PUNOs are less likely to include strong synergies and complementarity.
- Social protection programmes are not a one size-fits all, also capacities in PICTs are not the same. Activities should be context-specific to ensure the availability of capacities for implementation.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Continue to support social protection floors in the four PICTs to ensure the adequate continued implementation of the different activities have been initiated through the SP-JP.

Recommendation 2: Future similar projects should recognise that activities focusing on social protection require time to be well developed and integrated into national systems. Future JPs need to factor in time factors and ensure adequate duration of implementation to ensure the achievement of results.

Recommendation 3: Ensure adequate buy-in of implementing and technical units. This could be achieved by focusing during the inception phase of social protection projects on conducting wide-scale consultations that would promote common understanding and finetuning of objectives and approaches to increase relevance and effectiveness of interventions and promote long-term sustainability.

Recommendation 4: Ensure enough timeframe is allocated for the implementation of projects that focus on social protection and other system strengthening interventions. These types of projects cannot yield results within short periods of time especially when global conditions affect the implementation modality of the activities.

Recommendation 5: In order to increase collaboration and synergies between multiple partners, joint projects should include in their design joint activities and common results and outputs. This would ensure that partners in the same joint project are working together and in an integrated manner to achieve results. This is likely to reduce siloed approaches and ensure that the UN agencies are indeed delivering as one.

Recommendation 6: Ensure adequate activities are specifically targeting CSOs and NGOs that are engaged with the vulnerable groups that the project is targeting. This would ensure the development of a critical mass that is able to continue to advocate for the rights and priorities of those vulnerable groups that the project is intending to serve. The role of CSOs should go beyond representation of vulnerable populations to playing an advocacy and oversight role vis a vis the government. This would require building the capacities of CSOs and the provision of adequate tools to strengthen their roles within their communities.

ANNEXES

The following annexes are presented in the coming section of the inception report:

- Annex 1: Terms of Reference
- Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix
- Annex 3: Data Collection Tools
- Annex 4: Stakeholders List
- Annex 5: Evaluation Workplan
- Annex 6: Documents consulted.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference



TERMS OF REFERENCE

STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCE OF PACIFIC ISLANDS THROUGH UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PROTECTION END-OF-PROGRAMME EVALUATION INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT – TEAM LEADER

PROGRAMME TITLE :

Strengthening Resilience of Pacific Islands States through Universal Social Protection.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Strengthening social protection systems in Samoa and other Pacific Island countries

The United Nations (UN) 'Strengthening Resilience of Pacific Island States through Universal Social Protection' (also called the Social Protection Joint) Programme aimed to support four Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) (Samoa, Cook Islands, Tokelau, and Niue) in their efforts to strengthen their sustainable, inclusive, and evidence-based social protection systems. The Programme is being implemented in the four PICTs from June 2020 to December 2022 and is jointly implemented by the UN Country Team (UNCT)⁵⁰ in the Pacific and Governments of the four PICTs.

The four PICTs are among the most fragile Small Island Developing States (SIDS) due to their isolated geography, small economies, and vulnerabilities. With limited economic opportunities, quality of life for many of the local people have deteriorated - with increased vulnerability, poverty, exclusion, and inequality. Urbanisation and monetisation are changing lifestyles and social dynamics creating new forms of hardships, high costs of living, and lack of access to basic services and decent employment opportunities. Increased noncommunicable diseases, emergence of new forms of communicable diseases, alcohol abuse, and domestic violence are other key concerns for the well-being of Pacific Island communities and people.

The Social Protection Joint Programme (SP-JP) aims at increasing resilience through viable and financially sustainable SP systems that will address life cycle vulnerabilities, strengthen SP floors, enhance employability, and maintain social inclusion and cohesion across the four PICTs. The objective

⁵⁰ The Participating UN organisations (PUNOs) of this Programme include the UNDP (UN Development Programme), UNESCAP (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), UNICEF (UN International Children's Fund), UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), ILO (International Labour Organisation), and the UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) in-country. ² Include representatives of government, private sector, and civil society organisations.

is to develop universal, evidence-based, nationally owned SP systems and introduce SP floors to help accelerate Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) progress through integrated programming and Leaving No One Behind initiatives and approaches. The Programme is spearheaded by a Multi Country Steering Committee (MCSC) and a Technical Committee for each of the four PICTs.²

1.2. End of Programme Evaluation

With the SP-JP coming to its conclusion, this ‘end-of-programme evaluation’ will assess the programme in terms of its design, scope, and implementation – and including the extent to which the programme has achieved its purpose and outcomes.

The evaluation is forward looking and is intended to provide useful information on the nature, extent, and where possible, the potential impact and sustainability of the programme.

It will identify lessons learnt and recommendations on how to improve on the design and implementation of similar future programs in the Pacific. This is with a particular focus on programs that are managed and delivered through the UN system and implemented through joint partnerships and collaborations with government and other key stakeholders for improved ownership, sustainability, and impact.

To enable the conduct of an independent, timely and quality evaluation of the SP-JP, the service of a qualified Consultant is required to work with the UN RCO, UNDP, and all other PUNOs in the conducting of an end-of-programme evaluation of the SP-JP.

2. REASONS FOR THE EVALUATION

2.1. Rationale

The evaluation is being commissioned as part of a mandatory monitoring and evaluation process for the Joint SDG Fund. The evaluation findings will be used by the Governments of the four PICTs and the UN system in the Pacific towards improving social protection programming in the countries, strengthening UN reforms, to contribute to the acceleration of SDGs, and to inform learning from results of this programme.

The evaluation is being commissioned and is needed at this time as:

The SDG Fund requires the evaluation to be finalized before the end date of the JP in December 2022, and the funds available for the evaluation need to be disbursed before November 2022.

At the same time, the evaluation is timely to inform the early design/formulation and implementation stages of further joint programs in the Pacific.

It will provide useful information on social protection programs for programming plans addressing ‘postCOVID-19’ and other similar crises, as Pacific countries need support to recover from the unfolding impacts of the pandemic and other crises, shocks, stresses, and emerging contingencies.

2.2. Objectives

The SDG Fund requested the PUNOs of the SP-JP to commission an independent end-of-programme evaluation to assess:

Contribution of the JP to achieving of the main expected transformative results of the SP-JP (Annex 2)

Contribution of the SP-JP to the jointness of the UNCT/PUNOs engagement under the Resident Coordinator (RC) leadership.

Contribution of the SP-JP to SDG acceleration, focusing on SDG targets identified in the SP-JP Programme Document (Prodoc).

The extent to which the SP-JP has been inclusive, including its effective contribution to socio-economic inclusion, particularly of persons with disabilities (Annex 5).

The evaluation will be useful for the PUNOs and implementing partners when designing future joint programs through the identification of lessons learnt and a deeper understanding how joint programs

position agencies vis-à-vis the national governments. Also, it will be useful to inform PUNO's further efforts in the field of social protection in the Pacific islands and other similar contexts.

3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, SUBJECT AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

3.1. Stakeholder Input

The evaluation will seek the views of, and be useful to, a broad range of internal and external stakeholders. A number of stakeholders will be asked to play a role in the evaluation process in light of their expected interest in the results of the evaluation and relative power to influence the results of the programme being evaluated.

Among primary users who are interested in learning from this evaluation are the RCO, PUNOs, as well as the Governments of Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau. On the other hand, the Joint SDG Fund and the beneficiaries have interest in the evaluation mainly for accountability.

Accountability to affected populations, is tied to UN commitments to include beneficiaries as key stakeholders in its work. The participating or partnering UN Agencies are committed to ensuring gender equality, equity, and inclusion in the evaluation process, with participation and consultation in the evaluation of women, men, boys, and girls from different groups (including persons with disabilities, the elderly, and persons with other diversities such children and youth living in vulnerable conditions).

Preliminary stakeholders identified include primary and secondary stakeholders. Among the primary stakeholders are internal stakeholders (RCO, PUNOs' multi-country offices in the Pacific, PUNOs' Headquarters, PUNOs' Offices of Evaluation and PUNOs' governing bodies) and external stakeholders, such as beneficiaries, the Governments of Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau, and the United Nations Subregional Team, and the SDG Fund.

The Evaluator will be provided with a preliminary stakeholder analysis, which should be deepened by the evaluation team as part of the inception phase.

3.2. Subject of the evaluation

The JP was designed to contribute to the development of evidence based nationally owned social protection (SP) systems to accelerate SDGs through integrated programming in national and sub-national development. Its initial duration is of two years (January 2020 to December 2021); however, the commencement of the programme was delayed for six months. As such and given the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and Samoa's political stalemate in 2021, the programme was extended to December 2022.

The programme overall budget is USD \$3,386, 176, with SDG funds providing USD\$3 million and the rest being constituted by funds of the five PUNOs. The UNDP is the convening agent (on behalf of the PUNOs) providing secretariat support and coordination of programmatic activities including reporting to the monthly and quarterly meetings of the Technical Committees and six-monthly meetings of the MCSC. The RCO plays a coordination role for the MCSC and SDG Funds with technical inputs from the UNDP (as technical lead) and other PUNOs. The MCSC is co-chaired by the Representative of Government (usually the CEO of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs) and the UN Resident Coordinator. The TC is co-chaired by the Representative of Government (nominated or on a rotational basis of TC government members) and the UNDP Representative.

