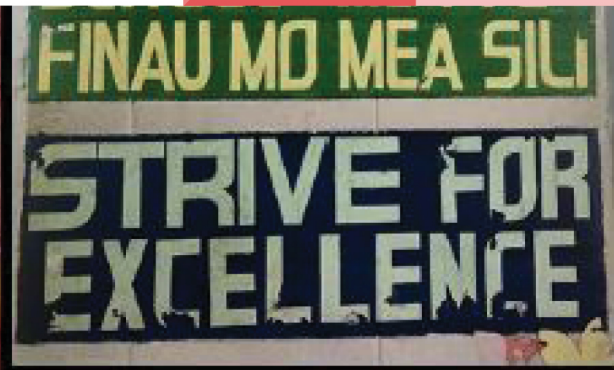


NOVEMBER 2018

Evaluation of the Samoa Education Sector Support Programme: Final Evaluation Report



Document status:	Final Draft
Version and date:	V 2.4 09/11/2018
Author(s):	Jacqui Haggland, Vince Catherwood, Pounamu Aikman
Filing Location:	W:\MFAT\Evaluation for the Sāmoa Education Sector Program\Phase 3 Analysis and Reporting
Peer / technical review:	Mathea Roorda, Ned Hardie-Boys
Verification that QA changes made:	Jacqui Haggland
Proof read:	Ryan Angus
Formatting:	Jacqui Haggland
Design	Salman Abbasnejad
Final QA check and approved for release:	Jacqui Haggland

Allen + Clarke has been independently certified as compliant with ISO9001:2015 Quality Management Systems



Cover photographs: [Top left](#) and [bottom right](#) photos are from the 'Paul Soliai Foundation Sāmoa Tour 2014', by the U.S. Embassy in New Zealand, used under CC BY-ND 2.0. All other photos are those of Allen + Clarke.

ABOUT ALLEN + CLARKE

Allen and Clarke Policy and Regulatory Specialists Limited (*Allen + Clarke*) is a consultancy firm based in Wellington, New Zealand. We specialise in policy and programme development and implementation, research and evaluation, business change, operational management and risk, and secretariat and programme support services. A key component of our work is undertaking reviews and developing and implementing policies that improve outcomes for the public. Founded in 2001, the company is owned and managed by senior staff and has a team of approximately forty-eight senior evaluation and policy practitioners, analysts and project support staff. Our company works extensively for a range of government agencies in New Zealand, and international clients and non-government organisations in the Pacific and Asia. More information about our work can be found on our website: www.allenandclarke.co.nz.

Jacqui Haggland, who led this work for *Allen + Clarke*, has significant experience in policy, research and evaluation. Jacqui has a background in secondary teaching and spent four years working for the New Zealand government in adult literacy and numeracy operational policy. Jacqui's evaluation and policy work has supported improvements in education (including early childhood and international education in New Zealand), international development, public health, social development, and sport. Jacqui's Pacific experience has included project management of the evaluation of the New Zealand Aid Programme's support to the Curriculum Development Division of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development in the Solomon Islands, as well as conducting in-country legislative review and stakeholder consultation in the Cook Islands legislation on behalf of WHO in the area of tobacco control.

Vince Catherwood joined *Allen + Clarke* for this assignment. Vince has had an extensive background of experience and expertise over the last seventeen years in development work in the education sector through his company Vince Catherwood & Associates Ltd. He has a background of assisting in the development and monitoring of country-wide education strategic plans for several Pacific countries. He has well-developed evaluation and monitoring skills, having conducted a number of education reviews for both the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Agency for International Development. Vince has also worked previously as a consultant in Sāmoa and in nine other Pacific countries on education assignments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Allen + Clarke is grateful to the evaluation participants who made themselves available for interviews, many at short notice and during a busy time of the year. Your experiences and ideas shared were invaluable to the evaluation process. We are thankful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Foreign Affairs teams for their time, enabling access to information, and for their participation in the evaluation discussions.

DISCLAIMER

Data referred in this report were provided by various stakeholders. The evaluation team was not able to validate these data and are not responsible for any misrepresentations in the data presented.

CONTENTS

ABOUT ALLEN + CLARKE	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
DISCLAIMER	III
CONTENTS	IV
GLOSSARY	V
TABLES	VI
FIGURES	VI
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
Recommendations	5
1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	6
1.1. About the ESSP	6
1.2. Evaluation purpose	7
1.3. Earlier independent review of the ESP and ESSP	7
1.4. Evaluation methodology	7
2. FINDINGS	9
2.1. Relevance	9
2.2. Effectiveness	11
2.3. Efficiency	23
2.4. Impact	27
2.5. Sustainability	29
2.6. Cross-cutting issues	32
3. LESSONS LEARNED	34
4. EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS	35
5. RECOMMENDATIONS	36
REFERENCES	37
APPENDIX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE	40
APPENDIX B: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT LIST	53
APPENDIX C: AIDE MEMOIRE – EVALUATION OF THE SĀMOA EDUCATION SECTOR SUPPORT PROGRAMME – INTERIM FINDINGS	57
APPENDIX D: RESPONSE TO ESP MID-TERM REVIEW	62
APPENDIX E: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: EDUCATION SECTOR SUPPORT PROGRAMME	65
APPENDIX F: ESSP FUNDING TIMELINES	68
APPENDIX G: LINKAGES BETWEEN KEY EVALUATION SUB-QUESTIONS AND SECTIONS OF THE DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT	69
APPENDIX H: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY	73

GLOSSARY

ACD	Aid Coordination Division
ACEO	Assistant Chief Executive Officer
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CMAD	Curriculum Materials and Assessment Division
CT	Consumer Tax DAC
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DP	Development Partner
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESAC	Education Sector Advisory Committee
ESCD	Education Sector Coordination Division
ESP	Education Sector Plan
ESP II	Education Sector Programme II
ESSP	Education Sector Support Programme
ESWG	Education Sector Working Group
JFA	Joint Funding Agreement
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
GoS	Government of Sāmoa
IA	Implementing Agency (MESC, SQA and NUS)
IVP	Independent Verification Process
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCIL	Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour
MESC	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand)
MoF	Ministry of Finance (GoS)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSS	Minimum Service Standards
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NTDF	National Teacher Development Framework
NUS	National University of Sāmoa
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSET	Post-Secondary Education and Training
SAT/WST	Sāmoan Tala
SBS	Sector Budget Support
SEN	Student Enrolment Number

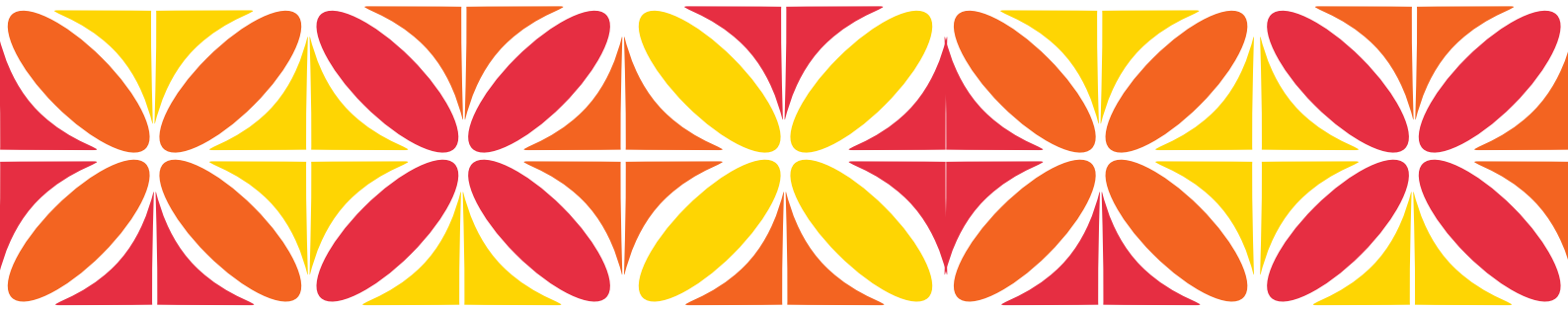
SOD	School Operations Division
SPELL	Sāmoa Primary Education Literacy Level Test
SQA	Sāmoa Qualifications Authority
SSFSGS	Sāmoa School (Primary) Fee Grant Scheme
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
TA	Technical Assistance
TDAD	Teacher Development and Advisory Division
TOC	Team of Consultants
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

TABLES

Table 1: OECD DAC Criteria and associate Sāmoa ESSP KEQs	8
Table 2: ESSP Budget and Actual Funds Received, 2015-2019 Currency: Sāmoan tala, rounded to \$000s	25
Table 3: Percentage Achievement against KPIs 1, 2, 4 and 5 by Gender - 2018 IVP report	32
Table 4: MTR recommendations - have they been addressed and what is their ongoing relevance	62
Table 5: SPELL 1 Percentage of Students at Risk - at Beginner level	74
Table 6: SPELL 2 Percentage of Students at Risk - at Beginner level	74
Table 7: SPECA: Percentage of students at the 'beginning' level/ level 1	75
Table 8: Year 12 SSC Results: Pass Rates	75
Table 9: Year 13 SSLC Results	76

FIGURES

Figure 1: Advantages and Disadvantages of sector budget support funding modality	16
Figure 2: Alignment of GoS Budget and ESSP timelines	68
Figure 3: Timing of ESSP funding availability	68



Executive Summary



Purpose

An evaluation of the Sāmoa Education Sector Support Programme (ESSP) was undertaken from August to November 2018. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the ESSP on the broader Sāmoan education sector, to examine cross-cutting issues such as gender and inclusive education, and to inform any further commitments by Australia and New Zealand to the programme. An Evaluation Plan was developed and approved by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) in the first phase, followed by two weeks of field work in Sāmoa in the second phase, and the development of the draft and final reports in the third phase.

Relevance

The evaluation found that the ESSP was broadly relevant to the Sāmoa education sector. The ESSP has a clear strategic framework aligned with Australian/ New Zealand international development policy and Government of Sāmoa (GoS) development objectives, and the educational objectives of education providers. The outcomes sought in the Education Sector Plan 2013-2018 (ESP) and included in the ESSP, set very ambitious targets to achieve within a relatively short timeframe. The broad scope of the ESP and the ESSP encompasses the entire education sector, which justified the involvement of the three Implementing Agencies (IAs): the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESc), the Sāmoa Qualifications Authority (SQA), and the National University of Sāmoa (NUS).



Monitoring and Evaluation

Effectiveness

The intended outcomes of ESSP, which relate to improved access to, and participation in, education, improved learning outcomes, and improved access to employment, all remain fundamentally relevant and important. The additional activities made possible by the ESSP investment have addressed the priorities of target groups such as schools and other education providers, and have targeted key issues facing the education sector. However, the connection between theory and practice, and therefore between planning and expected outcomes, was overly ambitious in the original design of the programme.

Governance and Coordination

The governance structure of ESSP, the Education Sector Advisory Committee (ESAC) and the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) is effective. There were problems with the implementation of the governance structure in the first two years, but significant progress has been made recently. The Education Sector Coordination Division (ESCD) is now better placed to support the ESWG to provide the required analysis before reports are forwarded to the ESAC for decision-making. Major factors enabling or constraining the achievement of ESSP objectives include the commitment and hard work of IA staff (an enabling factor), and the weak capacity of staff to monitor, analyse and report on data, the lack of timeliness in reporting, and staff turnover (three constraining factors).

The collection of data, management of information, and reporting against key performance indicators (KPIs) have all improved to some extent during the course of the ESSP. Because there are inefficiencies in the way information is managed within the Sāmoa education system, there is a need for a more integrated and comprehensive data management system that is used by all staff in the IAs. A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework is being used to report on a much broader range of indicators than are included in the ESSP (for example, additional ESP indicators). The M&E Framework needs to be streamlined, simplified, and updated more regularly. Similarly, the joint funding agreement (JFA) between GoS and the donors requires the GoS to update the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) in February each year as part of the monitoring process.



Efficiency and the Funding Modality

A mixed-mode sector budget support modality has been used as a funding mechanism. The evaluation found that this budget support modality is broadly appropriate and its retention in the future was supported by the sector. Modifications would be needed to some details of the funding modality if the programme was to continue in the future. The misalignment between the ESSP timelines and GoS Budget timelines needs to be addressed, so that one process (based on the GoS Budget processes) is used. A weakness in the programme initiation was the delay by Development Partners (DPs) in establishing the programme. However, the MFAT and Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) posts in Apia have had close involvement with ESSP, including participation in the governance framework, and their staff have provided useful policy dialogue and advice. Feedback from the interviews with education sector participants also suggested there were delays by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) in releasing funding to the IAs which may have had an impact on the underspend.

The fixed tranche disbursement of the budget support component of the funding modality (currently 70 percent) is appropriate, although the evaluators question the effectiveness of reducing the amount of the fixed tranche component, as funding predictability is important for planning purposes. In this context, the process indicators associated with the fixed tranche disbursement, and the KPIs associated with the performance-based funding tranche, need to

be reviewed for the next iteration of the ESSP. The Independent Verification Process (IVP) was generally supported, and should continue in any future ESSP, although those interviewed recognised that it had taken time for the education sector in Sāmoa to appreciate that timely data collection, analysis and reporting was a pre-requisite to success in using a performance-based system of funding. In this respect, although there was considerable early communication about the sector budget support modality, some of the initial information may have been misunderstood or misinterpreted by the education sector in Samoa, and, with the advantage of hindsight, it is clear that communications by both donors and the GoS could have been better.

The implementation of ESSP by the GoS has been less efficient than desired, but improvements are occurring. Results against the nine KPIs linked to performance-linked contributions have shown some improvement over three years, although considerable scope remains for efficiency improvements. The need for training and capacity development to address weaknesses in staff capacity is an issue across the education sector. Investment in a programme of staff capacity development is needed to improve the analysis of data and reporting against key performance objectives in order to provide evidence that progress towards long-term outcomes is being made.



Impact and Sustainability

The ESSP has provided IAs with a larger funding pool from which they can address significant initiatives such as upskilling teachers or Post-Secondary Education and Training (PSET) tutors, and these investments can be expected to bring results over time. The efforts to build staff capacity need to continue, with more emphasis on using technical assistance to build local capacity. In the short to medium-term, the sustainability of the programme is dependent upon continued support from MFAT and DFAT.

Cross-cutting issues

Cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and inclusive education (IE) have been identified and addressed with mixed success in the ESSP. The performance of boys has fallen behind that of girls and is an ongoing issue that needs to be carefully monitored. The use of ring-fenced funding within the fixed tranche component of the ESSP to support IE was successful in ensuring progress was made. The use of technical assistance, supported by access to specialist volunteers, was also helpful in supporting staff to develop a programme of future work. The incorporation of internationally agreed questions in the annual school census to support more accurate identification of students with disabilities has led to a much better information base with respect to children with disabilities. However, this work is in its early stages and the full impact is not yet known.

