



# Joint Programme 2021 Annual Progress Report

## SDG Financing Portfolio - Component 1

### Cover page

**UNCT/MCO:** Samoa

**Reporting Period:** 1 January - 31 December 2021

**JP title:** Sustainable Financing for the 2030 Agenda Through Viable INFF in Cook Islands, Niue and Samoa

**PUNOs:** UNDP, UNESCAP, UN-Women

**Government partner:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

**Target SDGs:** SDGs 1, 5, 8, 9, 10, 17

**Gender Marker:** 2

**Approved budget:** USD 979,462

**Co-funding:** USD NA

**Total Disbursement by 2021:** USD 489,445

**Total estimated expenditures:** USD 146,685.5 (est. Delivery rate: 30%)

**Total estimated commitments** (including expenditures): USD 292,225.5 (est. Committed rate: 59.7%)

**RCO focal point name:** Elisapeta Kerslake

**RCO focal point email:** [elisapeta.eteuatikerslake@un.org](mailto:elisapeta.eteuatikerslake@un.org)

### Executive Summary

2021 was a very challenging year for the Joint Programme, with several unanticipated challenges and delays encountered during implementation; Nevertheless, the JP managed to achieve some notable achievements in the course of the year. Firstly, the completion of the Inception Workshops for Samoa in Q3 and Cook Islands in Q4 was a success, marking the start of JP activities for both Countries. Subsequently, under Output 1.1, the JP undertook the DFA Review for Samoa and the development of the DFA in the Cook Islands. By December, both countries completed the INFF Block Analysis and Financing Analysis stage of the DFA process, with the remaining stages to be completed in Q1 of 2022. Under Output 1.2, the JP have successfully mobilized the required technical consultant to undertake the Gender Responsive Analysis of the Samoa National Budget however, due to the delay in the development of the national budget for the current financial year, this work will now focus on analyzing the previous financial year budget of 2019/2020. The work plan and deliverables have been shared with Government for final approval. Completion is set for early Q2. Similarly, work started on cost priority initiatives in the Samoa Tourism Sector Plan, given the significant COVID-19 impacts and need to support national recovery efforts. This included the feasibility assessment and costing the establishment of an innovative Asset Protection Fund to support tourism

operators in times of a health pandemic (COV-19) and post-natural disasters, with financing streams from government and development partners. To adopt a common approach to project planning, programming, financing and implementation, capacity building has been programmed with the Government of Samoa Ministry of Finance, to include project planning and programming, and cost-benefit analysis for public investment projects. Lastly, in fostering public-private investment and co-financing in Samoa, work has commenced on a National Strategy on Private Sector Development, Investment and Co-financing through resource loan arrangements from UNDP Regional Office and the country office internal TRAC resources for 2021. In collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, ESCAP has almost completed a feasibility study for a debt for climate swap financing instrument, which will be considered at a Pacific ministerial level debt conference in April 2022. A dedicated session on Leveraging Climate and Disaster Risk Financing, was convened as part of the Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, co-hosted by the Government of Fiji and ESCAP in November 2021, which deliberated on draft findings of the feasibility study.

## Annual Progress

### Overall JP self-assessment of 2021 progress:

Not-satisfactory (majority of expected results not yet achieved; over 3 months delay in implementation)

**Comments on self-assessment:** The implementation progress of the JP has been significantly delayed, with most of the activities that were initially planned for Year 1 deferred/reprogrammed to Year 2. Still, many challenges and persisting issues continue to hinder progress which led to further deferrals of activities and a subsequent request for a no-cost extension from June 2022 to December 2022. From July 2020, COVID19 restrictions across the 3 countries were at their peak, therefore hampering implementation from the beginning of the project. 2021 started off no different with Samoa's no mission period and preparations for the General Elections in April, which saw normal Government operations at a standstill from February to June. Additional delays were encountered because of the political stalemate and transitioning in of the new Government. With the new government came major shifts in national priorities and delayed the approval of the national budget and the finalization of the SDS which are key documentation requirements of the JP.