The initiative of building SP systems is novel, the first of its kind in the four PICTs. It is unique because it supports SP systems to be nationally owned and address human capabilities in an 'active' (actors participate in development) rather than a purely 'reactive' manner (post-shock hand-outs). As such, the SP-JP is promoted as a collaborative effort between the UNCT, Governments and national partners

where government ownership and leadership are critical for sustainable inclusive SP systems. The programme envisions a strong leadership role for governments and national stakeholders in programme design, finance, delivery and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

The JP is expected to enable partner governments to accelerate progress towards the implementation of SDGs in support of national commitments and reflective of the significant vulnerabilities of SIDs to external shocks, including climate-related events, contingencies, and impacts. Nine SDG targets⁵¹ are directly addressed by the JP with the programme contributing to integrated multi-sectoral policies and financing leverage to accelerate SDG achievement implemented with greater scope and scale. The JP responds to the regional and national objectives and priorities of the four PICTs, including the six outcomes of the UN Pacific Strategy (UNPS) 2018-2022: climate change, disaster resilience, environment; protection gender equality; outcome 3: sustainable and inclusive economic empowerment; equitable basic services; governance and community engagement; and human rights.

In line with the principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and outcomes of the UN Pacific Strategy 2018-2022, the SP-JP have adopted five strategic interventions in developing and strengthening coherent SP systems— data/evidence; inclusive participation and partnerships; sustainable finance; institutional coordination and capacity building; and outreach. The SP-JP has four key strategic outcomes: universal, inclusive & equitable SP systems; SP floors are efficiently and effectively administered; financial inclusion enables low transaction cost transfers of SP benefits; and increased resilience through mainstreaming of disability, gender, youth, and climate related contingencies.

The Theory of Change of the JP is reiterated in Annex 1. The JP aims to build sustainable, inclusive, and equitable SP systems by ensuring that: high quality evidence and data exist to guide choices and gain political and social consensus; institutional coordination and delivery mechanisms are efficient; financing strategies are equitable and robust; strong partnerships and inclusive participation are encouraged; and a strong commitment for advocacy and outreach exists. The main assumptions underpinning the theory of change are:

Political commitment towards a valid social contract that addresses vulnerabilities is in place during and beyond the JP lifespan.

National development strategies and budgets are centered on poverty reduction and resilience including through SP floors.

Digital transformation continues with the introduction of single digital identity and e-governance.

Civil society remains engaged in promoting human rights and equitable development.

The objective of the JP is to promote synergies across multiple sectors for equitable access to SP, further development, and SDG progress to leave no one behind.

The four strategic outcomes indicated in the Project Document are:

Universal, inclusive & equitable Social Protection systems Leave No One Behind. -contributive schemes will be designed and enacted to respond to multidimensional vulnerability.

SP floors are efficiently and effectively administered.

Financial inclusion in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau enables low transaction cost transfers of SP benefits.

Increased resilience as disability, gender, youth, and climate related contingencies are being mainstreamed.

⁵¹ SDG targets 1.3, 2.1, 4.2, 5.4, 8.5, 10.4, 13.1, 16.6, and 17.1.

The three main transformative results of the JP

The logic model in terms of the programme activities to be implemented under each of the four expected outcomes is reiterated in Annex 3. The results framework that provides information on the JP indicators is presented in Annex 4. Each of the five PUNOs and the RCO.

3.3. Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will look at all activities (through different lenses: design, implementation, results) undertaken within the JP over its initially expected implementation period and including the extension periods.

The evaluation will focus on the key focus and objectives as stated under section 2 above. Using conceptual frameworks and understanding of SP, a specific focus will be on addressing vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities, women, and children.

Albeit all JP activities should be covered, the time and resources available for this evaluation may not necessarily allow looking at every single support/intervention carried out by each one of the partnering agencies. In this regard, the partners see a particular interest in having the evaluation examine their institutional strengthening and capacity building efforts, as well as their work at the national level and the overall process of collaboration amongst the PUNOs.

4. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. Evaluation questions and criteria

The evaluation will address the following key questions, which will be further developed and tailored by the evaluation team in a detailed evaluation matrix during the inception phase. The evaluation team is invited to revise the questions following detailed evaluability assessment during the inception phase. Collectively, the questions aim at highlighting the key lessons and performance of the JP, with a view to informing future strategic and operational decisions.

Table 1: Evaluation questions and criteria

Evaluation questions		Criteria
EQ1 – To what extent are the JP design and implementation relevant and coherent?		RELEVANCE, COHERENCE
1.1	To what extent were the JP's scope, estimation of required resources (and expected results based on analysis of available data/needs or capacity assessments? To what extent were they realistic and relevant? To what extent does this way of designing a JP lend to its efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and support UN Reform?	
1.2	To what extent synergies have been achieved between the different activities implemented by the PUNOs? What value added has been generated through these synergies?	
1.3	To what extent was the design of the intervention relevant to the wider context (including national policies and work carried out by other actors)?	
1.4	To what extent was the JP in line with the needs and priorities of the most vulnerable groups such as people living with disabilities, women, and children?	
EQ2 – What are the results of the JP?		EFFECTIVENESS
2.1	To what extent were the expected outcomes and three main expected transformative results of the JP accomplished or are likely to be accomplished?	
2.2	What major factors influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the outcomes and expected transformative results?	
2.3	What are the unintended (positive or negative) outcomes of the JP (if any)?	
2.4	To what extent is the achievement of the outcomes and expected transformative results leading to meeting of JP goal and further objectives related to acceleration of SDGs and contributing to the UN Reform?	
2.5	To what extent were the PUNOs able to adapt the implementation of the JP to the COVID-19 context?	

EQ3 – How efficient was the partnership of the PUNOs in view of implementing the JP and leveraging further resources?		EFFICIENCY
3.1	Which factors facilitated or hindered the collaboration and efficiency of the JP?	
3.2	To what extent represents the JP a link to and leverage other development efforts (including national budgets for social protection) to strengthen the social protection systems in the four PICTs?	
3.3	To what extent were funds deployed against plan by activity and PUNO in timely and effective manner?	
EQ4 – To what longer-term changes has contributed the JP?		IMPACT
4.1	To what extent has the JP contributed to improving the situation of vulnerable groups identified in the programme document and particularly that of people living with disabilities, women, and children?	
4.2	What macro level changes have been induced by the programme within the social protection systems of the four PICTs?	
4.3	What are the longer-term effects of the JP on the four PICTs and UNCT work on social protection?	
EQ5 – To what extent are the benefits of the JP sustainable?		SUSTAINABILITY
5.1	To what extent is it likely that the benefits of the JP at the national level will continue after its implementation ceases?	
5.2	To what extent is there government buy-in in the interventions that contributes to their sustainability?	
5.3	To what extent are the synergies and collaboration created through the JP between the PUNOs likely to persist after its completion?	
EQ6 – To what extent did the JP take into account and contribute to social inclusion, equity gender and equality?		PERSONS WITH DISABILITY, GENDER, AND INCLUSION
6.1	To what extent was the JP design, implementation and monitoring sensitive to gender, equity, inclusion of persons with disabilities and social inclusion?	
6.2	To what extent have persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities, been consulted through their representative organizations?	
6.3	What are the concrete results of the JP in terms of gender equality, women's empowerment, equity, inclusion of persons with disabilities and social inclusion?	

The evaluation will apply all the international evaluation criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. Additionally, the inclusion (persons with disability, gender, and equity) is included as a separate criterion provided that the objectives of the JP are aiming to act upon them.

4.2. Evaluation approach and methodology

The detailed methodology will be designed by the evaluation team during the inception phase. It should:

- Employ the above outlined relevant evaluation criteria.

Apply an evaluation matrix geared towards addressing the key evaluation questions considering data availability challenges, budget, and timing constraints.

Ensure through the application of mixed methods that persons with disability, women, girls, men, and boys from different stakeholders' groups participate and that their different voices are heard and used.

Apply participatory and innovative approaches to overcome possible access limitations resulting from the COVID-19 pandemics.

Be utilization focused.

Include a revision of the theory of change of the JP.

Consider including two case studies on the work of the programme. These case studies may use the most significant change approach.

Consider using contribution analysis or other appropriate approach to assess the longer-term changes to which the JP has contributed to and national level, including further initiatives needing further actions for continuation and sustainability.

The methodology chosen should demonstrate attention to impartiality and reduction of bias by relying on mixed methods (quantitative, qualitative) and different primary and secondary data sources that

are systematically triangulated (documents from different sources; a range of stakeholder groups, including beneficiaries; direct observation in different locations; across evaluators; across methods etc.). It will consider any challenges to data availability, validity, or reliability, as well as budget and timing constraints. The evaluation questions, lines of inquiry, indicators, data sources and data collection methods will be brought together in an evaluation matrix, which will form the basis of the sampling approach and data collection and analysis instruments. The following data collection methods are expected to be included alongside others proposed by the evaluation team: desk review, individual and group interviews, and survey.

The methodology should be sensitive in terms of responding to persons with disability needs and issues, equity, inclusion, and human rights, indicating how the perspectives and voices of diverse groups (men and women, boys, girls, the elderly, people living with disabilities and other marginalized groups) will be sought and taken into account. The methodology should ensure that primary data collected is disaggregated by sex and age; an explanation should be provided if this is not possible. The effort to capture perspectives of diverse group should be made (e.g., when identifying key informants).

Looking for explicit consideration of gender and equity/inclusion in the data after fieldwork is too late; the evaluation team must have a clear and detailed plan for collecting data from women and men in gender and equity-sensitive ways before fieldwork begins.

The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations must reflect gender, equity, and human rights analysis. The findings should include a discussion on intended and unintended effects of the intervention on gender equality, equity, and human rights dimensions. The report should provide lessons, challenges, and recommendations for conducting gender and equity-responsive evaluations in the future.

The following mechanisms for independence and impartiality will be employed:

The JP MCSC validate key deliverables including the TOR and take other relevant decisions related to the evaluation including providing strategic inputs on the Evaluation inception, process, and outcomes. The Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) composed of internal and external stakeholders (as represented on the TCs) will be established to provide technical advice, comment on evaluation deliverables and act as key informants at inception and possible data collection phase.