Lessons Learned

All things considered, evaluation of the achievement of ESSP goals after three years was too soon. A further three to five years is needed in order to align the intended outcomes of the ESP with the goals of the ESSP, and to allow the Sāmoa education sector to put into practice the learning that has been achieved since 2016 and to experience the full benefits of the new sector wide approach that is being implemented.

While there has been positive learning about management of the ESSP, there have also been challenges. The evaluators remain concerned about the low level of student achievement in Sāmoa, but recognise that ESSP investment has targeted areas such as teacher performance and the upgrading of PSET tutors' skills, and that these initiatives are intended, over time, to lift student performance. While access to education has been generally good in Sāmoa in the past, it is apparent that education agencies need to continue to monitor access to education, and to improve their data collection and analysis in this space.

Evaluation Conclusions

While the desired achievement of outcomes over the course of the ESSP have not eventuated, the evaluators are confident that there is every prospect that the planned outcomes related to improving student learning and building the capacity of the education system can be achieved over time. An important area of ongoing focus is ensuring that the measurement of progress towards identified education outcomes is supported by the collection and reporting of evidence against relevant KPIs.



Recommendations

1 Continue to use a sector budget support modality to deliver any future ESSP-type funding with the following conditions:

- a.** better alignment between the ESSP reporting and planning timelines and the established timelines of the GoS Budget process;
- b.** expert guidance in the development of performance indicators for any future ESP, and selection for inclusion in an ESSP, to ensure the KPIs are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound), and that the required evidence is able to be collected and reported;
- c.** accountability requirements must be satisfied by regular reporting against appropriate KPIs; and
- d.** the 'fixed tranche' component of the education sector budget support modality should be delivered annually in total if a reasonable proportion of any fixed process indicators are met.

2 Continue to use an Independent Verification Process for a small number of agreed KPIs, with the following conditions:

- a.** include clear guidelines on how the individual KPIs for the sector relate to the release of the performance funding component; and
- b.** specify the steps for the release of funding, including whether any IA is entitled to a share of the funding disbursed.

3 Prepare a capacity development plan for staff of GoS agencies with involvement in all levels of the education sector (e.g., MESC, SQA, NUS) to ensure those working in these agencies have the necessary skills to support future planning and reporting. This plan would sit alongside the National Teacher Development Framework, and include capacity development plans for the ECE, PSET/TVET and IE sectors.

4 Improve the processes for engaging technical assistance to ensure timely recruitment and engagement with a focus on capacity development in priority areas. For example, resourcing a reading specialist in the Education Faculty of NUS to help ensure teachers (participating in pre-service and in-service training) have the skills required to teach reading.

5 Support current work to develop a Sāmoa Education Data Quality Improvement Plan, and support implementation of the plan in order to strengthen data collection and analysis, monitoring, and reporting.

6 Update, rationalise and simplify the M&E Framework to ensure that it can be used effectively, and consider whether it gives the necessary focus to the range of activities across the education sector (e.g., ECE, IE, primary, secondary, formal, and informal PSET and TVET).

7 Improve the integration of MTEF update processes with other reporting to ensure the necessary updates actually occur.

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This section provides context on the Sāmoa Education Sector Support Programme (ESSP), detailing the purpose of this evaluation, its methodology, and an outline of the structure of this report.

1.1. About the ESSP

The ESSP is a three-year activity between MFAT and DFAT designed to specifically support and finance implementation of elements of the Education Sector Plan 2013-2018 (ESP). The ESP outlines how the Implementing Agencies (IAs) (the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC), the Sāmoa Qualifications Authority (SQA), and the National University of Sāmoa (NUS)) will work together as a sector, building on previous Sector Wide Approach programmes (SWAp), and a number of large donor funded projects. The ESSP commenced in October 2015 (DFAT) and March 2016 (MFAT), and will be completed in December 2018. The total value of the investment is SAT \$35,865,685. The goals of the ESSP (not presented here) are taken from the ESP.

The strategic outcomes of the ESSP are:

1. increased numbers of three to five-year olds participating in Early Childhood Education;
2. improved literacy and numeracy scores at Years 4 and 6;
3. increase in percent of children commencing Year 1 Primary and completing Year 8;
4. increased numbers of children with special education needs in inclusive classroom settings with Individual Education Plans;
5. increase in participation rates and outcomes of Year 12 examinations;
6. increase in transition rates to post-secondary education; and
7. increase in the employment rate of graduates of post-secondary education and training.

In particular, the ESSP investment aims to:

- strengthen Sāmoa's new approach to the development of the education sector as a coherent whole;
- support implementation of reform policies designed to improve learning outcomes and skills development linked to realistic employment expectations;
- strengthen government systems for sustainable achievement of improved learning outcomes and skills development for employment; and
- support achievement of Sāmoa's National Goals and Strategies, through a well-educated and skilled Sāmoan society.

1.1.1. Monitoring the achievement of ESSP objectives

The Joint Funding Agreement (JFA) between GoS, MFAT and DFAT as the development partners was developed to support achievement of the ESP objectives. The ESSP was therefore constructed at the outset from the ESP, while the Independent Verification Process (IVP) was drawn from the ESP Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework. The ESSP investment priorities are therefore drawn from the ESP. This process was driven by the GoS, with strong direction from the Ministry of Finance (MoF) for a sector budget support funding modality. The IAs were therefore responsible for development of the indicators in the ESP. The donors were not responsible for

developing the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The evaluators understand there was extensive consultation about which of these KPIs should be selected as part of the performance-based tranche, i.e., which ones should be highlighted to provide a comprehensive picture of the health of the Sāmoa education system and how the ESP was being implemented. The MFAT and DFAT as the Development Partners (DPs) noted that the KPIs were outcomes-related, and asked the IAs whether the KPIs were realistic, and whether the IAs were sure these KPIs were the ones that should be focused on. DPs recognised at the time that the KPIs were very ambitious, but they were identified in consultation with the GoS.

1.2. Evaluation purpose

This evaluation was designed to assess the likely relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and short and medium-term impacts of the ESSP on the broader Sāmoan education sector. Cross-cutting issues (gender and inclusive education) were also assessed. The evaluation will inform any further commitments of Australia and New Zealand and the funding modalities and assessment frameworks used. The Government of Sāmoa (GoS) also indicated an interest in grasping the impact of the ESSP at the grassroots levels amongst communities, schools, and employers.

1.3. Earlier independent review of the ESP and ESSP

The ESSP evaluation follows on from the 2016 Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the ESP and the three Independent Verification Process (IVP) reviews undertaken in 2016, 2017 and earlier in 2018. In reference to these earlier independent reviews of the ESP (MTR) and ESSP (IVP), the role of this evaluation was not to revalidate their findings. Rather, the ESSP evaluation Terms of Reference (see Appendix A: Terms of reference) noted the evaluation was expected to build on the MTR findings, alongside assessments from the intervening period, to respond to key evaluation questions. Comment on the MTR, and discussion of achievement and ongoing relevance of the MTR recommendations, is included in Appendix D: Response to ESP Mid-Term Review

The ESSP evaluation was also expected to analyse the effectiveness of the IVP including whether is this something that donors would wish to continue in any future ESSP. Analysis of the IVP findings and effectiveness is discussed within the report and specifically in section 2.2.7.

1.4. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation comprised three phases.

Phase One determined the focus and scope of the evaluation and included a document review and stakeholder engagement tool design. Documents were provided by MFAT Wellington and MFAT Sāmoa across Phases One and Two. Phase One concluded with the Evaluation Plan and a tentative schedule of in-country fieldwork, which was agreed to by MFAT.

Phase Two consisted of in-country fieldwork in Sāmoa (6-19 September 2018) and focused on implementing the evaluation according to the plan agreed to in Phase One. This involved conducting 37 face-to-face interviews with over 70 people across GoS agencies, Development Partners, and education providers. At the end of Phase Two, the in-country team held an Interim Findings Workshop and provided an Aide Memoire, which presented emerging issues, sought verification of facts and assumptions, and discussed the feasibility of the initial recommendations.

Phase Three involved data analysis and drafting of this Evaluation Report.

This evaluation adopted a mixed-method approach, gathering information through stakeholder interviews and review of relevant documentation. These data were then analysed against the key evaluation questions and sub-questions identified in the Evaluation Plan. The evaluation was undertaken using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria to underpin and focus the assessments being made.

Table 1: OECD DAC Criteria and associated Sāmoa ESSP KEQs

DAC Criteria	Key evaluation question for the Evaluation of the Sāmoa ESSP
Relevance	To what extent is the design of the ESSP relevant to the key issues facing the education sector in Sāmoa?
Effectiveness	To what extent has the ESSP has been effective in improving the quality of learning and enhancing educational access and opportunities?
Efficiency	To what extent is the implementation of the ESSP being managed efficiently?
Impact	What is the likely impact of the ESSP?
Sustainability	Are the benefits of the ESSP likely to be sustainable?

The evaluation team also considered the extent to which cross-cutting issues (gender equality and inclusive education) have been identified and pursued in the implementation of the ESSP. The evaluative judgements made about the ESSP under the above criteria were tested with key stakeholders in MFAT, DFAT, GoS agencies, and the Sāmoan education sector more broadly.

Structure of this report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows: Section 2 outlines the evaluation’s findings, organised under the DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, as well as a consideration of cross-cutting issues; Sections 3 and 4 provide lessons learned and evaluation conclusions; and Section 5 presents a list of recommendations. Linkages between the key evaluation sub-questions set out in the Evaluation Plan and the various sections of the draft report are set out in Appendix G: Linkages between Key Evaluation sub-questions and sections of the draft evaluation report.

2. FINDINGS

This section outlines the findings of the evaluation of the ESSP based on a review of existing policy and practice. Stakeholder interviews, operational documents, and published reports informed the evaluation. Interim findings and preliminary recommendations were presented to stakeholders at the end of the field mission in Sāmoa on 18 and 19 September 2018, and feedback from that process has been incorporated into this draft report.

2.1. Relevance

This section seeks to address the key evaluation question, “*To what extent is the design of the ESSP relevant to the key issues facing the education sector in Sāmoa?*”

2.1.1. ESSP objectives, scope and design

The evaluation found the scope of the ESSP encompasses the whole education sector, is well aligned with Development Partners and Government of Sāmoa policies and objectives, addresses key issues and priorities of target groups, and justifies the involvement of the three Implementing Agencies.

The five broad strategic goals, the related seven strategic outcomes, and the four aims of the ESSP are highly relevant, well-aligned with Development Partner (DP) and GoS policies and objectives, and are supported by the Sāmoa education sector. Very few respondents referred to the original investment design of the ESSP, although people referred to the Joint Funding Agreement (JFA) or the ESP.

The theory of change for the ESSP Investment Design was based on the premise that supporting the implementation of Sāmoa’s ESP would be more efficient and effective than working through a parallel process (for example, provision of funding for specific projects). This approach was generally supported by GoS agencies; however, problems arise when these goals, strategic outcomes, and aims are translated into more specific and practical sub-sector objectives and activities that require measurement.

The time frame for evaluation of the ESSP goals was too short. The need for a longer-term approach is recognised by a number of development partner stakeholders, particularly those that were involved at the design stage. The original intention in designing the programme was to align the ESSP completion date with the end date of the ESP. However, given the complexities of a budget support approach, the ESSP time frame (effectively two years, given the initial setting-up delays) was too short for a realistic evaluation of what could be achieved under this new model. A longer time frame such as an additional three to five years is needed in order to align the intended outcomes of the ESSP with the goals of the ESP, and to evaluate effectively the impact of the sector budget support approach. A longer time frame would also provide space for the education sector to put into practice the learning that has been achieved since 2016, and would allow the full benefits of the new approach that is being implemented to become more visible.

The GoS agencies have faced significant challenges in implementing the programme. One key difficulty was inadequate appreciation of the downstream implications of adopting a new sector budget support approach where delivery of funding was linked to meeting key performance indicators (KPIs). Under this new approach, there was insufficient engagement with, and commitment by, the broader education sector in Sāmoa to provide input to the initial design of the ESSP performance indicators which would be used to measure progress of the programme. A

complementary problem was a lack of staff capacity to manage the necessary analysis and reporting of data against KPIs.

The scope of ESP is wide, as it encompasses the whole education sector including:

- early childhood education (ECE);
- primary schooling;
- secondary schooling; and
- post-secondary education and training (PSET), including University-based education, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

The comprehensive coverage of all education sectors by the ESP had an impact upon the ESSP because it shares the same goals with the ESP. However, the scope of the ESSP is narrower, since it focuses on the relatively specific aims of the ESSP investment. This specific focus is appropriate, since the available additional funding through the ESSP needed to be targeted if it was to make a difference. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework is based on the ESP and, although used for monitoring the ESSP, is wide in scope. Targeting of ESSP objectives occurs with the use of the nine selected KPIs as part of the performance-based Independent Verification Process (IVP).

The evaluators considered whether the scope of the ESSP, while narrower than the ESP, should be narrower still, so that more resources are targeted to selected high priority areas. They concluded that each of the stated ESSP outcomes remain a priority for the Sāmoa education sector, and that the current scope of the ESSP remains appropriate and is therefore adequate for its intended purpose as it allows GoS to focus ESSP funding on priority initiatives within this scope.

2.1.2. Activities made possible by the ESSP

The evaluation found that additional activities made possible by the ESSP investment have addressed the priorities of target groups such as schools and other education providers and have targeted key issues facing the education sector.

The additional activity made possible by the ESSP investment has been significant, even though schools and other providers may not have been aware of the source of the additional funding. Examples of such activities include teacher development, teacher appraisal initiatives, work to support literacy and numeracy objectives as part of implementing Minimum Service Standards (MSS), and support from the PSET Support Fund to upskill trainers and build better links to employment in the PSET/TVET sector. While the design of the ESSP is broadly aligned with the educational objectives of education providers, there is nevertheless an ongoing need for more effective communication of programme objectives to schools, PSET providers and the wider community.

2.2. Effectiveness

This section seeks to address the key evaluation question, “*To what extent has the ESSP been effective in improving the quality of learning and enhancing educational access and opportunities?*”

2.2.1. Improving Quality and Access

Efforts through the ESSP to improve the quality of and access to education have had mixed success. The positive focus on professional development is expected to lead to an improved quality of teaching in the long-term. Implementing Agencies in Sāmoa need to continue to monitor and to improve their data collection and analysis so that evidence of progress can be captured and reported.