### Overall progress and key developments to date (3 key JP milestones)

The overall progress of the JP for 2021, although delayed has attained some results. The completion of the Inception workshops for Samoa and Cook Islands marked the commencement of activities in both countries. At the end of 2021, both Samoa and Cook Islands are a step closer to completing their DFAs and a first for the Cook Islands. The completion dates are set for Q1, 2022. Additionally, UNWOMEN under Output 1.2 has recruited technical expertise to undertake the Gender Responsive Analysis of the Samoa National Budget and considering the delay in the development of the national budget for the current financial year, this work will focus on analyzing the previous financial year budget, 2019/2020. Similarly, under output 1.2, ESCAP has progressed with work on cost priority initiatives in the Samoa Tourism Sector Plan, including feasibility assessment and costing for establishing an innovative Asset Protection Fund to support tourism operators during the pandemic and post-natural disaster and developing a costed cruise tourism strategy. In partnership with Samoa Ministry of Finance, project planning and programming, and cost-benefit analysis for public investment projects is currently underway. Finally, under Output 1.3, ESCAP has commenced work on a regional feasibility study on innovative debt for climate swap instruments. Furthermore, in fostering public-private investment and co-financing in Samoa, UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labor has started the development of a National Strategy on Private Sector Development, Investment and Co-financing.

**Changes made to JP:** As per the requirements for the no-cost extension, changes were only made to approved timelines in the workplan across all outputs. Some of the activities planned for implementation in Year 1 and Year 2 (Q1 and Q2) are now also implemented in 2022 Q3, Q4.

**Main Challenges:** We acknowledge the delivery status of the JP remains significantly low; however, delays are due to factors outside of the PUNOs control. COVID 19 continues to impact the implementation of the programme since

the beginning (July 2020), starting with nationwide State of Emergency (SOE) restrictions put in place before the JP start date. The said has diverted the focus and priorities of the three Governments in maintaining their individual SOE orders and accelerating COVID preparedness and prevention plans. Whilst there have been some flexibility or relaxation on some of the restrictions specifically on borders in the Cook Islands and Samoa by Q4, 2021, the attention on JP implementation continued to decrease as Governments focused on ensuring proper activation of precautionary and preparedness plans. Moreover, the political situation in Samoa continued to greatly impact the delivery of the JP starting with the General election in April 2021, followed by the transitioning of the new Government. This change led to the shift in government priorities, delays in the adoption of the new Fiscal budget, and the revision of the already drafted National Development Strategy under the previous Government. As of late December, these are yet to be finalized. These delays have resulted in a capacity strain with key Ministries due to the persisting institutional and operational challenges. In response, the PUNOs devised an acceleration plan and have continuously engaged with the three Governments to discuss and revise work plans for activities, budgets, and timelines. As part of the acceleration efforts, UNDP had loaned resources from its Regional Office (USD33,000) and Country Office TRAC Resources (USD23,400), to support the implementation of activities programmed for Year 2 given the disbursement requirements of the second tranche. The reimbursement of the loans was under the understanding that the SDG Financing resources allocated for UNDP would be received latest early Q4, 2021. While the PUNOs were hopeful that operational processes in the Government of Samoa would return to business as usual with the transition of the new Government, a decision was jointly made to request for a no-cost extension (from July 2022 to December 2022) and an exceptional transfer request for the second tranche to allow sufficient time and enable the timely completion of JP activities by the PUNOs. Both requests were approved by the Operational Steering Committee in early January 2022.

## Updates on SDG financing framework

Inception phase	Assessment Diagnostics	Financing Strategy	Monitoring Review	Governance Coordination
Advancing (50-99%)	Emerging (1-49%)	Planned (0%)	Planned (0%)	Emerging (1-49%)

## Descriptions on progress by INFF building blocks

**Inception Phase:** The JP at the end of 2021, has only managed to instigate the review phase for the DFA Samoa and the development of the first DFA for the Cook Islands. The development of the DFA for the Government of Niue is planned for early February 2022 as per the directive from the government. The review process for Samoa and the development progress for the Cook Islands have only managed to reach the INFF Block Analysis and Financing Flow Analysis stages due to the delays encountered as previously mentioned. The remaining part of the process that will identify the recommendations and finalize the INFF roadmaps with the consequent adoption by the National Governments are planned for Q1, 2022.

**Assessment & Diagnostics:** As indicated in the above narrative, the JP at this point has only managed to instigate the review process for the DFA for Samoa and the development of the DFA for the Cook Islands. Both processes are in their early stages with the completion of the INFF Block Analysis & Financial Analysis, thus no Financing Strategies have been developed and adopted. Under Output 1.2 ongoing collaboration with the Tourism Sector stakeholders to undertake the costing of specific priority activities in the Samoa Tourism Sector Plan, including a feasibility assessment and costing for the establishment of an innovative Asset Protection Fund for tourism operators.