An evaluation manager that has not been involved in the implementation of the JP will be nominated to be a part of the externally recruited Evaluation Team.

The Joint SDG Fund Secretariat will provide quality assurance on the Evaluation process.

The Multi-country Joint Steering Committee is the supreme body to provide strategic oversight to the implementation of the JP. The MCO JSC is co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and high-level representatives of the Governments of Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau. The MCO JSC will endorse the results of the evaluation and management response – pls reflect in the deliverables.

The following potential risks to the methodology and mitigation measures have been identified:

A large number of partners with a numerous activity at different levels are involved in the JP. Assessing in depth every single activity is likely not to be feasible within the time and budget allocated for this evaluation. Based on the detailed evaluability assessment during the inception phase, the evaluation team needs to confirm the prioritization and scope outlined in the TOR and propose adjustments to the scope and questions if necessary.

It is unlikely that it will be possible to isolate the results and effects of the JP on social protection systems, as multiple interventions by development partners were taking place at the same time. The evaluation team is expected to review and develop in more detail the theory of change of the JP and could consider using contribution analysis to overcome this limitation.

The evaluation team will need to expand on the methodology presented in the TOR and develop a detailed evaluation matrix and inclusion and gender-sensitive sampling strategy in the inception report.

4.3. Evaluability assessment

The subject of the evaluation should have a clearly defined theory of change, a well-defined results framework, primary and secondary data for evaluation, scope for consideration of political, social, and economic factors and for the evaluation to be relevant.

Several secondary sources of information are available including programme design and formulation documents, planning and budget information, as well as implementation progress reports, including quarterly and annual project reports. Also, a number of documents (policies, strategies, studies/research, analyses and assessments, and others) are developed as part of the JP.

During the initial consultations, the partners indicated that monitoring and progress reports are complete, of good quality, and no significant data gaps were identified. To confirm this, the evaluation team is expected to carry out a thorough review and appraise the quality of the available secondary data during the inception phase.

However, there may be a lack of quality gender-disaggregated data and data sets and high staff turnover may mean limited institutional memory. During the inception phase, the evaluation team will be expected to perform an in-depth evaluability assessment and critically assess data availability, quality and gaps expanding on the information provided in this section. This assessment will inform the data collection and the choice of evaluation methods. The evaluation team will need to systematically check accuracy, consistency, and validity of collected data and information and acknowledge any limitations/caveats in drawing conclusions using the data during the reporting phase.

4.4. Ethical considerations

The evaluation must conform to [United Nations Evaluation Group \(UNEG\)](#) ethical guidelines for evaluation. Accordingly, the selected evaluation team is responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation process. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of respondents, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of respondents, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results do no harm to respondents or their communities.

The evaluation firm will be responsible for managing any potential ethical risks and issues and must put in place, in consultation with the evaluation manager, processes and systems to identify, report and resolve any ethical issues that might arise during the implementation of the evaluation. Ethical approvals and reviews by relevant bodies and institutions must be sought where required.

In case of in person field visits, the evaluation team needs to consider all necessary bio-security measures (related to COVID-19) and ensure non-maleficence as per ethical standards. No further specific ethical risks are identified at this stage.

The team and evaluation manager will not have been involved in the design, implementation or monitoring of the JP nor have any other potential or perceived conflicts of interest. All members of the evaluation team will abide by the [2020 UNEG Ethical Guidelines](#), including country specific requirements. The evaluation team will also be expected to sign a data protection agreement.

4.5. Quality assurance

The RCO and UNDP are responsible and accountable for the oversight and organisation of the evaluation, as a quality assurance measure.

The [United Nations Evaluation Group \(UNEG\)](#) evaluation quality assurance system and Joint SDG Fund guidelines will be used for the purpose of this joint evaluation. It sets out processes with steps for quality assurance and templates for evaluation products based on a set of [Quality Assurance Checklists](#). The quality assurance will be systematically applied during this evaluation and relevant documents will be provided to the evaluation team. This includes checklists for feedback on quality for each of the evaluation products. The relevant checklist will be applied at each stage, to ensure the quality of the evaluation process and outputs.

To enhance the quality and credibility of the evaluation, the MCSC and ERG together with the Evaluation Manager and SDG Fund Secretariat will review the draft TOR, the draft inception and the evaluation reports, and provides a systematic assessment of their quality from an evaluation perspective, along with recommendations.

The evaluation manager will share the assessment and recommendations from the quality support service with the team leader, who will address the recommendations when finalizing the inception and evaluation reports. To ensure transparency and credibility of the process in line with the [UNEG norms and standards](#), a rationale should be provided for comments that the team does not take into account when finalizing the report.

The evaluation team will be required to ensure the quality of data (reliability, consistency, and accuracy) throughout the data collection, synthesis, analysis, and reporting phases.

All final evaluation reports will be subject to a quality assessment by the MCSC, ERG and Joint SDG Fund Secretariat with additional checks provided through relevant evaluation systems and criteria of the specific PUNOs.

5. Evaluation team requirements and roles and responsibilities

5.1. Evaluation team composition

The evaluation team is expected to include a minimum of two members: the Team Leader and the national counterpart as the Evaluation Manager. In view of evaluation capacity strengthening, the inclusion of one young or emerging evaluator into the team (ideally a national) should be envisaged for the role of a national counterpart.

To the extent possible, the evaluation will be conducted by a gender-balanced and geographically and culturally diverse team with appropriate skills to assess gender dimensions of the subject as specified in the scope, approach, and methodology sections of the TOR. The Team Leader should have experience with evaluations commissioned by UN Agencies following UNEG norms and standards.

The team will be multi-disciplinary and have an appropriate balance of technical expertise and practical knowledge in the following areas:

Social protection and adaptive social protection.

Capacity strengthening.

Policy development and analysis.

Partnerships work.

Good knowledge of gender, equity, and wider inclusion issues.

Knowledge of the cultural context.

All team members should have strong analytical and communication skills, evaluation experience with a track record of written work on similar assignments, and familiarity with the region.

Fluency in English is required.

Team members will: i) contribute to the methodology in their area of expertise based on a document review; ii) conduct field work; iii) participate in team meetings and meetings with stakeholders; and iv) contribute to the drafting and revision of the evaluation products in their technical area(s).

5.2. Team Leader

The evaluation team will conduct the evaluation under the direction of its team leader and in close communication with the joint evaluation manager. The team will be hired following agreement of the ERG and MCSC on its composition.

The team leader will have expertise in one of the key competencies listed above as well as demonstrated experience in leading similar evaluations, including designing methodology and data collection tools.

She/he will also have leadership, analytical and communication skills, including a track record of excellent English writing, synthesis, and presentation skills.

Her/his primary responsibilities will be: i) defining the evaluation approach and methodology; ii) guiding and managing the team; iii) leading the evaluation mission and representing the evaluation team; and iv) drafting and revising, as required, the inception report, the end of field work (i.e., exit) debriefing presentation and evaluation report.

5.3. Evaluation Manager

The Evaluation Manager organizes the evaluation and provide the strategic oversight of the evaluation process, including the approval of key outputs.

The Evaluation Manager manages the evaluation process through all phases including: □ finalizing the TOR for the evaluation.

identifying the evaluation team in consultation with the Team Leader and PUNOs.

preparing and managing the budget.

setting up the evaluation committee and evaluation reference group.

ensuring quality assurance mechanisms are operational and effectively used.

consolidating and sharing comments on draft inception and evaluation reports with the evaluation team.

ensuring that the team has access to all documentation and information necessary to the evaluation.

facilitating the team's contacts with local stakeholders.

supporting the preparation of the field mission by setting up meetings and field visits, providing logistic support during the fieldwork and arranging for interpretation, if required.

organizing security briefings for the evaluation team and providing any materials as required.

conducting the first level quality assurance of the evaluation products.

Providing the main interlocutor between the team, represented by the team leader and the focal point, and PUNOs to ensure a smooth implementation process.

5.4. UN Agencies

The UNDP and RCO multi-country office in Samoa will take responsibility to □ Oversee the evaluation process.

Convene and facilitate the management arrangements for the Evaluation through the ERG and MCSC mechanisms.

The MCSC and ERG ensure the independence and impartiality of the evaluation, it will be co-chaired by the RCO, and with inputs from PUNOs and stakeholder representatives managing the evaluation and will take responsibility to:

Approve the final TOR, inception and evaluation reports.

Approve the evaluation team selection.

Ensure the independence and impartiality of the evaluation at all stages.

Participate in discussions with the evaluation team on the evaluation design and the evaluation subject, its performance and results with the evaluation manager and the evaluation team.

Organize and participate in two separate debriefings, one internal and one with external stakeholders.

Oversee dissemination and follow-up processes, including the preparation of a management response to the evaluation recommendations.

The ERGs will review and comment on the draft evaluation products and act as key informants in order to contribute to the relevance, impartiality, and credibility of the evaluation by offering a range of viewpoints and ensuring a transparent process.

The SDG Fund Secretariat will take responsibility to:

Advise the evaluation manager and provide support to the evaluation process where appropriate.

Participate in discussions with the evaluation team on the evaluation design and on the evaluation subject as required.

Provide comments on the draft TOR, inception and evaluation reports.

Support the preparation of a management response to the evaluation and track the implementation of the recommendations.

Other relevant national and regional technical staff may participate in the evaluation reference group and/or comment on evaluation products as appropriate.