Clear evidence of improved student performance over time has not been demonstrated, although there are some indications of recent improvements. The IVP assessed the KPIs¹ related to literacy (English and Sāmoan) and numeracy of Year 4 and Year 6 students on three occasions (July 2016, April 2017, and March 2018). The literacy KPIs at these two levels of primary schooling were recorded as ‘not achieved’ in July 2016, but were ‘partially achieved’ in April 2017 and March 2018. The IVP evaluators noted in the 2018 report that the extent of improvement in literacy over a one-year period raised questions about the comparability of the data in the 2016/17 Annual Review Report (ARR) compared to the baseline data set in 2015.² The numeracy KPIs for Year 4 and Year 6 students were recorded as ‘not achieved’ in the July 2016 and April 2017 IVP reports, but were ‘partially achieved’ in the March 2018 report. The IVP evaluators noted in the 2018 report that the extent of overall improvement in numeracy was quite low.³ The KPI relating to the number of schools meeting MSS related to literacy and numeracy was ‘not achieved’ in July 2016 but was recorded as ‘achieved’ in April 2017 and March 2018. Overall, the evidence of the impact of the ESSP on education quality in Sāmoa is limited and ambiguous.

Some other reports indicate low levels of student learning achievement. For example, the Sāmoa Early Grade Reading Assessment (SEGRA) in 2017 noted that only 16 percent of Year 3 students can read fluently and understand what they read. Trends over time in the results of the SPELL1 and SPELL2 tests at Year 4 and Year 6 primary levels demonstrate a high and increasing proportion of students (especially boys) categorised as ‘at risk’ in English literacy and numeracy. These results raise concerns about the ability of these students to engage with the curriculum at higher levels of schooling. Furthermore, the results of senior examinations in Years 12 and 13 indicate high numbers of students have achieved only at ‘beginner’ levels, and will either struggle with the demands of formal and informal PSET/TVET, or are not well prepared to make the transition to employment. A more detailed analysis of student achievement in Sāmoa is presented in Appendix H: Student Achievement in Literacy and Numeracy.

In addition to monitoring student achievement indicators, other indicators of quality in education have been examined in order to assess the impact of the ESSP. In the July 2016 IVP report, KPI 7 (percentage of teachers meeting teacher performance standards) was assessed as ‘not achieved’. However, there has been a definite improvement in the subsequent two IVP reports (April 2017 and March 2018) where KPI 7 has been assessed as ‘achieved’. This improvement reflects the support from the ESSP for quality improvements via assisting more teachers to meet the required

¹ See Appendix H: Student Achievement in Literacy and Numeracy

² von Dadelszen, Jane, & Pongi, Visessio. (2018) *Sāmoa Education Sector Independent Verification Report (Draft)*, p. 9.

³ Ibid, p. 11.

performance standards. Teacher development has been occurring in the primary and secondary school sectors, and the new appraisal system for teachers is beginning to show positive results. The PSET Support Fund (managed by SQA) has supported the upgrading of skills of tutors in the PSET area. There have also been successes in developing quality assured qualifications, but there is much more to be done to link skill development to employment outcomes. The focus through the ESSP on literacy, numeracy and teacher quality has been commendable, but there is still room for improvement in these areas.

In recent years, access to primary education has been generally very good for both girls and boys in Sāmoa (see Table 3 in Section 2.6.1). The transition rate from primary to secondary education has also increased recently, although participation in secondary education favours girls. However, data from the 2016 National Census indicate a worrying trend in attendance rates: 6 percent of children in the primary school age range 5-12 are not attending school, with over 10 percent of 13 to 17-year-olds not attending school. The IVP reported on two KPIs that measure access to education: KPI 8, the primary cohort completion rate (percentage of children commencing Year 1 primary and completing Year 8 by gender) and KPI 5, the transition rate from Year 13 to formal PSET. The July 2016 IVP report noted that KPI 8 was 'not achieved', but the April 2017 and March 2018 reports indicated the KPI was 'partially achieved'. These last two reports verified that males achieved the minimum target (1 percent increase), but the target achieved for females declined. The July 2016 IVP report noted that the baseline for KPI 5 (the transition from Year 13 to formal PSET) was still being established, and consequently KPI 5 was 'not achieved' in that year. KPI 5 was rated 'achieved' in the April 2017 report, but 'not achieved' in the March 2018 report. The evaluators that conducted the IVP stated that the data would be of more value if all transitions from school to PSET (and not just transitions from Year 13 at secondary school to the foundation year at NUS) could be tracked and measured.⁴ This analysis illustrates that agencies in Sāmoa need to continue to monitor access to education, and to improve their data collection and analysis.

2.2.2. Governance

The governance structure for the ESSP (Education Sector Advisory Committee and Education Sector Working Group) is effective, and significant progress has been made recently to use this structure better. Active participation by all Education Sector Advisory Committee members is required to support effective governance of any future ESSP.

The Education Sector Advisory Committee (ESAC) and Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) provide the primary system of governance. The structure is effective, and significant progress has been made recently to use this structure better. Efforts to convene regular meetings of both ESAC and ESWG, improve meeting records and submit documents at a sufficient period prior to meetings have helped improve efficiency and participation. The ESAC includes the sector heads of the three IAs and representation from a number of other stakeholders, including key Ministries such as the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Ministry of Public Enterprises (MPE) and the Ministry for Commerce, Industry and Labour (MCIL), representatives of Mission Schools, and the DPs. The ESWG includes officials who are responsible for coordination and working with the ESSP taskforces, IAs, DPs, and other stakeholders to meet requirements for monitoring, evaluation and annual reporting.

⁴ von Dadelszen, Jane, & Pongi, Visiesio. (2018) *Sāmoa Education Sector Independent Verification Report (Draft)*, p. 12.

Coordination between IAs has occurred through the ESAC at a high level and through the ESWG, which undertakes prior analysis and scrutiny of reports. The ESAC has provided high-level guidance at a strategic level and has been able to monitor risks effectively. Although this system of governance now appears to be generally effective, ESAC and ESWG may need to periodically review the descriptions of their roles and functions, as set out in the JFA, in the light of actual practice, to ensure that there is clarity about their respective responsibilities.

The DPs have been involved on the ESAC at an advisory level, to ensure the programme has been implemented in accordance with the funding requirements. Their presence has had both benefits (e.g., policy engagement and independent advice) and challenges (e.g., questioning of inefficient practices). The donor role on the ESAC assisted transparency around what was being implemented. MFAT and DFAT felt that they had meaningful input into the direction of the ESSP, that they were able to assist effective policy dialogue, and present a consistent and unified approach at ESAC.

Prior to May 2018, the governance structure was not used effectively, and decisions, tasks and agreements did not follow agreed processes. Minutes of meetings up to early 2018 provide evidence of dissatisfaction with Education Sector Coordination Division (ESCD) management. This dissatisfaction was a major issue over a considerable period since the inception of the programme. As at October 2018, these issues have been resolved, and a positive and constructive approach is now evident. Papers to the ESAC are expected to have been through the ESWG before being presented to ESAC. In the past this did not always happen, with the result that reports have not always included a full analysis of progress and risks. Respondents reported that this has improved recently and the necessary prior analysis and timely presentation of reports from ESCD (including the M&E reports) is now allowing ESWG and ESAC to fulfil their roles more effectively.

Several of those interviewed in the PSET sector placed emphasis on developing a more effective approach to TVET in Sāmoa, in order to improve skill development and connections between the education sector, industry and employment. Australia, in particular, wishes to see a more coherent and coordinated approach to TVET. NUS has developed a TVET strategy, and SQA has an approved policy document on TVET. Positive steps are underway to integrate these documents into a national TVET strategy, including input from MESC who have responsibility for TVET provision in secondary schools. There are many other post-secondary education and training providers in Sāmoa in addition to NUS. MCIL has a key role in relation to the apprenticeship scheme and want to build the capacity of its apprenticeship inspectors. An interview with MCIL personnel focused on working with NUS and industry, in order to align practical training in the workplace with the curriculum. Revision of the ESSP could include consideration of the ESAC membership to ensure it provides appropriate representation of those with an interest in employment skills development, such as other TVET providers.⁵

There are seats available for Mission and Private school representatives on the ESAC. The evaluators understand that initially the mission schools were more active on the ESAC and did some innovative work around quality. This situation may have changed recently, as, at the time of the field visit, the Mission Schools appeared to be less engaged at the governance level. It was suggested this is because these schools have less direct connection with GoS, apart from the Government grants they receive. However, there was only limited consultation with Mission School representatives on the ESAC, since the second Mission School representative was travelling

⁵ NUS are currently the only PSET/TVET provider on the ESAC. Respondents noted while NUS are the largest single provider of PSET in Sāmoa, the combined enrolments at all other PSET/TVET providers are greater than that of NUS.

during the evaluators' field visit and could not be interviewed. Since approximately 25 percent of students in Sāmoa are taught in Mission schools, consideration by ESAC of the quality of education provision within these schools is necessary.

2.2.3. Sector Coordination

Lack of coordination has been a weakness in implementation in the past, resulting in late reporting and missed deadlines. Appointment of a new Education Sector Coordinator has seen improved coordination and evidence of a more coherent approach to the development of the education sector.

Cooperation among the three IAs is necessary to coordinate education activities and reporting where agency input is shared, and respondents suggested this has been an area of significant improvement in recent times. The fact that this cooperation between agencies, led by the focal points within the three IAs, is now occurring is a step in the right direction. This new approach is a welcome change from the siloed approach within the three IAs that was previously reported by stakeholders in this evaluation and the earlier ESP MTR. Improved coordination is evidence of a more coherent approach to the development of the education sector. More needs to be done to ensure that coordination among the three IAs continues in order to integrate education policies and processes at a high level. A coordinated whole-of-Government approach needs to be adopted for sectors such as TVET where links are needed beyond the three IAs with employers, and with labour and economic development focused Government agencies such as MCIL. The professional dialogue among staff within and across different agencies has created a better understanding of education standards, provided a forum for staff to reflect on their own capacity, and emphasised the need for collaboration between different parts of the education sector.

The evaluation found that the ESCD is now better placed to support the ESWG to provide the required analysis before reports are forwarded to the ESAC for decision-making. In particular, positive feedback was received from respondents about the new appointee to the role of Education Sector Coordinator within ESCD. The coordinator has brought effective coordination skills to the role and achieved a positive impact in a short time, although more time will be needed before the full impact of a fully staffed and functioning ESCD can be assessed.

The ESAC has intervened in the past when reporting has not been up to standard and made decisions to ensure that educational outcomes are reported using a strengths-based approach rather than a deficit-based approach. For example, following advice from the IVP consultants, changes to indicators relating to literacy were introduced to provide evidence on the proficiency of Sāmoan children (a strengths-based concept) rather than focus on 'at risk' children (a deficit-based concept). Some of these decisions had unintended outcomes, including the need to reset baselines, and consequently meant that full reporting against some KPIs was delayed by a year. Furthermore, ESAC and MoF expect quarterly reporting against the M&E Framework and the joint funding agreement (JFA) between GoS and the donors requires the GoS to update the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) in February each year as part of the monitoring process. Timeliness in reporting and in updating these monitoring tools has been a problem to date.

Constraining factors include the limited capacity of staff to monitor, analyse and report on data, the lack of timeliness in reporting, and staff turnover. Staff turnover at all levels in the education sector has meant that new people have been appointed in nearly every leadership role since the implementation of ESSP began, and consequently time was needed for new people to become familiar with a programme that they had no direct role in designing. This slowed the establishment and implementation of the ESSP, although progress is now increasingly evident.

2.2.4. Data and Information Management

A lack of a single education information management system and a disconnect between the systems in use across the three IAs are weaknesses of the ESSP implementation and reporting. Significant work is required in this area to support more effective data security and the ability to utilise the data available for reporting and planning purposes.

Most of the ESSP KPIs were outcomes focused and, due to weaknesses in data collection and analysis, it proved difficult for the IVP to verify to what extent these outcomes-focused indicators were achieved. The first IVP presented a learning experience for the IAs in the practicalities of collating data from multiple sources, bringing it together, and synthesising the reporting against KPIs in a timely way. Reflection from staff from the three IAs on this process included the realisation that poor planning and inadequate coordination had led to a situation where performance was rated in the first IVP report as ‘not-achieved’ against seven of the nine KPIs selected for monitoring the education system. Lessons have been learned from that process and data collection and reporting against the KPIs has since improved, although further work in this area is still required.

Two recent reviews have commented on education data management in Sāmoa, noting that the quality of data captured by MESC is poor.⁶ The evaluators understand that some staff in MESC continue to use Excel spreadsheets on personal computers for storing important educational data. While an Education Management Information System (EMIS) exists, it is not sufficiently developed nor widely used by staff. This presents several risks for GoS, both in terms of data security and the ability to utilise the data for reporting and planning purposes. In addition, MESC and SQA still report their annual Education Statistical Digest (MESC) and PSET Statistical Bulletin (SQA) separately. NUS appear to some extent to sit apart from the other two IAs in its reporting. The evaluators consider this separation of reporting is because currently there is no education sector-wide approach to reconcile all the data sources.

This situation is a result of poor data management practices coupled with an absence of sound data cleaning and verification practices. User feedback and consultation is a critical element missing in the data production process. The Sāmoa Bureau of Statistics does not have a sufficient role in the quality control and production of education statistics. The evaluation found that the dissemination of education data suffers from several shortcomings. Currently each IA is developing its own technical infrastructure in silo without taking into consideration the need for a sector-wide approach to education statistics. Any work to develop an Education Data Quality Improvement Plan should be supported, and implementation of the plan prioritised to strengthen data collection and analysis, monitoring and reporting. Associated with this work is the need to develop the capacity of staff in capturing, analysing and reporting on data. It is important to acknowledge that the long-term goals of the ESSP have to remain the paramount concern, and that management and analysis of information should not distract the sector from its investment in achieving these goals. Nevertheless, effective information management and analysis remains a critical tool in implementing the programme effectively and reporting evidence of outcomes achievement.

⁶ UNESCO Institute of Statistics. (2018) *Sāmoa Education Data Quality Assessment Report*, and WizConsult. (2017) *Situational Analysis for Creating Education Sector Management Information System & Recommendations*.

2.2.5. Monitoring and Evaluation

An M&E Framework exists and is being used to report on a much broader range of indicators than are included in the ESSP. The M&E Framework needs to be updated, streamlined and simplified.