**Financing Strategy:** N/A

**Monitoring & Review:** N/A

**Governance & Coordination:** In 2021, the joint programme in consultation with the Governments of Samoa and the Cook Islands have confirmed the establishment of the INFF Oversight Committees. Samoa through the Ministry

of Finance has recommended and confirmed that the Government will be utilizing the existing National SDG Task Force committee to undertake the functions of the Oversight Committee. This task force is currently chaired by the Samoa Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, with membership comprising of the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Prime Minister & Cabinet, Ministry of Women Community and Social Development, Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, UN Resident Coordinators Office, and the joint programme. However, this committee has yet to hold a meeting to discuss the SDG Financing progress. Following the completion of the Inception workshop in the Cook Islands, the joint programme in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance & Economic Management (MFEM) has confirmed the establishment of the Cook Islands Oversight committee with its first meeting planned in January 2022. This committee will be chaired by the MFEM with the following members: the Ministry of Prime Minister & Cabinet, MFEM and UNDP.

## **Priority Cross-cutting Issues**

### **How did the JP adapt to the COVID-19 context**

The implementation of the JP in the last 12 months, was informed and guided by the National Priorities of the 3 Governments regarding the COVID19 situation, and the PUNOs have premised and adapted their contingency actions and acceleration efforts accordingly. For instance, the development of the Concept Notes for the DFA Review Samoa and the DFA Development for the Cook Islands ensured that COVID19 is at the core of the assessment, in terms of impacts and shocks that the pandemic has on financing infrastructures of countries. This will in turn inform or assist with more relevant recommendations and interventions that are resilient and disaster responsive for Financing Strategies and overall INFF.

### **How did the JP apply the Gender Marker**

Gender Equality and Women Empowerment is well incorporated into the JP, with a dedicated activity under Output 2 of the JP that focuses on conducting Gender Responsive Budgeting Analysis of Samoa's National Budget, with a focus on two-line ministries budgets to identify how gender-responsive it is in terms of % allocated to gender development, and consequently, provide recommendations for gender mainstreaming capacities, and more gender-responsive budgeting process. Additionally, gender marker is well observed across the JP with the implementation of other components such as the DFA Inception Workshops, where gender equality is encouraged at the engagement/participation level, and similarly in the reporting side of all the produced reports and strategic deliverables.

*Estimated % of overall disbursed funds spend on gender: 18%*

### **Alignment with cross-cutting UN issues (e.g. human rights, decent work, inclusion, LNOB)**

With the progress of the JP so far, UN thematic issues are well observed in the implementation as reflected in the inclusive approach taken in the facilitation of the inception workshops that ensured the participation of all stakeholders from various spheres of development (public, private, civil) gender, and PWDs, to guarantee equal representation. Moreover, these thematic areas are also closely observed in the produced results of the JP such as reports to ensure that methodology adopted, the scope of works, results produced aligns with thematic issues of human rights, leaving no one behind, and that information available is well disaggregated in terms of gender and PWDs

### **How did the JP work to build ownership and buy-in of key stakeholders**

The JP is implemented under the oversight guidance of the Oversight Committees; although the components are implemented by each PUNOs through the Direct Implementation Modality, the overall strategic guidance comes

from the Government. This is well incorporated into the approach taken for strategic planning and inception of each JP Components, such as the DFA Reviews and Development, with the PUNOs providing quality assurance and back-stopping support. The Concept Notes are developed by the Technical Team in consultations and advice/guidance from the National Governments in terms of priorities, scope, timeframes, and arrangements. Similarly, this same approach is also adopted at the various levels of Stakeholder engagements, with the National Focal Point Agencies such as the Ministry of Finance in Samoa and MFEM in the Cook Islands leading the national coordination and facilitation role with PUNOs to provide support. Furthermore, to ensure national ownership of the JP and sustainability of results, the chairmanship of the Oversight Committees rests with the Governments with a predominant national membership.

## **Annual Reporting on Results**

### **Results achieved in promoting the priority thematic SDG agendas**

Most of the JP Activities are still at the early stages of implementation, with some progressing at this point. Therefore, no substantial results have been achieved to determine the actual contribution of the Joint Programme to promoting priority thematic SDG agendas as identified

### **JP contributions to the Joint SDG Fund's global results (especially around Outcome 2 & Output 4)**

The JP Contribution to Global Programmatic Results in terms of Targets is yet to be achieved, as the implementation is still in progress at this point of the JP.