6. Deliverables and institutional arrangements

6.1. Expected deliverables and timelines

66. In line with the scope of work outlined above, Table 2 presents the structure of the main phases of the evaluation, along with the deliverables and deadlines for each phase:

Duration of the consultancy will be 18 days.

Table 2: Deliverables and timelines

Main phases	Indicative timeline	Tasks and deliverables	Responsible
1. Preparation	January 2023	Finalisation of TOR Selection of the evaluation team & contracting □ Document review	Evaluation manager
2. Inception	January 2023	Inception mission Inception report	Evaluation team
3. Data collection	January 2023	Fieldwork Exit debriefing (PPT)	Evaluation team
4. Reporting	January 2023	Data analysis and report drafting Evaluation report Comments process Validation & learning workshop Video + 2-pager brief	Evaluation team
5. Dissemination and follow-up	10 February 2023	Management response Dissemination of the evaluation report	MCSC, ERG and Joint SDG Fund Secretariat

6.2. Payments

67. The selected firm will be paid in accordance with schedule outlined in Table 3:

Table 3: Payment schedule

Phase	Payment
Upon submission of draft inception report. 17 January 2023	20% (of total contract consultancy fee)
Upon submission of technically satisfactory final inception report. 24 January 2023	20% (of total contract consultancy fee)
Upon approval of all technically satisfactory final evaluation and associated deliverables as specified above. 24 February 2023	60% (of total contract consultancy fee)

6.3. Counterparts support, stakeholder inputs and duty station

The selected Evaluation Team is required to work closely with the SP-JP MCSC, ERG, PUNOs and RCO and with backstopping and quality assurance from the UNDP and RCO in the performance of the assignment. Consultant to provide link for each PUNOs update review that can be details in the Annex.

The PUNOs, Government Agencies and all other stakeholders of the SP-JP will make available to the Evaluation Team all relevant data/information which may assist the valuation Team in carrying out and completing the TOR.

The Evaluation team is expected to be in the field and based in the Samoa Pacific UN Multi-office with on-site visitation and virtual participation in all aspects of the assignment is required across the four PICTs.

7. COMPETENCIES OF THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE AS TEAM LEADER

7.1. Qualifications and Experiences:

Master's degree in Social Development, Political Science, Sociology, Economics, Law, Public Administration, Public Policy, Social Policy, Statistics and/or related social sciences.

At least 15 years of relevant work experiences, including at least 10 years of work experience at international level in Social Protection, Social Development, Sociology, Poverty reduction, and other related development areas at theoretical and practical levels in the field.

Proven track record of experience in the design and delivery of evaluation of social protection systems.

Proven track record of providing evidence-based evaluations in social protection, with ability to customize to different participant learning contexts and needs.

Substantial experiences in evaluative research with academic contribution to knowledge building in the social protection areas including poverty reduction, social development, and other related development areas.

Substantial experience in research and with scholarship contributions to the development areas of social protection, including related areas such as poverty reduction, social development, and others.

Relevant work experience in developing countries in a multi stakeholder environment with a development organization, Government, civil society, private sector, or a research/academic institution.

Proven track record of experiences in undertaking social protection development work in developing countries including the Pacific.

Sound understanding of project results-based management would be an asset.

Proficiency in written and spoken English required.

7.2. Assessment of competencies

The assessment of individual consultants will be in accordance with the evaluation criteria below: □

70% for Technical; and

□ 30% for Financial.

Technical Evaluation Criteria will be based on the information provided in the CV and relevant documents that are to be submitted as evidence to support the above required criteria.

Only the top 3 candidates that have achieved a minimum of 49 points (70% of 100 points) will be deemed technically compliant and considered for the interview assessment.

The technical competencies will be assessed as per criteria and scoring outlined in Table 3:

Table 4: Evaluative criteria for the consultancy

Competency	Evaluative points
1. Master's degree in Social Development, Political Science, Sociology, Economics, Law, Public Administration, Public Policy, Social Policy, Statistics and/or related social sciences.	10%
2. At least 15 years of relevant work experiences, including at least 10 years of work experience at international level in Social Protection, Social Development, Sociology, Poverty reduction, and other related development areas at theoretical 10% and practical levels in the field.	25%
3. Proven track record of experience in the design and delivery of evaluation of social protection systems.	15%
4. Proven track record of providing evidence-based evaluations in social protection, with ability to customize to different participant learning contexts and needs.	10%
5. Substantial experiences in evaluative research with academic contribution to knowledge building in the social protection areas including poverty reduction, social development, and other related development areas.	10%
6. Substantial experience in research and with scholarship contributions to the development areas of social protection, including related areas such as poverty reduction, social development, and others.	
7. Relevant work experience in developing countries in a multi stakeholder environment with a development organization, Government, civil society, private sector, or a research/academic institution.	10%
8. Proven track record of experiences in undertaking social protection development work in developing countries including the Pacific	5%
9. Sound understanding of project results-based management would be an asset.	
10. Proficiency in written and spoken English required.	5%
Total	100%

This TOR is approved by: Christina Mualia-Lima

UNDP Assistant Resident Representative, Governance and Poverty Reduction

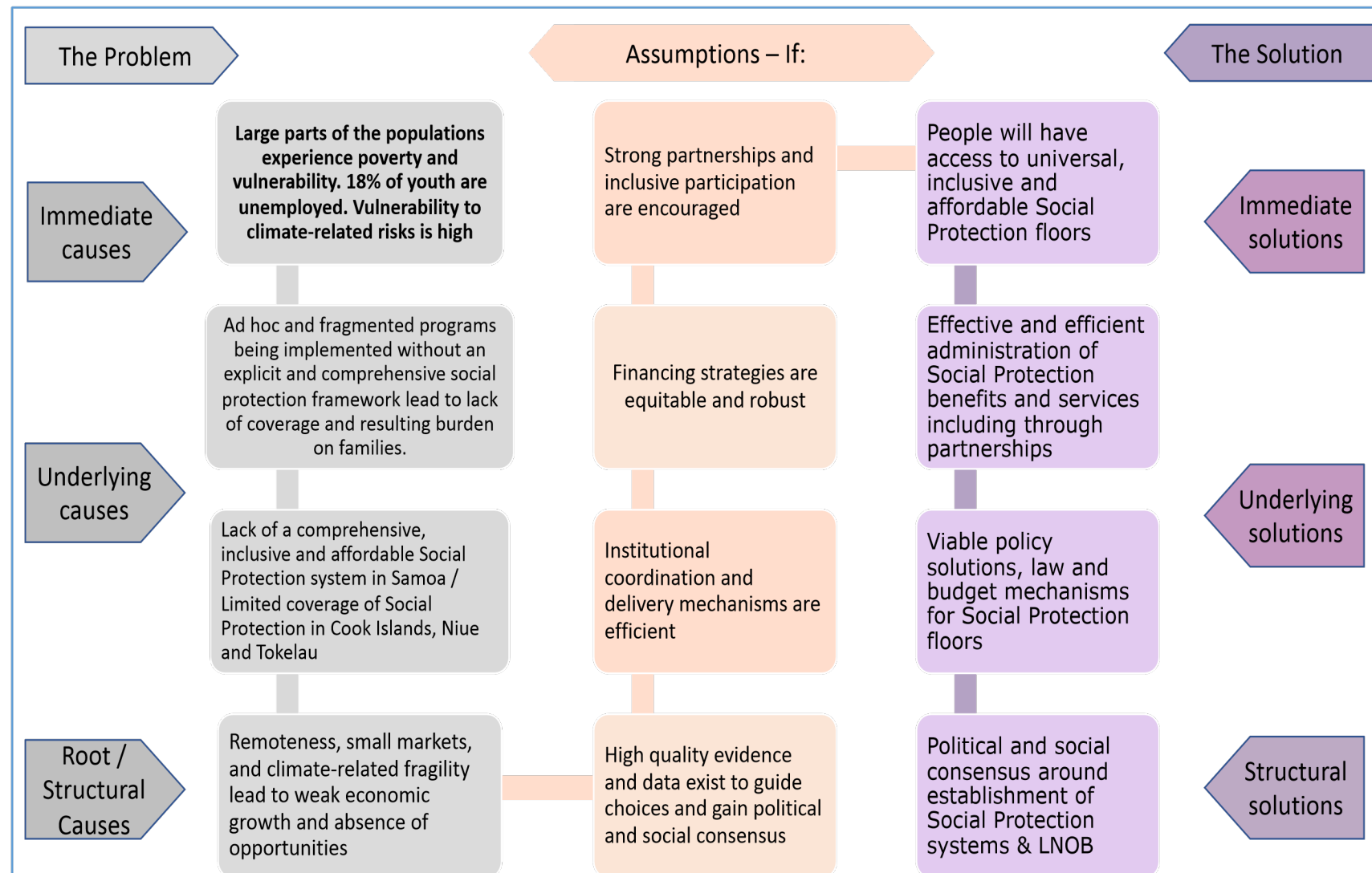
Unit

Signature

Date of Signing

ANNEXES

1. SP-JP Theory of Change



2. Three Main Transformative Results of the SP-JP

SP-LNOB JPs - Main results

Background explanation: These results were the foundation for approval of funding and later elaborated the full JP document (ProDoc) into more detailed, precise (and often expanded) outputs and outcomes in its programmatic Results Framework. Further JP progress updates and to the Fund's Secretariat will focus only on those results to streamline the process and facilitate global communication. Nevertheless, the JP will still need to report on the overall Results Framework in its next Annual and the Final Progress Reports – the transformative results will be in the focus only for monitoring purposes.

MCO Samoa

Strengthening the Resilience of Pacific Island States Through Universal Social Protection

In Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau the program will undertake review and stock take of existing social protection systems and provide country specific recommendations of new/additional social protection programs and interventions for people left behind due to geography, multidimensional poverty, vulnerability to shocks, and discrimination.