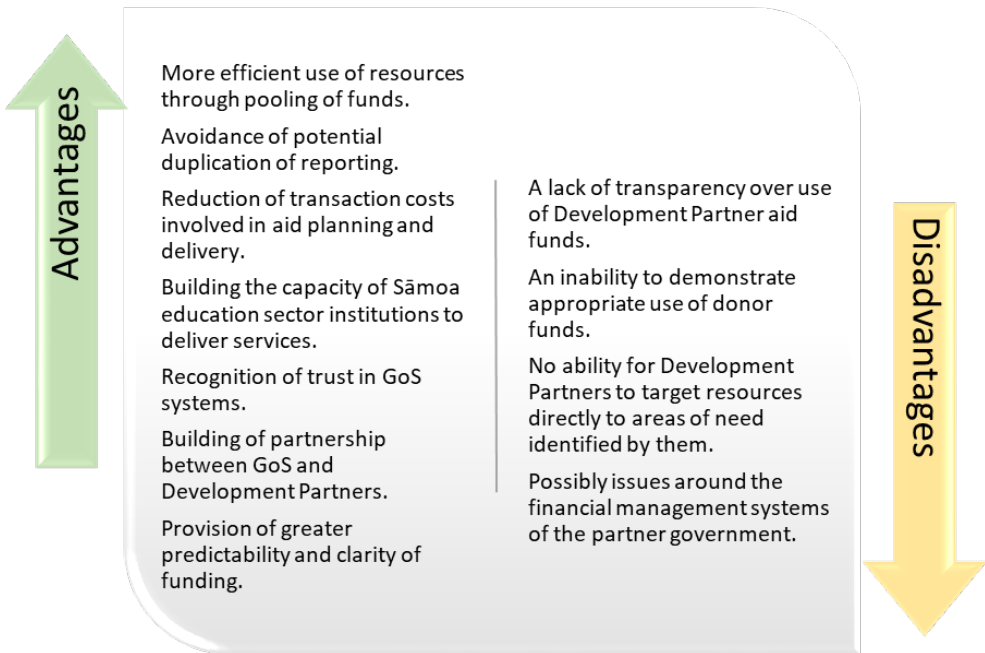
An M&E Framework exists and is being used to report on a much broader range of indicators than are included in the ESSP (for example, additional ESP indicators). The decision to report on all the activities in the ESP was reasonable, as reporting on the education sector needs to be comprehensive. Reporting against the ESSP KPIs is required under the M&E Framework currently in use. The many progressive modifications to the KPIs have made the M&E Framework unnecessarily complex. Because the current M&E Framework includes the various changes in KPIs (in strikethrough and/or different coloured text) that have occurred over a period of three years, it is hard to follow and is less usable than is optimal. Some parts of the M&E framework include deleted indicators which need to be removed. There are strengths and weaknesses in the way monitoring and evaluation has occurred, partly related to the information management issues discussed above. The Annual Review Reports (ARR) are useful and essential tools which require the IAs to coordinate their reporting.

2.2.6. The Funding Modality

The mixed-mode funding modality for the ESSP, including the 70 percent fixed tranche sector budget support and 30 percent performance-based tranche is appropriate. However, improvements are required to Budget processes to ensure all available efficiencies are achieved.

A mixed mode funding modality was used for ESSP. This mixed-mode modality includes sector budget support based on fixed process indicators for 70 percent of the funds (more or less a sector wide approach), combined with performance-linked contributions assessed via the IVP for the remaining 30 percent of the funding, plus a separate ring-fenced or ear-marked funding amount for inclusive education (IE). In effect, three funding modality types have been used. In addition, funds were made available for technical assistance to support the ESSP. The advantages and disadvantages with this mixed mode method of funding outlined in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Advantages and Disadvantages of sector budget support funding modality



The sector budget support approach requires alignment between the GoS budget timelines and the ESSP timelines in order to be effective and to achieve the anticipated benefits described above. ESSP funding priorities and allocations should be dealt with as part of the established GoS budget process. The implication is that any new ESSP in the future should align its dates much better with the GoS Budget processes by allowing sufficient time for ESAC and the MoF to do their work. This alignment was not present in practice in the Sāmoan approach to management of the ESSP. Figure 2 in Appendix F: ESSP Funding Timelines shows the misalignment in diagrammatic form.

Under the performance-based IVP mechanism, 30 percent of the ESSP funding was released (or not) based on GoS's tracking towards nine pre-determined KPIs subject to an independent assessment of a minimum trend of one percentage point towards the ESSP's 2018 targets. The first IVP report in 2016 found that seven of the nine KPIs targets had not been met, one target had been partially met, and one target had been achieved. Consequentially, full funding was dispersed against only one of the KPIs and 50% against one other KPI. Funding was withheld against the remaining seven KPIs. The 2017 IVP Report saw an improvement where four of the nine KPI targets had been fully met, two were partially met and three KPIs were not achieved. In 2018 the IVP Report recommended full disbursement against three KPIs, partial disbursement against four KPIs and no disbursement against two KPIs.

Perceived advantages of the performance-based fund (30 percent of the total funds) assessed by an IVP against nine selected KPIs include an incentive to the GoS to earn additional funds through good performance, and a transparent focus on a limited set of high GoS priorities. Disadvantages include a reduction in funds if the KPIs are assessed as 'not achieved', and the need to ensure staff have the necessary capacity to administer and report on the KPIs.

Advantages of the 'ring-fenced' fund (for inclusive education) include more transparency in the use of funds, and an ability for donors to track with precision exactly where the funds are being spent. Disadvantages of a ring-fenced fund include less flexibility by the GoS to reallocate funds to other priority areas if there are administrative or other delays in spending the funds on what was intended.

The main challenge for the Government of Sāmoa education sector in using the budget sector support funding modality was that it was a new approach, and that it has taken considerable time for the Implementing Agencies and their staff (and to some extent the Ministry of Finance and Development Partners) to understand and appreciate what sector budget support really implies, and what the downstream practical implications of adopting this approach to funding are.

Areas of concern in relation to funding which were raised by education sector representatives who were consulted included the following: a lack of transparency for education players about what funds were actually available; the out-of-date MTEF; the different approaches for approval of payments; and the absence of detailed acquittals against the annual workplans. Some of these issues (e.g., the out-of-date MTEF) need to be addressed by the ESCD. Other issues (e.g., better communication about approval of payments, and transparency and communication about the funding available) are matters that need to be addressed by the MoF.

It is difficult in many sectors of the Sāmoan education system to separate out the effect of GoS budget funding from the effect of additional funds delivered through the ESSP, because the 70% fixed funding tranche is not tagged to achievement of specific KPIs (although a report on the 12 specified process KPIs is required). A very detailed analysis, such as that outlined in the OECD Guidelines *Evaluating Budget Support: Methodological Approach*, coupled with preparatory financial analysis such as the recent draft 2018 World Bank Sāmoa Public Expenditure Review: Education Sector (not yet released), would be required to provide definitive answers as to what

contribution towards achieving outcomes was made by regular GoS budget funding, and what contribution was made by ESSP funding. That kind of detailed analysis was not possible in the timeframe and scope of this evaluation.

Sector budget support means that DPs provide donor funds through the ESSP which are expected to then be merged with GoS funds and spent according to the ESP. The merging of additional donor funds with GoS funds from its regular budget (implied by direct sector budget support) makes disaggregation and tracking of the additional donor funds difficult. For example, improvement of literacy is a key GoS priority which it funds via the education budget, and literacy improvement is also an aim of the ESSP. The ESSP included ring-fenced funding from Australia targeted at IE.

Although it is difficult to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of ESSP without detailed financial analysis to disaggregate the impact of donor funding from ongoing GoS funding, the evaluators have identified some specific areas of ESSP investment. Examples include:

- support for upgrading of teacher skills and qualifications;
- support (through the PSET Support Fund managed by SQA) for upskilling of tutors in the PSET sector;
- support for programme and professional development at NUS;
- support for the work of task forces on goals such as ECE and IE;
- investment in making education provision in schools more relevant; and
- investment in developing capacity such as Principal leadership and other in-service training courses.

There is a need for better alignment of key milestones in the GoS annual Budget processes and procedures, and the ESSP milestones set out in the JFA. A sector budget support modality should include integration between GoS budget and ESSP timelines. In practice two separate processes appear to have been operating to date: the GoS annual budget round (to determine the regular annual funding budget for MESAC, SQA and NUS from GoS resources, according to the established GoS timetable) and a separate ESSP annual funding round, according to the JFA dates. This duplication of activity created additional work for both the IAs and for MoF and meant that an expected advantage of sector budget support (elimination of unnecessary duplication) was not achieved. This misalignment is illustrated in Figure 2 in Appendix F: ESSP Funding Timelines.

As an example, currently the ESAC is expected to meet in January (according to the JFA), but in practice it has met in March. The purpose of the January ESAC meeting is to ensure that the MTEF is developed with guidance from ESAC, and that the Annual Budget is updated in February each year in preparation for Budget bids and forward estimates due to MoF before the end of March each year. Due to delays in scheduling ESAC meetings in January, and delays in reporting to ESAC, there has in the past been intense pressure to finalise ESSP financial arrangements in mid-March at a time when the MoF is very busy. Essentially, the ESSP dates specified in the JFA need to be brought forward by about two months to ensure a better integration between the standard GoS budget processes and timelines, and the ESSP timelines. The annual timeline of the ESSP requirements set out in the JFA such as the Annual Sector Reviews (November), ESAC meeting (January) and updating of the MTEF and Annual Budget (February) needs to be changed in any future plan to be better aligned in practice with the deadlines expected for the GoS annual budget process. Better alignment of GoS budget timelines and anticipated ESSP dates would allow more timely assessment of budget bids and would improve efficiency.

The evaluators consider the fixed tranche disbursement of the budget support component of the funding modality (70 percent) is appropriate. The main benefit of this approach is that it theoretically ensures GoS systems are used, thereby reducing duplication and transaction costs and satisfying accountability requirements (although as discussed above this is not necessarily what is happening in practice).

Staff in IAs were emphatic in their belief that sector budget support was a funding modality that supported GoS processes, and they wished to see this approach continued. It was argued that sector budget support gives GoS agencies and divisions more autonomy than project-based approaches to funding. While there is general agreement about the merits of a funding approach that uses GoS processes and procedures to achieve its goals by aligning planning and reporting processes and avoiding unnecessary duplication, more work is needed to communicate to the sector a clearer understanding of how a sector budget support modality operates and the associated accountability requirements to receiving funding through this modality.

Some stakeholders questioned the fairness of reducing the amount of the fixed tranche component, as funding predictability is important for planning purposes, based on the GoS self-assessment of progress against the 12 fixed process indicators, and the DP's assessment of the likelihood of an underspend in the current financial year. It appears that current practice is to treat the 'fixed' amount as a performance-based fund (to some extent), and the evidence indicates that the amount has been reduced in some years (e.g., in 2017-18).

One purpose of the 'fixed tranche' funding is to provide the education sector with funding predictability from year to year. The evaluators consider that a reasonably favourable report by the GoS as part of the Annual Review Report against the 12 process indicators should result in all of the funds available being paid to the education sector. It is unreasonable to expect the education sector to plan effectively if they do not have ongoing certainty about their funding. It is acknowledged that the JFA includes clauses⁷ to the effect that if there is the likelihood of an underspend, the DPs will consider a reduction in the subsequent fixed tranche funding. Only in circumstances where the underspend is large should these clauses in the JFA be invoked to withhold funding in this way. In this context, the process indicators associated with the fixed tranche disbursement need to be reviewed for the next iteration of the ESSP. The KPIs associated with the performance-based funding tranche also need to be reviewed in the next iteration of the ESSP.

A perceived advantage of the performance-based approach using the IVP was that it would provide a funding incentive for the education sector. In practice, no funding incentive has been evident. This situation has arisen partly because of a lack of transparency in management of, and communication about, the funding by the MoF, and partly because education staff are motivated not by purely financial considerations but by the desire to do a good job and meet education objectives. There are advantages in continuing the performance-based approach, since education sector participants found that the IVP experience has improved their management and implementation of KPIs, and their understanding of the need for effective data collection and analysis processes. Managing a performance-based approach to funding is a challenging exercise in all countries, not just in Sāmoa, and is an area where help and technical expertise may need to be brought in to assist. This issue is further developed in the next section.

⁷ Author Unknown. (2015) *Investment Design for Sāmoa Education Sector Support Program (ESSP)*, July 2015 to June 2018. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Pages 28 and 36.

The use of ring-fenced funding for IE was a transparent approach that successfully ensured that funding was targeted to relevant activities that supported the mainstreaming in regular classrooms of children with disabilities. Activities that were supported include training of teacher aides who would provide support in regular classrooms to children with disabilities. DPs like the transparency of ring-fenced funding since it provides clear accountability for ESSP funding. It would be good to see the GoS invest more of its funding to help to really ensure sustainability for IE objectives within the education sector.

The 'ring-fenced' funding component is essentially project-based funding. The evaluators considered that a move to place more emphasis on a project-based funding approach would undermine the relationship between the donors and the GoS. There was always an intention from the donor perspective that ESSP would be part of a long-term approach. It is for this reason that the evaluators have recommended that the sector budget support modality should continue to be supported as the major mechanism for delivery of funding to support the education sector.

Funding has been available as part of ESSP to support the procurement of technical support for ESSP accountability and quality assurance purposes, and to support the ESCD and other mutually determined areas where required. Technical assistance, where it has been called upon, has had positive results. Valuable technical assistance has been provided, for example, through the Strategic Planning Adviser role. The person undertaking this role has provided strategic advice to ESCD on implementation of the ESSP, and positive assistance with the development of cross-agency reporting templates to support efficient and effective reporting of outputs and outcomes. Useful technical assistance has been provided in other areas (for example, IE) by international advisers with technical expertise. There is further scope for using technical assistance (both international and local) in targeted areas (for example, reading or numeracy specialists at the education faculty of NUS to assist in the training of teachers, or technical expertise in the design and development of new key performance indicators) in order to support and strengthen the implementation of the ESSP.

2.2.7. Independent Verification Process

IAs, ESAC, and other stakeholders interviewed are generally supportive of the IVP. However, the selected KPIs were not SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) and this led to difficulties in providing evidence of achievement. In any performance-based component of a new ESSP that is developed in future, consideration should be given to including process indicators that demonstrate measurable steps towards achieving outcomes, as well as outcomes-focused KPIs.

The IVP was designed as a mechanism to verify the performance-based tranche (30 percent) of the funding provided under ESSP. On balance, the people interviewed supported the IVP and felt there had been positive learning from the exercise. Many saw it as an opportunity to learn from external consultants and develop staff capacity on the management of performance-based systems and this had improved data collection and analysis procedures across the board. The people interviewed from key agencies and the ESAC suggested that the IVP provided good motivation to work together and design and implement the systems required to provide evidence against the nine ESSP KPIs.

The support for the IVP occurred despite the obvious disappointment in not successfully achieving all nine ESSP KPIs. The results from the initial IVP in 2016 were particularly disappointing but results improved in the 2017 and 2018 reports. Feedback from the IVP has helped create a better awareness of the multiple sources of data that need to be coordinated, and

the need for effective system-wide information management systems to collate relevant information and report in a timely way on KPIs. However, there was little evidence available that withholding funding provided incentives to IAs to improve performance.

Learning did occur through mistakes that were made, but it was not until the first IVP had been completed that stakeholders appreciated the importance of identifying the sources of data, gathering the required information, and reporting in a timely way. In some cases, these lessons were too late for effective reporting against the KPIs over the course of the ESSP.