### **Progress against JP-specific outcomes**

At the Outcome Level, the JP, unfortunately, did not achieve its intended Targets for both 2020 and 2021 due to the significant delays in implementation of activities.

### **Progress against JP-specific outputs**

Most of the Output Results and Targets for the JP is yet to be achieved, as the implementation of most activities is still in progress at this point of the JP.

### **JP contributions to strengthening UN coherence, partnerships and reducing duplications of efforts**

While the programme has yet to show results due to the delay in implementation. It has enabled the PUNOs to work more closely together and jointly advocate for DFAs/ INFFs and Gender responsive budgeting across the UNCT.

## **Strategic Partnerships, Documents and Communications**

### **How did the JP facilitate collaboration with diverse stakeholders in the SDG financing space**

The JP established some prominent partnerships in the last 12 months, which enabled the implementation and delivery of some of the JP activities through existing relationships with the National Governments through their National Focal Point Agencies, such as the Ministry of Finance for Samoa, and the Ministry of Finance & Economic Management for Cook Islands. These partnerships permitted the coordination and execution of successful Inception Workshops for both Countries on their DFAs, with the subsequent undertaking of the Financing Analysis of their public finances as part of the DFA Development process.

**Did the JP secured additional financing (co-funding/co-financing) from the following stakeholders:**

Government	Donors & IFIs	Private Sector	PUNOs	Other Partners
No	No	No	No	No

**Comments on additional financing secured:** The JP established some prominent partnerships in the last 12 months, which enabled the implementation and delivery of some of the JP activities through existing relationships with the National Governments through their National Focal Point Agencies, such as the Ministry of Finance for Samoa, and the Ministry of Finance & Economic Management for Cook Islands. These partnerships permitted the coordination and execution of successful Inception Workshops for both Countries on their DFAs, with the subsequent undertaking of the Financing Analysis of their public finances as part of the DFA Development process.

**JP organized events in 2021**

JP Launch Event	Annual Donor Event	Partners Event
No	No	No

*Number of strategic documents produced by the JP: 2*

*Number of strategic documents contributed by the JP: 0*

*Number of communication materials produced: 1*

## **2022 Plans & Way Forward**

### **JP priority activities & expected results for 2022**

By 2022, the JP under Output 1.1 will focus on completing the DFA Review for Samoa, and the DFA Development or both Cook Islands and Niue. For Output 1.2, the JP will focus on completing the Gender Budget Analysis of the Samoa National Budget, and analysis of the Community Sector Budget under the Ministry of Women Community and Social Development and another line ministry to be identified by the MoF. Additionally, it will also focus on completing the costing of the Samoa Tourism Sector Plan and successfully delivery of capacity building support to the Ministry in terms of project planning, programming, financing, and implementation, that can be further contextualised and shared with other Government ministries at the sectoral level. Lastly, under Output 1.3, the JP will focus on completing the Strategy for the Private Sector Development, Engagement, and Co-Financing for Samoa, and will work in partnership with the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labour to deliver capacity-building support to both the public-private sectors to foster PPP relations and co-financing. In addition, the JP, in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and member states, will finalize a debt for climate swap feasibility study and present at a regional conference on fiscal sustainability and debt management, to be co-hosted by Government of Fiji and Tuvalu, the Pacific Islands Forum, and ESCAP in April 2022, aimed to bring together major creditors and PSIDs debtors, inter alia, leading to a political declaration championed by PSIDS Finance Ministers. Debt stress and financing challenges which could be mitigated by using innovative instruments will be discussed at the Conference, as envisaged under Output 1.3 of the JP.

### **3 major transformative results that will be achieved by the end of the JP**

1. Completion and launch of the Updated DFA for Samoa, and the DFAs for the Cook Islands and Niue.

2. The completion of the Gender Responsive Analysis of the Samoa National Budget, with sector budget for the Community Sector under the Ministry of Women Community and Social Development and second-line ministry GRB budget analysis.
3. Specific tourism sector initiatives which will be costed and developed aimed to create resilience and help cushion impact of further external shocks.
4. Feasibility study and capacity building on the application of debt for climate swaps in Pacific SIDS, and a regional political declaration (involving major debtors and creditors in the Pacific region) on sustainably managing and financing through debt instruments.
5. The first National Strategy for Public-Private Sector Development and Investment for Samoa.

**Estimated rate of completion for each result as of 31 Dec 2021**

Result.1	Result.2	Result.3
Advancing (50-99%)	Emerging (1-49%)	Emerging (1-49%)