For Samoa, a nationally owned, inclusive, forward looking and sustainable social protection policy, inclusive of social protection floors and a comprehensive long-term social protection development will be developed, and submitted to the Government of Samoa, for approval and implementation.

For Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau, systems, and capacities for the effective and efficient implementation of inclusive and sustainable social protection are strengthened through improvements in evidence-based knowledge building; integrated and innovative data and information management systems; coordinated policy, legislative reforms, programming and administrative capacities; and regular monitoring and evaluation for ongoing improvements and feedback learnings.

3. SP-JP Logic Model of Activity Implementation

<u>Outcomes/outputs/activities</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Responsible PUNO</u>
1 – Universal, inclusive & equitable Social Protection systems Leave No One Behind.		
<u>1.1. Data-informed, nationally consulted, comprehensive, and equitable social protection floors designed and costed (policy, law, budget) to complement ongoing programmes and reduce poverty and vulnerability to socio-economic and climate-related risks.</u>		
1.1.1. Set up a Disability Reference Group (DRG) in each of the four PICT to engage in the design and costing process run by the JP.	All 4 PICTs	UNESCO
1.1.2. TA for SDG indicators: SP indicators for social inclusion/protection are verified and data needs are agreed and met.	Samoa	UNESCAP
1.1.3. Technical support for developed and costing of systems for early childhood development.	Samoa	UNICEF
1.1.4. Establish regional and country platforms for stakeholder discussion/ consultation and issue call to action.	Samoa	UNDP
1.1.5. Conduct gap analysis of existing SP legislation, policies, programmes, and expenditures, and organize stakeholder consultations.	Samoa	UNDP
1.1.6. Based on SP floor (SPF) design recommendations, cost SPF and prepare "business case" (recommendations to include how to reduce risk and increase climate disaster resilience).	Samoa	UNDP
<u>1.2: Multi-year social protection floor implementation plan adopted and budgeted [focusing on new components of the SP system while existing ones will be improved] to allow implementation as of year 2.</u>		
1.2.1. Situational analysis and registers of the existing registers of the existing schemes; fiscal space analysis, proposed SP framework development and actuarial analysis.	All 4 PICTs	UNESCO
1.2.2. Advocacy and technical support for definition of child sensitive system.	Samoa	UNICEF
1.2.3. Develop gender-sensitive multi-year SPF implementation plan, budget, and M&E framework.	Samoa	UNDP
1.2.4. Experts inputs and review of implementation plan.	Samoa	UNESCAP
1.2.5. Consultations of the newly adopted Convention 190 with constituents, stakeholders, and the public for the first and second quarter of 2020.	Samoa	ILO
1.2.6. Awareness of the new amendment Labour Law on inclusion of Sexual Harassment Sections as well as the amendments on terms and conditions of employment in the LERA 2013.	Samoa	ILO
1.2.7. Establishing of the SP Taskforce to be inclusive of the related ministries and organisations under the umbrella of Samoa National Tripartite Forum. The Project Manager would also coordinate and facilitate this taskforce for 2 years contract base on the preparation and ratification of C190 and preparing ILS periodic reports for Samoa.	Samoa	ILO
1.2.8. Engaging the constituents, Business Center, and related Ministries to the on-going Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) with the Seasonal workers for 2 days.	Samoa	ILO
1.2.9. National capacity trainings for constituents and labour inspections on cases of sexual harassment - and on mediating.	Samoa	ILO
1.2.10. Conduct a follow up survey in reference to the first Rapid Assessment Survey Samoa have in 2017 on the Street Vendors in Apia. Report will update period report to the CEACR as well as the recommendation for policy in place for children engage in street vendors.	Samoa	ILO / UNICEF
<u>1.3: Social Protection Pilot programmes implemented with the objective of national scale-up.</u>		
1.3.1. SP package pilot for PWD	All 4 PICTs	UNESCO
<u>1.4: Existing Social Protection Floors for Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau fully reviewed to strengthen inclusiveness, equity, effectiveness, efficiency, and financial sustainability of contributive and non-contributive scheme.</u>		

1.4.1. Capacity development trainings strengthen existing programmes and the pilot for efficiency and effectiveness.	All 4 PICTs	UNESCO
1.4.2. Review of coverage gaps - CIs, Niue, and Tokelau.	CIs, Niue & Tokelau	UNICEF
1.4.3. Expert inputs and review of SPFs.	CIs & Niue	UNESCAP
1.4.4. Cook Islands - Consultation meetings with government line ministries, workers, and employers' representatives and CSOs to discuss SP issues relevant to their respective organisations.	CIs	ILO

1.4.5. Cook Islands - Assessment of the country's existing SP system (SPS) including a stocktake of existing schemes, review of the legal framework and identification of policy gaps and implementation issues within the national SPS.	CIs	ILO
1.4.6. Drafting of new legislation and/or amendment of existing legislation as required for the successful implementation of the proposed schemes.	CIs	ILO
1.4.7. Stock-taking and review of existing SPF (laws, policies, budget, M&E frameworks, results) through the lens of inclusiveness, equity, financial sustainability, and gender sensitivity; and prioritized recommendations to governments.	CIs, Niue & Tokelau	UNDP
1.4.8. Establishment of stakeholder coordination mechanisms in each country.	CIs, Niue & Tokelau	UNDP

2 – Social Protection floors are efficiently and effectively administered (financial management, institutional framework and capacity, evidence-based planning drawing on robust information management systems).

2.1: Digital data systems in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau will be strengthened to support registration and robust administration of the social protection floor and programmes.

2.1.1. Capacity building of the PWD understanding digital data systems.	All 4 PICTs	UNESCO
2.1.2. Integrating and linking more national registries on OSH cases from MoH, Samoa Fire & Emergency Service Authority to the joint sharing system that ACP and Ministry of Labour have in place. The sharing of these data and information should be agreement sign under the Samoa National OSH taskforce with all these OSH related Authorities.	Samoa	ILO
2.1.3. Develop multi-dimensional Poverty Index (for Samoa only).	Samoa	UNDP
2.1.4. Develop and test mobile platform for beneficiaries' improved access to information on SPF and programmes, as a means for outreach and as an interface for people to register and access benefits (via SMS and via mobile data).	All 4 PICTs	UNDP
2.1.5. Expert review of data systems.	Samoa, CIs & Niue	UNESCAP

2.2: Integrated administrative systems such as registries and redress mechanisms are strengthened, in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau.

2.2.1. Technical support for development of scalable and integrated SP information systems.	All 4 PICTs	UNICEF
2.2.2. Upgrading of the OSH Registries System with Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour to the standard of digitalization and information sharing.	Samoa	ILO
2.2.3. Citizens' reporting mechanism and data analysis tool developed and piloted that use mobile phone technology to report cases of unavailability of and delays in the delivery of public services and programmes, of their uneven quality.	All 4 PICTs	UNDP
2.2.4. Train public servants to assess eligibility and address claims for redress.	All 4 PICTs	UNDP

Output 2.3 - Evidence-based financial management of Social Protection systems.

2.3.1. Training for Ministries of Finance, Women's Affairs and Social Services in evidence-based budgeting for SP (initial training and refresher training)	All 4 PICTs	UNDP
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3 - Financial inclusion in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau enables low transaction cost transfers of Social Protection benefits low transaction cost transfers of Social Protection benefits.

<u>3.1: Robust payment systems through the banking system designed and costed.</u>		
3.1.1. Review of Accessibility of the Payment System by PWD.	All 4 PICTs	UNESCO
3.1.2. Gap analysis of current mobile banking system (Samoa only).	Samoa	UNDP
3.1.3. Design and testing of a universal mobile banking system for payment of social benefits (Samoa only).	Samoa	UNDP
3.1.4. Technical assistance on reducing the cost of remittance transfers including through the use of fintech.	Samoa	UNESCAP
<u>4 - Increased resilience as disability, gender, youth, and climate related contingencies are being mainstreamed.</u>		
<u>4.1: Labour market services designed and scalable in Samoa to improve working age populations' access to jobs and incomes – with specific attention to ensuring access for women, persons living with disability, and young people.</u>		
4.1.1. Impact studies of SP on social cohesion	All 4 PICTs	UNICEF
4.1.2. TA and policy guide on enhancing the role of informal systems for social inclusion and protection.	Samoa	UNESCAP
4.1.3. TA and policy guide on enhancing the contribution of trade to poverty alleviation and social inclusion.	Samoa	UNESCAP
4.1.4. Using the Labour Market Survey and School to Work Just Transition Programme to modify the existing Job Seekers Registries and able to inter-link with existing employment services available in Samoa to enable the ONE-STOP access by the public of jobs available as well as skills required.	Samoa	ILO
4.1.5. Review the current Samoa National Employment Policy to develop the new Employment policy base on the Labour Market Information available and the analysis provided for Samoa LMS and SNAP 2019.	Samoa	ILO
4.1.6. To conduct 2 Internship Programmes with SCCI from the list on the youth job seekers on the E-platform with SNYC.	Samoa	ILO/UNDP
4.1.7. Partnership with SBC (Samoa Business Centre) Hub to target vulnerable women in farming business to train them on SYB model.	Samoa	ILO
4.1.8. Designing innovative SP policies to protect workers and vulnerable groups in the context of more ambitious climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. Such measures would promote social justice as out indispensable dimension of ambitious climate action.	Samoa	ILO
<u>4.2: Disaster-risk informed SP benefits and services integrated in SP floor.</u>		
4.2.1. Awareness-raising about employment of PWD in the private sector.	All 4 PICTs	UNESCO
4.2.2. Technical support for horizontal and vertical scalability and readiness for use in humanitarian response.	All 4 PICTs	UNICEF
4.2.3. TA and policy guide on enhancing synergies between disaster resilience and investment in SP.	Samoa	UNESCAP