The KPIs selected originally for the performance-based assessment component of the funding are open to criticism for not being easily measurable or achievable, e.g., they are not what would be considered SMART indicators – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. More consultation was needed at the ESSP design stage as to whether the data sources were available that would allow the IAs to provide evidence for the achievement of the KPIs. However, collation of data for IVP should not have been extra work, rather it is part of delivering education programmes. The evaluators consider significant modifications to the current processes and KPIs are needed if a performance-based component is to be included in any new ESSP.

The education sector is expected to work collaboratively and collectively to achieve the KPIs through a sector-wide approach. Unfortunately, there is some evidence the three IAs continue to see the indicators as 'belonging to' individual agencies. The intention of the performance-based component of sector budget support approach is that achieving KPIs generates funding for the education sector as a whole and does not deliver funding specifically to the agency that may be primarily responsible for gathering and reporting on the data. The initial presentation of the KPIs (see Appendix E: Key Performance Indicators: Education Sector Support Programme), where lead agencies are named against specific KPIs, may have contributed to this perception. It is important for the three IAs to realise that new funding should be secured as part of the annual GoS budget process, and that reporting against the KPIs is an accountability requirement for the sector, rather than a revenue-generating exercise for an individual IA. The evaluators suggest one approach to support improved coordination is that the performance funding received for meeting individual KPIs could be targeted at sector initiatives that are expected to support achievement of the KPIs that have not yet been achieved.

Better communication about the implications of the sector budget support modality and the IVP would have assisted stakeholders to understand what they needed to do in collating and analysing information. Clarity is needed about the release of the performance-based funds under a sector budget support approach. While there were initial misunderstandings about how the performance-based funding tranche would be released if KPIs were met, IAs now have a better understanding that the sector budget support approach means they need to cooperate, and that this process generates funding for the education sector, rather than funds that are allocated to individual IAs.

Indicators for the performance-based funds focus on outcomes-focused KPIs. It is generally acknowledged in the education sector that achieving outcomes such as improved student achievement takes time, and that little progress may be observable over a restricted time frame such as that of the ESSP. An approach that includes some process KPIs would enable smaller quantifiable steps towards larger goals to be measured. An example of a process indicator might be one that measures the quality, accuracy and timeliness of delivery of annual Government grant funding to schools and other education providers. Delivery of funding is a key step in helping education providers to meet broader student learning outcomes.

2.2.8. Communications and Guidelines for Schools, ECE and PSET/TVET Providers

Communications and guidelines to education providers have an operational focus and there is little awareness by providers about the ESSP funding, its purpose and expected outcomes.

Feedback from the interviews indicated that there was a lack of provider insight about the ESSP beyond the awareness that, “New Zealand and Australia provide funding for education”. There was no evidence of guidelines for schools or other education providers that relate specifically to the ESSP (for example explaining what the ESSP is, how it supports the education sector, or what dimensions of the education sector are targeted). Individual providers (beyond NUS) had little to no knowledge of the ESSP, and certainly no idea of how that funding might have been relevant to them on an individual provider basis. Schools, however, were aware and appreciative of the school (fee) grant funds delivered to each school to assist them with their school operations but did not link those funds explicitly to ESSP. That money was now sourced from GoS core Budget, even though the initial impetus and funding for the school grants scheme came from New Zealand and Australia. This feedback is consistent with a sector budget support modality where the GoS systems are being successfully used.

There are other creative ways (beside official guidelines) in which visibility for the contribution made by donors to support the education sector might be communicated to a wider audience in Sāmoa. These communication models could include, for example, media releases, advertisements in newspapers and on television, and speeches by High Commissioners at significant events.

The MSS guidelines produced by MESC are well designed and provide helpful advice and guidance to schools. These guidelines include a component that helps schools with their development planning. However, there is close centralised supervision of the MSS, including some apparent role duplication as MESC staff and school inspectors both have a role in monitoring the MSS. Monitoring of the MSS could be streamlined, with less ‘hands on’ approval by MESC staff and more delegation to Principals/Head Teachers as managers of schools who could take more responsibility for their own school development. High-level monitoring responsibility of the MSS could be transferred to school inspectors.

A new integrated approach to delivery of school grants is being developed in Sāmoa. The existing school grants administration manuals will need to be reviewed as part of the implementation of the new integrated approach.

2.3. Efficiency

This section seeks to address the key evaluation question “*To what extent is the implementation of the ESSP being managed efficiently?*”

2.3.1. Implementation

The implementation of the ESSP by the Government of Sāmoa has been less efficient than has been anticipated, but improvements are occurring. Delays in delivering school grant funding directly to schools is evidence of inefficiency within Government of Sāmoa systems. Despite these inefficiencies, the ESSP has clearly added value to the Sāmoa education sector.

The implementation of the ESSP by the GoS has been less efficient than has been anticipated, but improvements are occurring. Part of the reason for initial inefficiency was the very ambitious nature of the ESP to which the ESSP is linked. Challenges from the outset of the ESSP, related to implementation of a SWAp based on a new (to education sector) budget support modality and of coordinating the activities of the three IAs, meant that the programme made a slower start than expected.

There has been some inconsistency in implementation of the ESSP as compared with its original design. The stakeholders informed us the practical application of the first IVP caused the Sāmoa education sector to appreciate that its planning and information management systems needed overhaul and strengthening to demonstrate in a timely way that the KPIs had been achieved. Delayed or late reporting and initial failure of the ESCD to follow the required procedures were indications of this inefficiency. Added value through reduced transaction costs and reduced duplication are not yet apparent, but these benefits should become evident in future, given the better understanding of what sector budget support for education means in practice.

Results against the nine ESSP KPIs have shown steady improvement over the last three years, although considerable scope remains for efficiency improvements. For example, the teacher appraisal process has been proceeding positively, and the relevant KPI (percentage of teachers meeting teacher performance standards) was achieved in the 2018 IVP report. In the same report, the KPI relating to the number of schools meeting MSS for literacy and numeracy was achieved. Similarly, the KPI for the number of accredited courses provided by PSET providers was also achieved. Four other KPIs in the 2018 IVP report were partially achieved, while two KPIs were not achieved. Without exception, all those interviewed were committed to the improvement of education in Sāmoa. The passion and commitment of staff in the education sector has been a key contributor to the achievement of ESSP outcomes.

The need for training and capacity development is recognised as a key issue across the education sector. This includes the quality of teaching, since the quality of student performance in the classroom is dependent upon the quality of the teacher. The Faculty of Education at NUS and the teacher development division of MESC acknowledge the need to strengthen the skills of teachers currently in the profession, and have been implementing programmes to upgrade the qualifications of teachers to degree level (from diploma level), and to provide relevant in-service training. Teachers in schools have been given in-service training in internal assessment processes and procedures. It is too soon, however, to assess whether this training is leading to improved student achievement in schools. The teacher appraisal system is being implemented successfully. The PSET Support Fund is providing opportunities for tutors to upgrade their skills. In-Country Training is being delivered by NUS in the post-compulsory sector via their Oloamanu Centre for Professional Development and Continuing Education.

Feedback from stakeholders was clear that they felt the ESSP has added value to the Sāmoa education sector. The assistance and support provided includes provision of technical assistance (TA), support and advice through participation on the governance bodies, and help with managing for results. The evaluators met with the technical assistant who was engaged to support the ESCD, and concluded that the direct implementation support given through such activities as provision of ongoing advice on the ESSP, and the development of reporting templates, had assisted considerably in reducing transaction costs and avoiding duplication. Useful expertise and advice had been contributed by contracted technical advice in relation to MESC's IE policy. Direct support was also provided through the engagement of technical experts to assist with the IVP. There was general acknowledgment that value had been added through the independence and technical expertise that these skilled people had brought to bear on the ESSP.

Feedback from schools visited indicated that 2018 school grants had not yet been delivered to school bank accounts by mid-September. The delay in delivering funds was explained as a result of the planned introduction of the new integrated approach to school grant delivery. Nevertheless, Principals/Head Teachers commented that schools were facing difficult cash flow issues as a result of the late delivery of school grant funds. The impact on schools of the unacceptable delay in receiving funding is that other sources of revenue (such as the fees paid by parents) had to be used to pay outstanding monthly bills such as water and power bills. An inability to meet deadlines for delivering funds to educational institutions raises questions about the efficiency of implementation of the ESSP.

2.3.2. Development Partner Management Efficiency

Delays in the initial delivery of funding and misalignment between ESSP and Government of Sāmoa Budget process timelines have caused inefficiencies. Despite these delays, Development Partner engagement with the ESSP Implementing Agencies has been positive.

The ESP was a five-year programme starting in 1 July 2013. The ESSP was expected to be a three-year programme covering August 2015 to December 2018. As shown by Figure 3 in Appendix F: ESSP Funding Timelines there was some delay in signing the ESSP JFA by DPs (JFA signed 8 October 2015 by Australia, 21 March 2016 by New Zealand) and consequently delivery of funding was late (not delivered on 1 August 2015). Late signing of the JFA impacted upon the ability of the GoS to make an early start in implementing the programme, and further limited the ability of GoS to understand and come to terms with the implications of the new sector budget support funding modality. The practical effect of the delay in receiving funding from donors was to reduce the effective time frame of the ESSP to two years rather than the three years that was originally anticipated.

Personnel from the MFAT and DFAT posts in Sāmoa have had close involvement with ESSP, and have maintained good communication with the three IAs through their participation in the ESAC. The support and advice provided to ESAC by DPs has been appreciated. The Head Offices of MFAT Wellington and DFAT Canberra have only been involved at a relatively high level. On balance, the support of the DPs has helped to promote more efficient implementation of the ESSP through a process of policy dialogue and through monitoring of progress.

2.3.3. Systems Efficiency

The decision to deliver the bulk of ESSP funding through a sector budget support mechanism was appropriate. However, there are several initiatives that would improve the efficiency of ESSP – specifically initiatives focused on strengthening the education system and the capacity of those working within it.

Some examples of areas where more efficient systems would improve performance were provided to the evaluators. For example, the procurement process was perceived to cause delays in implementation of some activities, especially those managed by MESC. The process for obtaining approval from MoF for procurement was considered cumbersome.

An MTEF for the ESSP has been sighted by the evaluators. However, it appears to exist in multiple versions, is relatively complex, and does not appear to have been recently updated. Reporting to the ESWG and ESAC as part of quarterly and annual review reports should provide an updated MTEF as part of the financial reporting. The evaluators understand that a recent appointment has been made to the ESCD with responsibility for updating and reporting against the MTEF. It is expected having this additional capacity in the team will support improvements in this area.

The total value of the ESSP over its life was up to a maximum of SAT\$35,865,685. In summary, the GoS has actually received SAT\$28,893,258 over the four financial years of the ESSP from the total budget. Table 2 sets out the budget for ESSP and the funding actually received by the GoS is set out by ESSP financial years.

Table 2: ESSP Budget and Actual Funds Received, 2015-2019 Currency: Sāmoan tala, rounded to \$000s ⁸

	FY2015-16		FY2016-17		FY2017-18		FY2018-19		Total		
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Difference
A	8,001.3	7,116.7	8,498.4	8,498.4	8,437.8	6,338.2	-	2,112	24,937.4	24,065.2	872.2
B	-	-	3,642.1	619.1	3,616.2	2,007	3,669.9	2,202	10,928.3	4,828	6,100.3
C	8,001.3	7,116.7	12,140.5	9,117.5	12,054	8,345.2	3,669.9	4,314	35,865.7	28,893.2	6,972.5

- Row A – Annual fixed tranche amount based on process indicators (70 percent)
- Row B – Performance-based tranche amount subject to achievement of KPIs (30 percent)
- Row C – Total of fixed and performance-based tranches (Rows A and B added together)

A proportion (SAT\$6,972.5k or 19.4 percent) of the potential funding available has not been delivered to the education sector. This figure is the difference between the total budget figure of SAT\$35,865.7k and the actual funding delivered (SAT\$28,893.2k). Row B in Table 2 shows the amount of funding that was withheld due to not achieving all the targets (the nine KPIs) associated with the performance-based component. Another reason was that funds from a previous education programme (ESPII) were unspent, and were reallocated, with a consequent offset reduction in the money made available for the education sector under ESSP. The evaluators do have a concern, however, that some of the fixed tranche funds were withheld in 2017/2018. It is difficult for education providers to plan expenditure without predictability of funding. The reasons for withholding fixed tranche funds arise possibly because of uncommitted expenditure and services not being delivered to an anticipated timeline, or possibly because financial

⁸ Note: Small differences in addition may be a result of rounding.

administrators have taken steps to 'recover' unspent funds. Nevertheless, the withholding of funds that were signalled in the ESSP budget is an indication of some inefficiency in the system. Timely financial reporting by the ESCD using an updated MTEF, and timely financial reporting by MoF back to the education sector, would assist overall efficiency.

The evaluators are also concerned that at this stage, near the end of the programme, the data from the MoF shows that SAT\$6,564,607 of the funds allocated remains unspent. This figure is an indication of inefficiency in the system. Some of the unspent funds may need to be returned to donors because these funds may be part of the 30 percent performance-based tranche where KPIs have not been met and funding was consequently not released to the education sector. However, MoF could be invited by ESCD to identify if there are any unspent funds available in the ESSP budget that could, with donor agreement, either be released before the end of 2018, or be carried over into 2019 for possible disbursement.

On balance the evaluators have concluded that the decision to deliver the bulk of ESSP funding through a sector budget support mechanism was appropriate. Potentially this arrangement should have been more efficient. The inefficiency that was evident, such as inadequate prior analysis and late reporting, arose partly because of a lack of understanding by the IAs of what the new SWAp represented by the sector budget support modality entailed, and partly from a lack of staff capacity in prior planning, coordination and delivery of the requirements for timely information and reports.

There are several initiatives that would improve the efficiency of ESSP. These include a targeted programme of capacity development for staff of IAs and teachers and tutors in education providers, better integration of GoS budget and ESSP timelines, and better planning, preparation and management of data so that reporting can occur in a timely way. Attention to timeliness of reporting by earlier prior planning and thorough analysis would assist the governance bodies who would not have to return reports for further work. Another step that would improve efficiency is simplification of the M&E Framework and the MTEF, and regular use of these tools in reporting to ESWG and ESAC. Reform of information management systems, and improvement and regular use by staff in the three IAS of a redesigned EMIS would assist in more efficient management of data.

2.4. Impact

This section seeks to address the key evaluation question “*What is the likely impact of the ESSP?*” Any discussion of impact of the ESSP needs to be understood within the timeframe of the programme and the related ability to demonstrate improvements in educational outcomes within this short timeframe. The very ambitious nature of some of the anticipated ESP outcomes across the broad range of the entire education sector (for example, measurable improvements in literacy and numeracy skills) have been unrealistic to achieve in the relatively short duration of the ESSP programme (just over three years). It may take at least a generation (twenty-five years or more) before education sector initiatives (such as improvements in teacher qualifications and capacity) can be shown to lead to quantifiable improvements in student performance.