4. SP-JP Results Framework

Result / Indicators	Baseline	2020 Target	2021 Target	Means of Verification	Responsible partner
JP OUTCOME 1- Universal, inclusive & equitable Social Protection systems Leave No One Behind Relevant UNPS Outcomes #2, #3, #4, #5; Relevant SDG Targets (#1.3, #2.1, #4.2, #5.4, #8.5, #10.4, #13.1, #17.1)					
Outcome Indicator 1- Poverty rates in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau declined as a result of inclusive Social Protection Systems			1%	HIES 2021	SBS
Output 1.1 [Samoa]- Data-informed, nationally consulted, comprehensive, and equitable social protection floors designed and costed (policy, law, budget) to complement ongoing programmes and reduce poverty and vulnerability to socio-economic and climate-related risks					
Indicator 1.1.1 Number of individuals consulted in the design of the Social Protection floor disaggregated by sex	0	1,000	5,000	Online platform access and feedback	MWCSO
Indicator 1.1.2 Number of civil society organizations participating in the design and testing of the SP floor components	0	10	20	Participation tracking and written feedback provided	MWCSO MESC
Indicator 1.1.3 Poverty and vulnerability mapping using data innovation has been completed to inform social protection floor budgeting	0	50%	100%	HIES, DHS-MICS data, Electricity consumption, Mobile phone payments, Remittance records	UN Global Pulse, MCIT, SBS, Digicel, Bluesky
Output 1.2 [Samoa]– Multi-year social protection floor implementation plan adopted and budgeted [focusing on new components of the SP system while existing ones will be improved]					
Indicator 1.2.1 Number of Government and Parliament members trained in planning and budgeting, including Gender-based budgeting for the operationalization of the SP floor disaggregated by sex	0	100	200	Training certificates issued / participation tracking	Gov Parliament/ Finance Ministries
Indicator 1.2.2 Number of partnerships including public-private partnerships established for the operationalization of the SP floor	0	2	4	MoA/MoU signed	
Indicator 1.2.3 Number of social workers trained disaggregated by sex	0	50	100	MWCSO administrative data	MWCSO, CSOs, CBOs
Output 1.3 [Samoa]– Social Protection Pilot programmes implemented with the objective of national scale-up.					
Indicator 1.3.1- Number of school age children benefiting from school feeding (disaggregated by sex)	0	500	1,000	MESC administrative data	MESC, MWCSO
Indicator 1.3.2- Number of certified civil society organizations providing social services# to people in need	0	10	20	National University of Samoa certification process	NUS, SUNGO
Output 1.4 [Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau]- Existing Social Protection Floors for Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau fully reviewed to strengthen inclusiveness, equity, and financial sustainability of contributive and non-contributive schemes					
Indicator 1.4.1 Reduction in fiscal deficit of pension funds	0	10%	20%	Public financial reports / Budget execution reports to Parliaments	MOF

Indicator 1.4.2 Increase in number of persons living with disabilities who have access to benefits disaggregated by sex and disability	0	10%	30%	MWCSD administrative data	MWCSD, NOLA
Indicator 1.4.3 Increase in number of entitled individuals who gain access to other non-contributive schemes disaggregated by sex	0	10%	30%	MWCSD administrative data	MWCSD, MOF

JP OUTCOME 2: Social Protection floors are efficiently and effectively administered (financial management, institutional framework and capacity, evidence-based planning drawing on robust information management systems) Relevant UNPS Outcomes #5; Relevant SDG Targets (#1.3, #17.1)					
Outcome Indicator 2- Administrative cost associated with a unit of SP spending will decline			5%	MOF budget analysis	MOF, Parliament budget committees
Output 2.1- Digital data systems in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau will be strengthened to support registration and robust administration of the Social Protection floor and programmes					
Indicator 2.1.1 Number of village registration points established for the implementation of the SP floor	0	100	200	MWCSD monitoring of community development sector plans	MWCSD
Output 2.2- Integrated administrative systems such as registries and redress mechanisms are strengthened, in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau					
Indicator 2.2.1 Number of public servants trained to assess eligibility and address claims for redress who received certification, disaggregated by sex	0	100	200	MWCSD & JP monitoring	MWCSD, SQA
Output 2.3 - Evidence-based financial management of SP systems in place					
Indicator 2.3.1 Proportion of unfunded SP benefits	-	40%	10%	MWCSD data	MWCSD
OUTCOME 3: Financial inclusion in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau enables low transaction cost transfers of Social Protection benefits Relevant UNPS Outcomes #3, #5; Relevant SDG Targets (#1.3, #5.4, #8.5, #10.4, #13.1, #17.1)					
Outcome Indicator 3: Non-bank transfer of SP benefits will decline			5%	Central Bank of Samoa oversight reports	MOF, CBS
Output 3.1- Robust payment systems through the banking system designed and costed					
Indicator 3.1.1. Proportion of non-public employees' beneficiary of SP with a bank account disaggregated by sex	0	30%	50%	Central Bank of Samoa reports	MWCSD
Indicator 3.1.2. Number of people with disabilities who have access to mobile banking disaggregated by sex	0	100	300	Central bank of Samoa reports	MWCSD
OUTCOME 4- Increased resilience as disability, gender, youth, and climate related contingencies are being mainstreamed Relevant UNPS Outcomes #1, #2, #3, #4, #5; Relevant SDG Targets (#1.3, #2.1, #4.2, #5.4, #8.5, #10.4, #13.1, #17.1)					
Outcome Indicator 4-Direct economic loss attributed to disasters in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) [SDG indicator 1.5.2]			5%	MOF reports	NDMO, MOF, MNRE
Output 4.1 [Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau] - Labour market services designed and scalable in Samoa to improve working age populations' access to jobs and incomes with specific focus on ensuring access for persons living with disabilities, women, and young people					
Indicator 4.1.1 Proportion of job seekers registered in the job mediation system (disaggregated by sex, disability, and age group)	0	10%	30%	MCIL data	MCIL
Indicator 4.1.2 Percentage of job seeking women enrolled in job mediation and vocational training services	0	10%	30%	MCIL data	MCIL, MESC

Output 4.2 [Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau] - Disaster-risk informed SP benefits and services integrated in SP floor					
Indicator 4.2.1 Proportion of SP budget allocated for climate related contingencies	0	10%	20%	MOF Budget	MOF, Parliament Budget Committee

5. [Assessment of the SP-JP contribution to disability inclusion](#)

As persons with disabilities are among the most vulnerable and marginalized groups across countries and considering the critical role that social protection can play in supporting their inclusion, most joint programs had identified them as direct or indirect beneficiaries.

In line with the Leaving No One Behind principle and the obligations stemming from the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, even programs that do not target directly persons with disabilities should ensure that persons with disabilities within targeted population can access the program without discrimination. The evaluation will therefore assess to what extent:

Joint programme design, implementation, and monitoring have been inclusive of persons with disabilities (accessibility, non-discrimination, participation of organizations of persons with disabilities, data disaggregation)

Joint programme effectively contributed to the socio-economic inclusion of persons with disabilities by providing income security, coverage of health care, and disability-related costs⁵² across the life cycle.

Guiding questions on Persons with Disabilities - to be included in the text of the ToR or its annex:

To what extent did the program target persons with disabilities? ○ Not specifically targeted

One of the groups of direct beneficiaries targeted ○ Main target group for the program

To what extent did the design and implementation of activities of the joint program supported include disability-related accessibility and non-discrimination requirement?

No requirements ○ General reference ○ Specific requirements

To what extent have persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities, been consulted through their representative organizations?

Not invited ○ Invited

Specific outreach

To what extent did support to data collection and analysis, registries, and information system feature disability?

No reference to disability

Disability included via Washington group short set or similar but no analysis ○ Disability included via Washington group short set or similar

Part of general analysis

with specific analysis

To which extent did the program contribute to support inclusion of persons with disabilities via: ○

Ensuring basic income security

Coverage of health care costs, including rehabilitation and assistive devices ○ Coverage of disability-related costs, including community support services

Facilitate access to inclusive early childhood development, education, and work/livelihood

⁵² [Joint statement on inclusive social protection system for full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities](#)

Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

Assumption to Be assessed	Judgement /Indicators	Criteria	Data Source/Stakeholders	Data Collection Method
Relevance and Coherence EQ 1 To what extent is the JP design relevant and coherent? 1.3. To what extent was the scope and estimation of required resources of the JP realistic and relevant to the needs and priorities of the four PICTs? To what extend does this way of designing a JP lend to its efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and support UN Reform? 1.4. To what extent did the design of the JP ensured synergies between the different activities implemented by the PUNOs? What value added has been generated through these synergies? 1.5. To what extent was the design of the intervention relevant to the wider context (including national policies and work carried out by other actors)? 1.4 To what extent was the JP in line with the needs and priorities of the most vulnerable groups such as people living with disabilities, women, and children?				
The design of the JP is well suited to the needs and priorities of the four PICTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Evidence of consultation with national governments- Degree of alignment with national policies in the four PICTs- Extent to which the design considered accountability and support UN reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Governments in the four PICTs• PUNO Teams• Civil Society Organisations• Samoa State owned enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Document Review• KIIs	
The design of the JP ensured on increasing synergies between PUNOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Evidence of clear roles and responsibilities amongst the PUNOs- Evidence of systematic coordination meetings and information sharing- Evidence of complementarity of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Governments in the four PICTs• PUNO Teams• Samoa State owned enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Document Review• KIIs	
JP Capitalised on efforts made on social protection by other actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Degree of synergies with other actors- Absence of duplication with other actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Governments• PUNO Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Document review• KIIs	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other UN agencies or actors 	
JP consulted wide range of stakeholders in the design to ensure the reflection of the priorities of the most vulnerable are well reflected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of consultation with wide range of stakeholders - Evidence of reflection of needs in project document and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PUNO Teams • Civil Society organisations (Women-led organisations; Organisations of PwDs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document Review • KIIs

Effectiveness

EQ 2: How effective was the implementation modalities of the JP and what has been the results of the JP?