2.4.1. Impact of funding via sector budget support

Delivery of the funding via sector budget support has allowed the Implementing Agencies to use the ESSP to support activities that will support the long-term achievement of Education Sector Plan goals and sector outcomes.

The evaluators understand that the availability of ESSP funding also made it possible for the IAs to design and pilot new initiatives that would otherwise have been outside of the reach of the available GoS funding for education. Two such initiatives are an e-initiative led by MESC and NUS that has included training for teachers to use e-learning, and the SQA delivered PSET trainer development programme. In both cases, these programmes are targeted at upskilling the education sector to deliver education programmes that are fit for purpose in a changing education environment.

The distribution of ESSP funding via a sector budget support approach, rather than via project specific funding, has allowed the IAs to utilise the available funds to focus on activities that they consider will support the long-term achievement of ESP goals and sector outcomes. A clear example of this is the roll out of activities aimed at supporting teachers to deliver higher quality education. As noted above, this has included professional development of teachers and principals to strengthen the education sector which, if appropriately managed, will have a positive impact on the medium to long term educational outcomes.

It has not been possible for the evaluators to make a definitive determination whether the ESSP funding would have had more impact had they been used in alternative ways (e.g., more targeted funding on provision of resources and teacher training to improve literacy and numeracy). The impact of education investment is always going to be long-term. Attempts to evaluate education system improvement on a short-term basis are risky, and may lead to false conclusions based on uneven, partial or inaccurate data.

2.4.2. Impact on families, schools and communities

The direct impact of ESSP funding on families, schools and communities is difficult to specifically identify as ‘nature’ of budget sector support is that the source of the funding is not ‘visible’ to those on the frontline.

For most families any impacts would be difficult to identify as specifically linked to the ESSP funding, although the school grant funds have had the effect of eliminating or reducing school fees. As noted above, activities targeted at strengthening the education sector and education system are more likely to have a positive impact on Sāmoan families as they lead to improvements in

education quality and increase in learning outcomes. In saying this, the impact is likely to have been noticeable for those families of children with disabilities (see section 2.6.2).

The support that the ESSP funding has provided to the teacher qualification upgrade programme is one noticeable activity that has had a direct impact on schools in respect to the requirement for their staff to undertake professional development after school hours during term time in addition to the MESC run professional development that occurs in the school holidays. Beyond this, the school representatives we spoke to attributed progress in the way funding is allocated to their schools to either the school grant scheme or other forms of external donation (e.g., community fundraising initiatives or donations from donors for large capital projects funded by JICA or the Chinese Government). The 'nature' of sector budget support is that the source of the funding is not 'visible' to those receiving it. This creates some difficulties for donors, in that they are unable to clearly identify what their funding was spent on.

Mission education organisations are concerned about the financial pressure they face in funding salaries of teachers in schools and tutors in PSET institutions. There is no GoS funding provided directly for salaries of teachers in Mission schools, although Mission schools qualify for a Government Grant and (in the schools' sector) receive access to the school (fee) grants that available to all schools. Nevertheless, Mission schools in Sāmoa can only afford to pay lower salaries to teachers in comparison with Government schools, and therefore suffer consequent regular migration of their staff to positions in Government schools with higher paid salaries. The result is a lack of qualified teachers in some Mission schools, and regular turnover of staff. This situation in Sāmoa compares unfavourably with the situation in other Pacific countries such as Fiji or the Solomon Islands, where Mission school teachers receive salary payments from their respective Governments.

2.5. Sustainability

This section seeks to address the key evaluation question, “*Are the benefits of the ESSP likely to be sustainable?*” To improve the long-term impact of the ESSP funding, activities should be focused on strengthening the education sector (for example, the skills of individuals and teams working within education) and the education system (for example, the tools and resources that are used by those working in the sector). Several activities identified in the ESP have been undertaken by the three IAs over the period of the ESSP, and can be seen as focused on building the education sector and the system that supports it. However, there is still further work to be done.

2.5.1. Capacity building in the education sector

The ESSP has been used to fund initiatives to support capacity growth across the education sector in Sāmoa (including upgrading teacher qualifications and provide for taskforces and technical advisory services). Further planning and targeted capacity initiatives are required to ensure the sustainability of ESSP investments.

Initiatives supported by ESSP funding undertaken over 2016-2018 have included a focus on capacity building of government officials, principals, teachers and those in governance and/or management roles within education providers across the full spectrum of the education sector (ECE, Primary, Secondary, formal and informal PSET/TVET, and IE).

One initiative aimed at harnessing the expertise of people across the education sector in Sāmoa was to establish taskforces in six key areas – literacy, numeracy, teacher development, assessment, ECE and IE. In some cases, these taskforces have been supported by the procurement of technical assistance through ESSP funding set aside for this purpose. It was reported that the taskforces have met with mixed success. It is disappointing that more has not been achieved by the literacy, numeracy and assessment taskforces over this period as they are key areas for improving learning outcomes and further work is required in these areas. The IE taskforce has been successful in developing policies and plans for the future. This work is discussed further in section 2.6.2 and should be further integrated into any new ESP and ESSP.

It is noted that there was no evidence that the MTR recommendation to appoint people to the two key positions at MESC which have leadership responsibility for literacy and numeracy had been achieved. The absence of leadership and direction continues to have an impact on the ability of the sector to achieve the expected outcomes in these areas.

The Teacher Development taskforce had a role in revising the National Teacher Development Framework (NTDF), a key step in supporting the ongoing capacity development of the teacher workforce to achieve sustainability of the ESSP funded outcomes. The implementation of the NTDF is key to the targeted upskilling of teaching staff, however, the impact of this unknown as it has not yet been rolled out.

The ECE taskforce has made significant progress, including leading the development of an ECE curriculum which is key to the professionalisation of this sector. Historically ECE was managed and delivered at arm’s length from GoS agencies and most ECE delivery was managed at the community level, often supported by village churches. IA involvement in the taskforce has seen more GoS agency input in the ECE space. Furthermore, the one indicator in the M&E framework for ECE (assessment of school readiness of children completing early childhood education) has been removed due to a lack of available data.

The evaluators understand that there is some political support for making ECE compulsory in Sāmoa from age four. The evaluators saw little evidence that the ECE sector is ready for this

requirement. Development of an evidence-based ECE policy (including provision of sufficient well-trained ECE staff), an implementation plan for the roll out of the ECE curriculum, and guidance on what is required for ECE facilities to meet the MSS are necessary pre-conditions before any requirement for ECE attendance comes into force.

Except for the TA support for the ESCD, the targeted TA funding has mostly been used to supply short term capacity for individual projects such as the Review of Extended school hours completed in July 2018. While this addresses immediate needs for specific skills, it can be argued that this is not the most effective approach for the long-term sustainability of the ESP activities. The evaluators understand the TA guidelines include a reference to capacity building, however due to delays in task definition and work scoping, only a few of the 19 approved requests for TA have been filled. An improvement to the processes for engaging TA support is required to ensure timely recruitment and engagement of experts to provide project and capacity development support in priority areas.

In speaking with representatives from the three IAs, there was some concern that their staff do not have sufficient skills to make best use of the education data collected and are unable to complete the level of analysis required to advise the ESWG and support decision making by the ESAC. Therefore, it is recommended that this capacity development plan should include activities to improve the quality of analysis and reporting across the education sector.

2.5.2. Strengthening the education system

The tools and resources used in delivering education (including assessment) and the processes used by Implementing Agencies to complete monitoring and reporting activities are not always fit for purpose and more work is required to support the ongoing sustainability of the systems in use.

In addition to raising the skills of individuals and teams working within the education sector, it is important they are supported by an education system that is fit for purpose. This includes the tools and resources used in delivering teaching and learning (including assessment) and the policies and processes used by the IAs that allow them to complete the necessary monitoring and reporting activities. This is not currently the case and more work is required. Additional activities are required to support the achievement of Goal 4 of the ESP “*Improved sector coordination of research, policy and planning development*” and the associated sector outcome “*Analysis of research findings, evaluations and monitoring evidence increasingly used to inform policy and planning across the sector*”.

The evaluation team examined the reports outlining the findings of two recent reviews of how information is managed across the education sector.⁹ More urgency is needed on the project to develop and implement an EMIS that can be used to collate data to support planning and reporting within a SWAp. The evaluation team consider this to be a priority project to ensure IAs are able to make better use of the data available to report learning outcomes.

One key area where the three IAs have previously struggled to collaborate is TVET policy and planning. SQA has taken the lead and has developed a *National Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy (2018-2023)*. This is a positive development. This policy is an initiative of GoS through the ESAC and the SQA to improve access to TVET, as well as enhancing the relevance,

⁹ UNESCO Institute of Statistics. (2018) *Sāmoa Education Data Quality Assessment Report*, and WizConsult. (2017) *Situational Analysis for Creating Education Sector Management Information System & Recommendations*.

quality assurance and coordination of TVET systems. NUS has developed a parallel document, a *Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) Strategy for Sāmoa 2018-2022*. While NUS is only one of several providers of TVET in Sāmoa, it is nevertheless the major provider of PSET. It will be important for the future of TVET development in Sāmoa that these two different policy strategies are integrated into a coherent national approach that recognises the need for a whole-of-Government approach. It is for the GOS to determine if ESAC is the right forum for development, management and support of TVET policies and processes in Sāmoa, or whether an alternative, such as a well-functioning TVET Oversight Committee (like the idea proposed by NUS), is more appropriate. Determining the appropriate response to future TVET development is a matter that needs to be settled as part of the design process for a new ESP and a new ESSP.

The CEOs for SQA and MESAC, and the Vice-Chancellor for NUS, informed the evaluation team that they are currently collaborating on a joint TVET Policy and Strategy that will include secondary and post-secondary provision of TVET. This type of collaboration should be encouraged to strengthen the system, supporting this important area of provision, so that a more coherent and sustainable approach is in place in the future. Similarly, the three agencies should be encouraged to work together on any future policy and plans around IE and ECE provision to ensure consideration of provider quality and teacher training are developed using a SWAp.

2.6. Cross-cutting issues

This section seeks to address the key evaluation question “*To what extent have cross-cutting issues (gender equality and disability inclusive development) been identified and pursued in the ESSP?*”

2.6.1. Gender equality

Currently male students have lower achievement in core areas (literacy and numeracy) at lower levels of schooling and are less likely to transition to formal Post-Secondary Education and Training. More work is needed to ensure that enough appropriate education opportunities are in place to ensure that boys’ education needs are being met at primary, secondary and PSET levels.

During the ESSPs period of operation it appears that gender equality has not been identified as an area of focus beyond data collection and analysis by gender. Historically, gender equality in education has focused on access to educational opportunities for females. Sāmoa is achieving well in this area; however, there is evidence of other issues related to gender equality.

There are four KPIs within ESSP that report achievement results by gender:

- KPI 1: Percentage of Year 4 and 6 children meeting a minimum of Level 3 for Literacy (English and Sāmoan) by gender;
- KPI 2: Percentage of Year 4 and 6 children meeting a minimum of Level 3 or better for Numeracy by gender;
- KPI 4: Percentage of children commencing Year 1 Primary and completing Year 8, by gender; and
- KPI 5: Transition rate from Year 13 to formal PSET.

There are poorer results for males than females in three of these KPIs (literacy, numeracy, transition to formal PSET). KPIs 1 and 2 show that females are consistently outperforming males in these key result areas.¹⁰ As shown by KPI 4, access to, and completion of, primary education is consistent across both genders. However, access to formal PSET is significantly lower for males. In contrast to the data included in the latest IVP, the latest data available for PSET enrolments and graduations show the gross enrolment numbers in formal PSET in 2017 were 1,190 for females, and 1,436 for males. The graduation ratio from formal PSET in 2017 was 39.5 percent for females and 38.2 percent for males.¹¹ This data has not been verified in the same way that the IVP data has. Further analysis is required to identify reasons for these gaps.

Table 3: Percentage Achievement against KPIs 1, 2, 4 and 5 by Gender - 2018 IVP report

	KPI 1: Year 4 English Literacy	KPI 1: Year 6 English Literacy	KPI 1: Year 4 Sāmoan Literacy	KPI 1: Year 6 Sāmoan Literacy:	KPI 2: Year 4 Numeracy	KPI 2: Year 6 Numeracy	KPI 4: Primary completion rates	KPI 5: Transition to formal PSET
Male	32%	36%	48%	52%	37%	50%	80%	37%
Female	48%	54%	62%	69%	46%	58%	81%	52%

¹⁰ It is also worth noting that Sāmoa College which has an entrance exam at Year 9 and takes the 130 top performing students typically enrolls two girls for every boy.

¹¹ Sāmoa Qualifications Authority. (2018) *Sāmoa Post School Education and Training (PSET): Statistical Bulletin 2017*. SQA, p. 3.

The results shown in Table 3 above, are taken from the 2018 IVP results report. Further work is required to ensure that there are sufficient appropriate education opportunities in place to ensure that boys' needs are being met through formal and informal education.

2.6.2. Inclusive education

Ring-fenced funding for inclusive education has been successful. The development of an Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Plan 2017-2020 and associated tools for more accurate identification of people with disabilities have supported the inclusive education sector to be better prepared for future mainstreaming of people with disabilities in education.

The ESSP evaluation included a review of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the funding of SAT\$6,126,185 across FY2015-16 to FY2017-18 from DFAT specifically for IE disbursed through the sector budget support mechanism and ring-fenced by MoF from the 70 percent tranche of the sector budget support mechanism. Overall, the evaluation determined that the approach to ring-fence the funding for IE has been successful. While there is still much work to be done, the sector is better prepared for future mainstreaming of people with disabilities in education than it was in 2016.

Following the release of the SIEDP evaluation report in late 2016, MESC and DFAT prepared a management response to the findings and recommendations outlined in the evaluation report including agreed actions (November 2017). This response followed the release of the Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Plan 2017-2020 in June 2017.

The policy also includes an M&E plan with draft indicators against which progress will be measured on an annual basis. The indicators identified are expected to guide reporting by service providers; the IE Taskforce will monitor progress against these indicators. Further work is needed to ensure these indicators are SMART. Once approved, the Implementation Plan will be submitted to the ESCD for incorporation into the M&E Framework.

The evaluation team understands that that a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between MESC, and the IE Service Providers and Special Schools in March 2018. This saw the achievement of one of the IE Policy Implementation Plan Outcomes as the main purpose of the MOU is to clarify the current and planned services that are central to the IE Policy. It also clarifies which services MESC will support each special school and provider to deliver as part of the IE policy. This is an indication of a partnership between MESC and the IE service providers and special schools, as well as DPs in implementing the IE policy.