- 2.1 To what extent were the expected outcomes and three main expected transformative results of the JP accomplished or are likely to be accomplished?
- 2.2 What major factors influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the outcomes and expected transformative results?
- 2.3 To what extent is the achievement of the outcomes and expected transformative results leading to meeting of JP goal and further objectives related to acceleration of SDGs and contributing to the UN Reform?
- 2.4 To what extent were the PUNOs able to adapt the implementation of the JP to the COVID-19 context?
- 2.5 What were the implementation modalities of the JP? How have the synergies between the PUNOs effective in increasing the implementation effectiveness?

The JP achieved all its intended results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of achievement against indicators - Outputs of the different activities 	PUNO Teams	JP Progress Reports JP output products KIIs
The implementation modality was well suited to the context (including adaptations during COVID)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of presence of risk analysis - Evidence of response to risks and adaptations by the JP 	PUNO Teams	Document Review KIIs
The JP led to accelerating the achievement of the SDGs in the four PICTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of contribution to the SDGs - Extent of contribution to UN reform 	PUNO Teams	Document review KIIs
Synergies amongst PUNOs increased the effectiveness of the implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of coordination amongst PUNOs - Evidence of coordinated workplans and approaches 	PUNO Teams Governments Samoa State owned enterprises	KIIs

Efficiency

EQ3 – How efficient was the partnership of the PUNOs in view of implementing the JP and leveraging further resources? 3.1 Which factors facilitated or hindered the collaboration and efficiency of the JP? 3.2 The extent to which the JP served as a link between other development efforts implemented by the PUNOs and the social protection systems in the four PICTs? 3.3 To what extent were funds deployed against plan by activity and PUNO in timely and effective manner?			
JP was implemented in an efficient manner	- Evidence of joint annual workplans - Evidence of joint activities between PUNOs	PUNO Teams	Document Review KIIs
Partnership between PUNOs increased efficiency of implementation	- Evidence of joint annual workplans - Evidence of joint activities between PUNOs - Evidence of joint implementation modalities and coordination	PUNO Teams	Document Review KIIs
Partnership between PUNOs led to increase in leveraging resources for achieving results	- Evidence of synergies between JP and other projects/programmes implemented by each PUNO	PUNO Teams	Document Review KIIs
Funds were disbursed in a timely manner leading to efficient implementation of JP	- Evidence of timely disbursement of funds -Evidence of timely implementation of work plans.	PUNO Teams	Document Review KIIs
Impact EQ 4: What are the long-term changes that could be attributed to the JP? Where could they be observed? 4.1 To what extent has the JP contributed to improving the situation of vulnerable groups identified in the programme document and particularly that of people living with disabilities, women, and children? 4.2 What macro level changes have been induced by the programme within the social protection systems of the four PICTs? 4.3 What are the longer-term effects of the JP on the four PICTs and UNCT work on social protection? 4.4 what are the positive/negative; intended/unintended impact/outcome of the JP?			
JP has long term effects in PwDs, women and other vulnerable groups	- Evidence of positive effects on PwDs - Evidence of positive effects on women - Evidence of positive effects on other vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Society Organisations • Government • Samoa State Owned Enterprises 	KIIs

JP had a positive effect on the social protection systems in the four PICTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of change in government systems - Evidence of change in state owned enterprise systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Organisations • Government • Samoa State Owned Enterprises 	KIIs
JP had long term effects on the work of UNCT on social protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of effects on other UNCT members - Evidence of effects on other social protection activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Organisations • UNCT members • PUNO Teams 	KIIs

Sustainability

EQ5 – To what extent are the benefits of the JP sustainable?

- 5.1 To what extent is it likely that the benefits of the JP at the national level will continue after its implementation ceases?
- 5.2 To what extent is there government buy-in in the interventions that contributes to their sustainability?
- 5.3 To what extent are the synergies and collaboration created through the JP between the PUNOs likely to persist after its completion?
- 5.4 to what extent the governments of the four PICTs have allocated resources for the continuation of the activities/benefits of the JP?

Governments are committed to the implementation of the JP outputs (including the allocation of resources)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of after-action plans by government - Evidence and rate of budget allocations by government - Evidence of follow-up actions/plans by PUNOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PUNO teams • Government • State owned enterprises 	KIIs
JP outputs are costed and well suited to the context in the four PICTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of government endorsement of JP output products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PUNO teams • Government • State owned enterprises 	KIIs
PUNOs coordination will continue after the JP on other social protection activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of continued coordination/collaboration amongst PUNOs 	PUNO Teams	KIIs

People with Disabilities, Gender, and Inclusion

EQ6 – To what extent did the JP take into account and contribute to social inclusion, equity, gender and equality?

- 6.1 To what extent was the JP design, implementation and monitoring sensitive to gender, equity, inclusion of persons with disabilities and social inclusion?

6.2 To what extent have persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities, been consulted through their representative organizations?			
6.3 What are the concrete results of the JP in terms of gender equality, women's empowerment, equity, inclusion of persons with disabilities and social inclusion?			
JP design ensured adequate integration of cross cutting themes of inclusion, gender, and equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of consideration of inclusion and other cross cutting themes in JP design - Evidence of gender analysis conducted during design of the JP 	PUNO Teams	Document review KIIs
JP consulted different organisations during the design and implementation to ensure inclusion and gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of consultation with different civil society organisations and women groups, and PwDs groups during design and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Society organisations • Government • PUNO teams 	KIIs
JP results clearly ensures adequate focus on women empowerment and human rights (including inclusion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of concrete results affecting women - evidence of concrete results affecting PwDs - evidence of inclusive policies adopted by government and other entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Society organisations • Government • PUNO teams 	KIIs

KII Guide – PUNO Teams

Relevance and Coherence

EQ 1 To what extent is the JP design relevant and coherent?

1. How was the JP designed? What consultations were conducted? How were the findings of these consultations reflected in the design?
2. Why was this JP relevant to the vision and strategic approach of your organisation?
3. To what extent was this JP relevant to the four PICTs?
4. How did the design ensure complementarity with other projects/programmes implemented by your organisation?
5. How were synergies ensured with other PUNOS? Why was this important? What would you say are the outcomes of these synergies? How could they have been strengthened?
6. To what extent was the design relevant to the needs and priorities of vulnerable groups identified during the design?
7. How is the design of the JP aligned/complementing the work of other actors on social protection in the four PICTs?

Effectiveness

EQ 2: How effective was the implementation modalities of the JP and what has been the results of the JP?

1. What was achieved during the life of the JP?
2. What were the implementation mechanisms and modalities? How did synergies amongst the PUNOs conducive to effectiveness of implementation?
3. How did the JP adapt to changing conditions including COVID? (probe: were risk analysis conducted? Were they updated?)
4. How did the JP contribute to achieving the SDGs, UN reform? More synergy between UNCTs?
5. What would you say have been the major factors influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the outcomes and expected transformative results?

Efficiency

EQ3 – How efficient was the partnership of the PUNOs in view of implementing the JP and leveraging further resources?

1. To what extent was the JP implemented in an efficient manner? How can this be observed? (probe: coordination between PUNOs, leveraging of additional resources, increased collaboration...etc.)
2. How did the synergy between the PUNOs affect efficiency? How can this be observed? (probe: joint work plans, joint meetings; joint activities; joint implementation modalities...etc)
3. How has other organisations programmes contributed to the efficiency of the JP and visa versa (how did the JP affect other programmes implemented by the PUNO)
4. Were funds disbursed efficiently and in a timely manner? If not, how has this affected the workplans and how was this compensated?

Impact

EQ 4: What are the long-term changes that could be attributed to the JP? Where could they be observed?

1. How has the JP contributed to improving the situation of vulnerable groups identified in the programme document and particularly that of people living with disabilities, women, and children?
2. What are the macro level changes that were introduced as a result of the JP within the social protection systems of the four PICTs?
3. What are the longer-term effects of the JP on the four PICTs and UNCT work on social protection?
4. What are the positive/negative; intended/unintended impact/outcome of the JP?

Sustainability

EQ5 – To what extent are the benefits of the JP sustainable?

1. What is likely to continue at the national level will continue after its implementation ceases?
2. To what extent is there government buy-in in the interventions that contributes to their sustainability? Have they allocated any budget for this?
3. To what extent are the synergies and collaboration created through the JP between the PUNOs likely to persist after its completion? Are there plans for further activities in the future?

People with Disabilities, Gender, and Inclusion

EQ6 – To what extent did the JP take into account and contribute to social inclusion, equity, gender and equality?

1. To what extent was the JP design, implementation and monitoring sensitive to gender, equity, inclusion of persons with disabilities and social inclusion?
2. To what extent have persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities, been consulted through their representative organizations?
3. What are the concrete results of the JP in terms of gender equality, women's empowerment, equity, inclusion of persons with disabilities and social inclusion?

KII Guide – National Governments and State Owned Enterprises

Relevance and Coherence

EQ 1 To what extent is the JP design relevant and coherent?