The evaluators understand that work is underway to revise MESC's Annual School Survey by incorporating the Washington Group questions to support more accurate identification of students with disabilities. An initial implementation of this new approach to disability identification (undertaken by Senese in March 2018) saw a jump from 140 to 270 students with disabilities identified in mainstream schooling. The evaluators understand that the Washington Group questions are also used to inform the Sāmoan Census and alignment between these two approaches to data collection about people with disabilities should help to strengthen cross-sector (i.e. health, education, and women, community and social development) activities to support Sāmoans living with disabilities. More work is needed to identify and assist people with disabilities in the PSET sector.

It was noted that students with disabilities are not always getting timely access to the health specialists they need. Whilst the provider Senese does its best, it is not able to provide the specialist services required (e.g., speech therapy, educational psychology, or physical therapy). It

was suggested that by the time the assistance becomes available the child has often been moved on to a special school or has been removed from schooling altogether.

Stakeholders identified that one benefit of incorporating IE within the wider MESC work programme has been an increase in the perceived legitimacy of the providers working in this area. This is particularly important for Senese who interact directly with schools that have students with disabilities enrolled. It was reported that in the past Senese have had difficulties getting access to students within the classroom. However, Principals now appear to have a better understanding of their work.

3. LESSONS LEARNED

The key lessons learned from the evaluation of the ESSP to inform future iterations of DP funding support for the education sector in Sāmoa are related to the need for an adequate time frame to implement a new approach; the need to recognise in-country capacity; the need for improved communication about funding matters; and streamlining of data collection, monitoring and reporting requirements.

The lessons learned can be summarised as follows:

- Take the time that is necessary at the outset of a major programme to plan well. Both DPs and GoS agencies need to start planning early, allow time for GoS processes to be completed, and be realistic about implementation time frames. International experience suggests that implementation of a budget support modality needs a long-time frame of at least five years before the benefits begin to become apparent.
- Start with small manageable steps and plan activities that can be phased in gradually in order to achieve sustainability. Lack of attention to in-country capacity, adoption of overly ambitious targets, and insufficient prior analysis of the country context are recurring lessons in the Pacific.
- Align the budget planning and reporting requirements for any sector budget support from development partners with those of the GoS Budget processes.
- Ensure there is effective and timely communication and transparency about the funding available, and about the expectations with respect to performance of both IAs and MoF.
- Consult during the development of individual performance indicators, to ensure the data required to report progress and achievement is available in the form required.
- Include clear guidelines for how performance-based funding will be distributed across sector agencies when KPIs are achieved.

4. EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation of the ESSP provided an opportunity to interview stakeholders and review the supporting operational and policy documentation for the ESSP and ESP. Our analysis shows the ESSP has a clear strategic framework aligned with Australian/New Zealand international development policy and GoS development objectives, and the educational objectives of education providers. While there were some serious initial challenges faced by the GoS in implementing the programme, and the overall objectives were too ambitious, the IAs with responsibility for the delivery of the ESP have made progress in many areas supported by the ESSP. There have been gains in areas such as teacher development and appraisal, ECE and IE. The evaluation found the additional activities made possible by the ESSP investment have addressed the priorities of target groups such as schools and other education providers, and have targeted key issues facing the education sector such as the need to improve literacy and numeracy.

The expressed commitment and hard work of staff has been a major factor enabling the achievement of ESSP objectives. The limited capacity of staff to monitor, analyse and report on data, the lack of timeliness in reporting, and staff turnover are factors that have constrained further success. While there has been positive learning about management of the ESSP, the time frame over which the ESSP has been operational has been too short to be able to point to hard evidence of improved learning outcomes.

The challenges faced by the education sector in Sāmoa in implementing the ESSP relate particularly to the development and implementation of new approaches to the sector budget support modality, which the ESSP, and specifically the IVP, necessitated. Misalignment between the ESSP processes and GoS Budget timelines created inefficiencies over the life of the ESSP programme. Better alignment between these timelines and processes would make the operation of the programme more efficient. The fixed tranche disbursement of the budget support component of the funding modality (70 percent) is appropriate, although it is suggested that to ensure predictability of funding and more effective planning, the fixed tranche amount should not be reduced unless there are exceptional circumstances. The performance-based approach to the other 30 percent of the ESSP funding, monitored by the IVP, should be continued, but with modifications to ensure that there is wide consultation on any KPIs selected for a future programme. The ring-fencing of funding for IE should continue, since the targeting made possible by this arrangement is slowly bringing results.

Investment in a programme of staff capacity development is necessary in order to improve the analysis of data and reporting against key performance objectives. Streamlining and simplifying the ESSP monitoring tools such as the monitoring and evaluation framework and the medium-term expenditure framework will be essential. If these adjustments are made, there is every prospect that the planned outcomes of the ESSP related to improving student learning and building the capacity of the education system can be achieved over time.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue to use a sector budget support modality to deliver any future ESSP-type funding with the following conditions:
 - a. better alignment between the ESSP reporting and planning timelines and the established timelines of the GoS Budget process;
 - b. expert guidance in the development of performance indicators for any future ESP, and selection for inclusion in an ESSP, to ensure the KPIs are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound), and that the required evidence is able to be collected and reported;
 - c. accountability requirements must be satisfied by regular reporting against appropriate KPIs; and
 - d. the 'fixed tranche' component of the education sector budget support modality should be delivered annually in total if a reasonable proportion of any fixed process indicators are met.
2. Continue to use an Independent Verification Process for a small number of agreed KPIs, with the following conditions:
 - a. include clear guidelines on how the individual KPIs for the sector relate to the release of the performance funding component; and
 - b. specify the steps for the release of funding, including whether any IA is entitled to a share of the funding disbursed.
3. Prepare a capacity development plan for staff of GoS agencies with involvement in all levels of the education sector (e.g., MESCS, SQA, NUS) to ensure those working in these agencies have the necessary skills to support future planning and reporting. This plan would sit alongside the National Teacher Development Framework, and include capacity development plans for the ECE, PSET/TVET and IE sectors.
4. Improve the processes for engaging technical assistance to ensure timely recruitment and engagement with a focus on capacity development in priority areas. For example, resourcing a reading specialist in the Education Faculty of NUS to help ensure teachers (participating in pre-service and in-service training) have the skills required to teach reading.
5. Support current work to develop a Sāmoa Education Data Quality Improvement Plan, and support implementation of the plan in order to strengthen data collection and analysis, monitoring, and reporting.
6. Update, rationalise and simplify the M&E Framework to ensure that it can be used effectively, and consider whether it gives the necessary focus to the range of activities across the education sector (e.g., ECE, IE, primary, secondary, formal, and informal PSET and TVET).
7. Improve the integration of MTEF update processes with other reporting to ensure the necessary updates actually occur.

REFERENCES

- Adam Smith International [ASI]. (2015) *Evaluation of the Sāmoa Country Programme*. ASI.
- . (2017) *Sāmoa Education Sector Plan 2013-2018: Mid-Term Review Report*. ASI.
- Australian Government (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade), Government of Sāmoa & New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (August 2015) *Joint Funding Arrangement (Arrangement) Sāmoa Education Sector Support Program (ESSP)*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- Author Unknown. (2015) *Investment Design for Sāmoa Education Sector Support Program (ESSP), July 2015 to June 2018*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- . (2016) *Sāmoa Inclusive Education Demonstration Project: Project Evaluation Report, December 2016*. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- . (2017) *Sāmoa Early Grade Reading Assessment Report*. World Bank.
- Asian Development Bank [ADB]. (2016) *Completion Report: Sāmoa: Education Sector Project II*. ADB.
- Boyd, Shayne. (2017a) 'Bilingual Policy in Sāmoa', unpublished manuscript.
- . (2017b) 'Introduction (Three Year 8 Examinations)', unpublished manuscript.
- . (2018a) 'Student Results across Sāmoa', unpublished manuscript.
- . (2018b) 'Sāmoa Secondary Leaving Certificate Prescription: A Comparison of the 2013 Prescription and the 2018 Prescription', unpublished manuscript.
- . (2018c) 'Curriculum Matters Discussion Paper', unpublished manuscript.
- . (2018d) 'Analysis of the 2017 SSC and SSLC examinations/examiners' reports', unpublished manuscript.
- . (2018e) 'Discussion paper Three – Literacy in the Secondary System in Sāmoa', unpublished manuscript.
- Brooker, Fred, Pongi, Visiesio, & Tuioti, Lili. (2016) *Sāmoa Education Sector Independent Verification Report*.
- Brooker, Fred, von Dadelszen, Jane, & Pongi, Visiesio. (2017) *Sāmoa Education Sector Independent Verification Report*.
- Catherwood, Vince & Taylor, Lester. (2016) *End of Programme Evaluation: Sāmoa (Primary) School Fee Grant Scheme*. Wellington: Vince Catherwood & Associates Ltd.
- Education Sector Coordination Division [ESCD]. (2018a) *Education Sector Quarterly Progress Report: Quarter One 2017-18, July-August-September 2017*. ESCD.
- . (2018b) *Education Sector Quarterly Progress Report: Quarter Two 2017-18, October-November-December 2017*. ESCD.
- Government of Sāmoa [GoS]. (2013) *Sāmoa Education Sector Plan, July 2013 – June 2018: Improved Focus on Access to Education and Training and Quality Learning Outcomes*. GoS.
- . (2015) *Quarterly Progress Report, Developmental Projects*. GoS.

- . (2017) ‘Management Response to Recommendations from the Sāmoa Inclusive Education Demonstration Program Evaluation’, unpublished manuscript.
- . (n.d.) *Education Sector Fourth Annual Review FY 2016-2017*. GoS.
- Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour [MCIL]. (2016) *Sāmoa Labour Market Survey of Private Sector Employers Report 2016*. MCIL.
- Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture [MESC]. (2006) *Strategic Policies and Plan, July 2006 – June 2015: Sāmoa*. MESC.
- . (2007) *Education for All: Mid-Decade Assessment Report SĀMOA 2007*. MESC.
- . (2014) *Annual Report: 1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014*. MESC.
- . (2015) *Annual Report: 1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015*. MESC.
- . 2016a) *Minimum Service Standards for Primary and Secondary Schools in Sāmoa*. MESC.
- . (2016b) *Annual Report: 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016*. MESC.
- . (2017a) *Annual Report: 1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017*. MESC.
- . (2017b) *Education Statistical Digest*. MESC.
- . (2017c) ‘Sāmoa Early Grade Reading Assessment (SEGRA) 2017. Briefing Note for the Honourable Minister of Education, Sports and Culture’, unpublished manuscript.
- . (n.d.) *National Teacher Development Framework 2018-2028*. MESC.
- . (n.d.) *Corporate Plan: July 2015 – June 2018*. MESC.
- Ministry of Finance [MoF]. (2012) *Strategy for the Development of Sāmoa, 2012-2016*. MoF.
- . (2016) *Strategy for the Development of Sāmoa, 2016/17-2019/20*. MoF.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (n.d.) ‘New Zealand – Sāmoa Joint Commitment for Development’, unpublished manuscript.
- National University of Sāmoa [NUS]. (2018) *Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) Strategy for Sāmoa 2018-2022*. NUS.
- Pongi, Visiesio and von Dadelszen, Jane. (2018a) *Sāmoa Education Sector Independent Verification Report*.
- . (2018b) *Sāmoa Education Sector IVP Recommendations Report Final Report*.
- Sāmoa Bureau of Statistics [SBS]. (2017a) *Statistical Abstract 2017*. SBS.
- . (2017b) *2016 Census Brief No. 1. Revised Version: Population Snapshot and Household Highlights*. SBS.
- . (2018a) *2016 Census Brief No. 2: Population Dynamics and Trends*. SBS.
- . (2018b) *2016 Census Brief No. 3: Education and Economic Characteristics*. SBS.
- Sāmoa Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, Pacific Community & UNICEF Pacific (2018). *2018 Sāmoa Disability Report: An Analysis of 2016 Census of Population and Housing*. Suva: UNICEF.

- Sāmoa Qualifications Authority [SQA]. (2010) *Sāmoa Post School Education and Training (PSET): Statistical Bulletin 2010*. SQA.
- . (2012). *Post School Education and Training (PSET): Statistical Bulletin 2011*. SQA.
- . (2013) *Post School Education and Training (PSET): Statistical Bulletin 2012*. SQA.
- . (2014) *The Sāmoa Qualifications Authority PSET Statistical Bulletin 2013*. SQA.
- . (2016) *The Sāmoa Qualifications Authority PSET Statistical Bulletin 2015*. SQA.
- . (2017) *Sāmoa Qualifications Authority PSET Statistical Bulletin 2016*. SQA.
- . (2018a) *Sāmoa Qualifications Authority PSET Statistical Bulletin 2017*. SQA.
- . (2018b) *Survey for Employer Satisfaction with 2012, 2013 & 2014 Graduates from Formal Post School Education and Training (PSET) Providers in Sāmoa*. SQA.
- . (2018c) *National Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Policy 2018-2023*. SQA.
- Sāmoa Qualifications Authority, Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture & National University of Sāmoa [SQA, MESC & NUS]. (n.d.(a)) *Sāmoa Education Sector Plan 2013/2014 Annual Review Report*. SQA, MESC & NUS.
- . (n.d.(b)) *Education Sector Plan 2013-2018: Second Annual Review Report FY2014-2015*. SQA, MESC & NUS.
- . (n.d.(c)) *Education Sector Third Annual Review Report FY2015-2016*. SQA, MESC & NUS.
- . (n.d.(d)) *Education Sector Fourth Annual Review FY 2016-2017*. SQA, MESC & NUS.
- UNESCO Institute of Statistics. (2018) *Sāmoa Education Data Quality Assessment Report*.
- WizConsult. (2017) *Situational Analysis for Creating Education Sector Management Information System & Recommendations*.

APPENDIX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE

External Evaluation for the Sāmoa Education Sector Program Terms of Reference

1. This Terms of Reference (TOR) is for the external evaluation for the Sāmoa Education Sector Support Programme (ESSP) and is jointly undertaken by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). The ESSP is delivered through budget support and is jointly funded by MFAT and DFAT. It is led by the Government of Sāmoa targeting its education priorities set in the Education Sector Plan July 2013-June 2018.

1. Overview and Evaluation Purpose

2. DFAT and MFAT wish to commission a joint external evaluation of the Sāmoa Education Sector Program to assess its likely relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and short- and medium-term impact on the wider Sāmoan Education Sector.
3. The evaluation will inform any further commitments of Australia and New Zealand and the funding modalities and assessment frameworks used.