1. Why was this JP relevant to the vision and strategic approach of your country/territory?
2. What were the consultations that occurred during the design of this JP? Do you feel that the views expressed during consultations were reflected in the actual activities that were implemented? How?
3. Are there other social protection projects implemented in the country and consultation with you? How does this JP complement these efforts?
4. As you know this JP is implemented by several UN agencies, were you engaged with all of them, some of them? Did you feel that there was adequate synergies and coordination amongst them? Why was this important? How could they have been strengthened?
5. To what extent was the design relevant to the needs and priorities of vulnerable groups in the country?

Effectiveness

EQ 2: How effective was the implementation modalities of the JP and what has been the results of the JP?

1. What would you say has been achieved during the life of the JP?
2. How did the JP adapt to changing conditions including COVID?
3. What would you say have been the major factors influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the outcomes and expected transformative results?

Impact

EQ 4: What are the long-term changes that could be attributed to the JP? Where could they be observed?

1. How has the JP contributed to improving the situation of vulnerable groups and particularly that of people living with disabilities, women, and children?
2. What are the changes that were introduced as a result of the JP within the social protection systems?
3. What are the positive/negative; intended/unintended impact/outcome of the JP?

Sustainability

EQ5 – To what extent are the benefits of the JP sustainable?

1. What is likely to continue at the national level will continue after its implementation ceases?
2. To what extent do you feel that there is enough ownership at your level of the results of this JP? Has there been any budget allocation to ensure sustainability?
3. What do you feel that the UN agencies could have done to strengthen the sustainability of the activities?
4. Are there future plans for increasing work on social protection?

People with Disabilities, Gender, and Inclusion

EQ6 – To what extent did the JP take into account and contribute to social inclusion, equity, gender and equality?

4. To what extent was the JP design, implementation and monitoring sensitive to gender, equity, inclusion of persons with disabilities and social inclusion?
5. To what extent have persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities, been consulted through their representative organizations?
6. What are the concrete results of the JP in terms of gender equality, women's empowerment, equity, inclusion of persons with disabilities and social inclusion?

KII Guide – Civil Society Organisations

Relevance and Coherence

EQ 1 To what extent is the JP design relevant and coherent?

1. What were the consultations that occurred during the design of this JP? Do you feel that the views expressed during consultations were reflected in the actual activities that were implemented? How?
2. Why was this project relevant/important to your organisation/the target group you work with?
3. Are there other social protection projects implemented in the country and consultation with you? How does this JP complement these efforts?
4. As you know this JP is implemented by several UN agencies, were you engaged with all of them, some of them? Did you feel that there was adequate synergies and coordination amongst them? Why was this important? How could they have been strengthened?

5. To what extent was the design relevant to the needs and priorities of vulnerable groups in the country?

Effectiveness

EQ 2: How effective was the implementation modalities of the JP and what has been the results of the JP?

1. What would you say has been achieved during the life of the JP?
2. How did the JP adapt to changing conditions including COVID?
3. What would you say have been the major factors influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the outcomes and expected transformative results?

Impact

EQ 4: What are the long-term changes that could be attributed to the JP? Where could they be observed?

1. How has the JP contributed to improving the situation of vulnerable groups and particularly that of people living with disabilities, women, and children?
2. What are the changes that were introduced as a result of the JP within the social protection systems?
3. what are the positive/negative; intended/unintended impact/outcome of the JP?

Sustainability

EQ5 – To what extent are the benefits of the JP sustainable?

1. what is likely to continue at the national level will continue after its implementation ceases?
2. What do you feel that the UN agencies and/or government could have done to strengthen the sustainability of the activities?
3. Do you have future plans for increasing work on social protection?

People with Disabilities, Gender, and Inclusion

EQ6 – To what extent did the JP take into account and contribute to social inclusion, equity, gender and equality?

1. To what extent was the JP design, implementation and monitoring sensitive to gender, equity, inclusion of persons with disabilities and social inclusion?
2. To what extent have persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities, been consulted through their representative organizations?
3. What are the concrete results of the JP in terms of gender equality, women's empowerment, equity, inclusion of persons with disabilities and social inclusion?

Annex 4: Stakeholders List

PUNOS		
UNDP	Quandolita Reid-Enari	Project Coordinator Social Protection - quandolita.reid-enari@undp.org
	Potoae Roberts Aiafi	Social Protection Specialist - potoae.roberts.aiafi@undp.org
UNICEF	Ronesh Prasad	Social Policy Specialist roprasad@unicef.org
ESCAP	Nobuko Kujiura	Sustainable Development Sustainable Development Offi kajiura.unescap@un.org
ILO	Laufiso Tomasi Peni	The National Coordinator of the International Labour Organization in Samoa peni@ilo.org
UNESCO	Papalii Peone Fuimaono	Chief Executive Officer Ministry of Education peone.fuimaono@gmail.com

SAMOA

Government:

MINISTRY	CONTACT PERSONNEL	CONTACT
Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labour	Albert Meredith ACEO	albert.meredith@mcil.gov.ws
Samoa Bureau of Statistics	Papalii Benjamin Sila ACEO	benjamin.sila@sbs.gov.ws

State-Owned Enterprises (SOE)

MINISTRY	CONTACT PERSONNEL	CONTACT
Samoa National Provident Fund	Pauli Prince Suhren CEO	prince@npf.ws
	Sheena Lesa	sheena@npf.ws

	Chief Information Technology Officer	
Samoa Accident Compensation Corporation	Fagalima Tuatagaloa	fagalima.tuatagaloa@acc.gov.ws

Civil Society

MINISTRY	CONTACT PERSONNEL	CONTACT
Samoa National Tripartite Forum	GatoloaiFaana Tilianamua Afamasaga	tiliafamasaga@gmail.com
Nuanua-o-le-Alofa (NOLA)	Mataafa Faatino Utumapu	manager.nola@nola.org.ws tino.mutumapu@gmail.com
SUNGO	Fuimaono Vaitolo Ofoia	ceo@sungo.ws

COOK ISLANDS

Government:

MINISTRY	CONTACT PERSONNEL	CONTACT
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Anne Herman Secretary, INTAFF	anne.herman@cookislands.gov.ck intaff@cookislands.gov.ck
	Elizabeth Hosking (Deputy Director for Labour, INTAFF)	
	Claudine Henry-Anguna Director Business Development	claudine.henry-anguna@cookislands.gov.ck
	Mereina Herman Coordinator Community Services	mereina.herman@cookislands.gov.ck
	Angelina Tuara Director Social Policy and Services	angela.charlie@cookislands.gov.ck
	Pauline Rangi National Disability Coordinator, INTAFF	pauline.rangi@cookislands.gov.ck
	Grace Chynoweth Director Welfare Services, INTAFF	grace.chynoweth@cookislands.gov.ck helina.glassie@cookislands.gov.ck
	Heleina Raukete (Manager for Social Policy and Services)	

NIUE

Government:

MINISTRY	CONTACT PERSONNEL	CONTACT
Ministry of Social Services	Gaylene Tasmania Director General MoSS	gaylene.tasmania@mail.gov.nu
	Charlene Tukiuha Divisional Head, Community Services	charlene.tukiuha@mail.gov.nu
Ministry of Education	Birtha Togahai Director	Birtha.Togahai@mail.gov.nu

Civil Society

MINISTRY	CONTACT PERSONNEL	CONTACT
NIUANGO	Angela Tuhipa Vice President NTAA	angela.tuhipa@mail.gov.nu

TOKELAU

Government:

MINISTRY	CONTACT PERSONNEL	CONTACT
National Office of the Council for the Ongoing Government of Tokelau	Ake Puka-Mauga Secretary National Office of the Council for the Ongoing Government of Tokelau	ake.puka-mauga@tokelau.org.nz

Annex 5: Workplan

Phase	Activities	Timeframe	Responsible Person	Comments/support needed
Inception Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial review of background documents. Remote kick-off session with UNDP, RCO and the Evaluation Team Leader. Finalisation of the EQs and methodology, review matrix, stakeholders map, data collection tools and workplan. Preparation of inception report. Submission of the final inception report with revisions. 	23 rd Feb-13 th March 2023	Evaluation Manager Evaluation Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Inception Report and feedback Selection of Local evaluation Experts
Field Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-depth analysis of relevant documents and other secondary sources. Data collection through different tools designed using KIIs and analysis testing the assumptions. 	13 th – 24 th March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation Team Leader Local Evaluation Experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of documents as needed Informing PUNOs and Local Stakeholders Facilitating meetings when/where necessary Organising remote meeting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation TL will conduct all meetings with PUNOs ▪ Local Evaluation Experts will conduct meetings with government and CSOs ▪ Formulation of preliminary responses to each EQs, with analysis of their validity and limitations. ▪ Remote presentation of the preliminary findings to UNDP and RCO. 			
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis and synthesis of the evidence and data collected during the previous phases. ▪ Preparation of the draft final report, and presentation of findings and recommendations to UNDP and RCO ▪ Producing the final evaluation report, addressing comments. ▪ Supporting the validation and 	24 th – 30 th March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation Team Leader • Evaluation Manager 	

	<p>learning workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparing content of video and 2-pager brief. 			
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Annex 6: Documents consulted.

Development and Delivery of Social Protection Training – Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. Scoping and Needs Assessment Report. 23 September 2022.

Gap Analysis of the Mobile Banking Systems in Samoa Final Report UNDP Country Office Samoa Talha Leghari August 2022

Joint Programme Document - RCO Samoa, Niue, Cook Islands, Tokelau -

Joint SDG Fund Joint Programme Annual Progress Report 2020

Joint SDG Fund Joint Programme Annual Progress Report 2021

Joint SDG Fund Joint Programme Final Narrative Report 2022

Joint Programme 6-month progress update SP-LNOB JPs Period: From the launch of JP until 30 June 2022