2. Background

4. The Government of Sāmoa (GoS) recognises that the education and training of its citizens is vital to the country's development. In the Strategy for the Development of Sāmoa (2012-2016) the GoS made it a national priority to improve access to education, training and learning outcomes.
5. The education sector comprises government and non-government primary and secondary schools; early childhood education (ECE); post-school education and training (PSET); and the policy, planning and regulation bodies.
6. In accordance with Sāmoa's commitment to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal completion of primary education,¹ primary education from Years 1 to 8 is compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 14. Secondary education covers Years 9 to 13. Students sit the Sāmoa School Certificate at the completion of Year 12, after which successful students can attend a further year to sit the Sāmoa Secondary Leaving Certificate (SSLC) in Year 13.
7. PSET encompasses a diversity of areas that include tertiary education at university; pre- and in-service professional education; technical and vocational education and training (TVET); theological and providers of religious instruction; apprenticeship; non-formal and on the job training.
8. Prior to 2011 the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC), the Sāmoa Qualifications Authority (SQA) and the National University of Sāmoa (NUS) operated as separate agencies with limited coordination. Recognising the need for increased collaboration, the GoS began requiring all Ministries to develop a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) in order to more effectively coordinate financial and human resources and improve service delivery.

¹ Sāmoa's Education Sector Plan still refers to Millennium Development Goals. The Sustainable Development Goal of relevance is No. 4 – Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.

Education Sector Plan 2013-2018 (ESP)

9. Education authorities in Sāmoa with the assistance of development partners developed the Education Sector Plan (ESP). The ESP sets out how the various education agencies will work together as a sector, building on previous SWAp-like programmes and a number of large donor funded projects. The current ESP is in place for five years from July 2013 until June 2018.² It has five goals, with associated Sector Outcomes to be achieved by 2018 as below:

	Goals	Sector Outcomes
1	Enhanced quality of education at all levels.	Improved learning outcomes at all levels
2	Enhanced educational access and opportunities at all levels.	At all levels, more students, including those with special needs, have access to quality educational opportunities in safe, climate- resistant learning environments
3	Enhanced relevance of education at all levels.	Improved employability of school leavers as a result of education and training responding to national economic, social and cultural needs
4	Improved sector coordination of research, policy and planning development.	<p>Analysis of research findings, evaluations and monitoring evidence increasingly used to inform policy and planning across the sector</p> <p>A coordinated approach through effective partnerships with key stakeholders ensures newly developed and implemented policies contribute to improved quality across the education sector</p>
5	Established sustainable and efficient management of all education resources.	Education resources are increasingly managed efficiently and sustainably across the sector

10. Three Implementing Agencies (IAs) are responsible for implementing the ESP:
- **The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (MESCC)** focuses on early childhood, primary and secondary education.
 - **The Sāmoa Qualifications Authority (SQA)** has responsibility for regulation, accreditation and quality assurance in post-secondary education and training.
 - **The National University of Sāmoa (NUS)** provides tertiary education including teacher training; TVET; and, continuing professional learning through the Oloamanu Centre for Professional Development (OCPD).
11. The ESP contains 22 programme activities. They include programme’s targeting specific issues, or strengthening systems for planning, monitoring and financing the sector, and for sector coordination.
12. The ESP functions through a coordinated governance structure designed to facilitate joint decision-making amongst sector partners and the incorporation of input from a range of stakeholders. The Education Sector Advisory Committee (ESAC) and the

² GoS currently has plans to review and potentially revise the ESP.

Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) provide governance. Broader input is elicited through a series of special interest Task Forces. The ESWG has responsibility for coordination and working with the committees, IAs, Development Partners and other stakeholders in order to meet requirements for monitoring, evaluation and annual reporting. The ESAC is a decision-making body based on submissions from the ESWG.

13. The Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) is intended to be updated annually to guide budgeting for the sector. The MTEF covers recurrent expenditures, including increases in these expenditures arising from ESP implementation e.g., from increased teacher salaries and school and PSET grants. It also includes expenses for capacity building activities.

Education Sector Support Program

14. The Education Sector Support Program (ESSP) is a 3-year activity between MFAT and DFAT, designed to specifically support and finance implementation of elements of the ESP. The ESSP commenced on October 2015 (Australia) and March 2016 (New Zealand) and will be completed in December 2018. The total value of the investment is SAT \$35,865,685.
15. The goals of the ESSP are taken from the ESP. The Strategic Outcomes are:
 - a. Increased numbers of 3 – 5 year olds participating in Early Childhood Education.
 - b. Improved literacy and numeracy scores at years 4 and 6.
 - c. Increase in percentage of children commencing Year 1 Primary and completing Year 8.
 - d. Increased numbers of children with special education needs in inclusive classroom settings with Individual Education Plans.
 - e. Increase in participation rates and outcomes of Year 12 examinations.
 - f. Increase in transition rates to post-secondary education.
 - g. Increase in the employment rate of graduates of post-secondary education and training.
16. In particular the ESSP investment aims to:
 - Strengthen Sāmoa's new approach to the development of the education sector as a coherent whole.
 - Support implementation of reform policies designed to improve learning outcomes and skills development linked to realistic employment expectations.
 - Strengthen government systems for sustainable achievement of improved learning outcomes and skills development for employment.
 - Support achievement of Sāmoa's National Goals and Strategies, through a well-educated and skilled Sāmoan society.

Funding Modalities

17. ESSP support to the education sector utilizes three funding modality types:

- **Sector budget support based on fixed-process indicators:** general financing in support of key operational areas identified in the Sāmoa Education Sector Plan 2013-2018 (70 per cent).
- **Performance-linked contributions** linked to the achievement of agreed key performance indicators with financing (30%) released based on GoS's performance against key performance indicators (KPIs) assessed via an Independent Verification Process (IVP).
- **Ring-fenced funding for Inclusive Education** (DFAT only): this is disbursed through sector budget support and ring-fenced by the Ministry of Finance for inclusive education providers.

Budget Support Allocations 2015-2018:

Budget Support	%	2014/15	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
Fixed process indicators (12)	70	No IVP	9.5/12	55	7.5/12	44	No fixed assessment	-
Performance linked contribution (9 KPI)	30		1.5/9	5	5/9	17	5/9	60%
	100%			60%		61%		60%

The table above shows the trend of the IVP since the ESSP began. The verification of the fixed and performance indicators in FY2015-2016 showed the achievement of only 1.5/9 performance indicators and 9.5/12 fixed process indicators. FY2016-2017 demonstrated strong improvement with 5/9 performance indicators achieved with a slight drop in 7.5/12 fixed process indicators achieved. FY2017-2018 did not assess the fixed process indicators as payment was made in the previous financial year, the results for the performance indicators showed an achievement of 5/9 KPIs. Overall, there has been improvement in achieving the performance indicators while achievement of the fixed has steadily declined.

Programme management and implementation arrangements

18. There are three groups of stakeholders critical to the governance and management of the ESSP.
 - The agencies responsible for implementation of the ESP: MESC, SQA and NUS
 - The Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Public Service Commission (PSC)
 - Development partners: Australia and New Zealand
19. These bodies come together at head of agency senior levels, together with representatives of private sector schooling and civil society (represented by the Sāmoa Umbrella for NGOS) on the ESAC. The key task of the ESAC is to monitor and guide the progress of the ESP at a strategic level.
20. A key monitoring mechanism is the annual Education Sector Review, which involves representatives from all sector stakeholders and includes consultations with the wider public. This provides an opportunity to review progress, identify challenges and realign activities and targets.

Results measurement, monitoring and evaluation

21. The monitoring and evaluation framework of the ESP provides the basis for the results measurement of the ESSP. It includes all of the measures identified under the education outcomes sought by the ESSP. The Education Sector Coordination Division (ESCD) at MESC is responsible for collating the overall monitoring information on the ESP from MESC, SQA and NUS for the monthly ESWG meetings, the quarterly ESAC meetings and the Annual Reviews.
22. The ESP sets out a range of sector and sub-sector level outcomes to be achieved by June 2018. It has undergone some modifications since the original design in 2012, including some rewording and the revision of KPIs. Mechanisms for tracking progress against outcomes have evolved over time in response to input from MoF and development partners, through recommendations from the IVP and the four Sector Annual Reviews (2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017).

Cross-cutting issues

23. The values and principles of inclusive education figure prominently in MESC policy frameworks and related documents. In particular, meeting the needs of students with disabilities is a very strong focus of existing and new education policy development for inclusiveness in Sāmoa. The ESP aims to facilitate access to mainstream schools for children with disabilities, and will support special education for children with disabilities where this is the most appropriate setting.
24. The issue of gender imbalance is also targeted in ESSP with a number of key needs to be addressed including: male drop-out rates in secondary education; low female enrolment in technical TVET courses; and the low enrolment of males in higher education.
25. Other issues are equitable access, participation and completion of good quality education and training at all levels for children and youth from rural and remote parts of Sāmoa, and from all socio-economic levels.

Mid-Term Review (MTR) of ESP

26. In 2016 the education sector conducted an independent MTR of the ESP to measure progress against its goals. The review team, comprised of two education consultants and one evaluation expert, completed an analysis of extensive documentary evidence and conducted a field visit from 3 to 28 October 2016 to interview stakeholders. The final MTR report was released in February 2017.
27. The MTR concluded that after three years of implementing the ESP, only gradual progress has been made against the 34 indicators reviewed, including the 9 KPIs. 9 indicators had been achieved and 9 indicators partially achieved (but deemed achievable over the subsequent three years). 13 indicators were not achieved and 3 were deemed very unlikely to be achieved by 2018.
28. The MTR found that robust data for reporting progress was lacking in a number of areas and in some cases the indicators used did not align to international standards. Some progress was being made in key areas (such as enrolment rates) but significant challenges remained in addressing numeracy and the gap in education achievement between females and males. The most intractable problem was found to be ineffective implementation of new policies and processes.

29. A number of issues were found to be limiting the effectiveness of the ESP. These included weak school-based support, the limited impact of professional development on teaching and learning in schools, and ongoing challenges with bilingual education. The sector had demonstrated a willingness to coordinate in key areas but the tools for effective, strategic coordination did not exist. The SWAp approach was deemed complex and the ESCD was found to be struggling to effectively implement the approach. Progress against Goal 4 was weakest and significant effort needed to be expended to progress this goal.
30. It was impossible to determine the efficiency of the ESP as the financial data required to assess cost-effectiveness did not exist. There were also concerns regarding the sustainability of ESP outcomes due to limited financial and human resources and the ineffective implementation of policies.
31. The MTR made a number of recommendations to the sector to implement between February 2017 and 2018, these included the need for:
 - provision of financial and human resource support; for the ESCD in the areas of strategic management and coordination;
 - development of new performance-based indicators for inclusive education;
 - development of a centralized EMIS;
 - development of new relevant and measurable indicators for Early Childhood Education;
 - definition of clear roles and responsibilities for Task Forces;
 - review of the validity of outcome indicators where data constraints exist; and
 - prioritization of sector wide gender analysis of access and performance and development of a medium-term strategy for addressing gender issues.
32. Results of the MTR have been accepted by ESSP stakeholders. Thus, the current evaluation does not need to revalidate findings. Rather, the evaluation should build on MTR findings, alongside assessments from the intervening period, to respond to key evaluation questions.
33. Sāmoan Qualifications and National Competency Standards have been developed and applied in PSET. SQA conducts triennial tracer studies using the results to enhance the relevance of PSET policy and practice, and to strengthen linkages between the PSET system in Sāmoa and the labour force development needs.
34. SQA has invested substantial resources to build capacity within TVET subsector and providers are supported to offer National Competency Standards and Sāmoa Qualifications.
35. There is limited data to measure PSET graduates' satisfaction and the relevance of their knowledge and skills in the workplace. SQA has put in place a quality assurance system which is in line with ESP monitoring and evaluation requirements and is reflected in the organization's management plan. SQA has also implemented a strategy for recognition of Sāmoan qualifications against international benchmarks.

3. Evaluation Scope

36. The evaluation will cover all objectives of the ESSP since commencement of the program in July 2015. It will include a specific review of management and governance arrangements, progress in achieving the programme’s intended impact and outcomes, based on key documents identified and any adjustments made to the design during the duration of the programme.
37. The evaluation will also consider the achievements of the education and skills development outcomes for 2014 and 2015, the 2 years preceding the ESSP – a period when Australia and New Zealand provided project support.

4. Indicative Evaluation Criteria and Questions

38. The following table presents only draft evaluation questions. These can be refined in the scoping phase of the project, and a clear set of key evaluation questions with sub-questions should emerge in the Evaluation Plan.

Criteria	Education	Management and Systems
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does ESSP have a clear strategic framework, and is this aligned with the DFAT and MFAT development policy and the GOS development objectives? How well has the programme articulated the objectives in terms of the theory of change in the ESSP? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the programme address the key issues facing the education (ECE, primary, secondary, TVET, higher) sectors? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the funding modality the most appropriate/effective way to achieve the intended outcomes?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Has this been an effective tool for monitoring progress? Consider the OECD DAC budget support evaluation methodology. How effective is the Independent Verification Process (IVP) and is this something we would wish to continue? How effective has the governance of the programme been? What outcomes (positive and negative and unintended) have occurred because of the activities? What has constrained or enhanced the achievement of outcomes? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the programme met its key objectives of improving learning? To what extent has the ESSP contributed to the strengthening of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy and numeracy Teacher development (appraisal and PD) Classroom-based assessment School leadership (MSS) Employability including accreditation, registration Inclusive Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the management structures improved coordination among the agencies? To what extent has the development of IA staff capacity helped the programme meet set objectives? Has data and an information management system (EMIS) been utilized for evidence-based planning and decision-making?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What can be done to improve effectiveness? 	

Criteria	Education	Management and Systems
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the programme been managed and delivered cost-effectively against planned budgets, expenditure and results achieved? • What has been the return on investments in terms of systems strengthening, service delivery and Value for Money? • To what extent has it added value (TA, Policy, governance, managing for results), reduced transaction costs, and reduced duplication? • To what extent has the program led to policy implementation? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the agencies using efficient methods in the delivery of key activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy and numeracy • Teacher development (appraisal and PD) • Classroom-based assessment • School leadership (Meeting the Minimum School Standards) • Employability including accreditation, registration • Inclusive Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have the management arrangements (including donor coordination, donor TA and connections back to Wellington and Canberra) supported the achievement of the activity outcomes? What has worked well? What has slowed progress? • How have the governance arrangements (including the ESAC and ESWG, the sector coordination unit and the IA leads) supported the management of risks, resolution of programme issues and achievement of ESSP outcomes? • How well has MFAT/DFATs engagement to support the education sector (policy dialogue, participation in management bodies) in Sāmoa worked?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can be done to improve efficiency? 	
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it likely that the preferred modality will be sustainable, particularly in reducing transaction costs and fragmentation, facilitating policy engagement and leveraging donor investments? • To what extent has the ESSP supported the financing gap in education? 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the programme laid a foundation for future donor partner engagement and what critical lessons have been learnt? • To what extent are partner government and agencies likely to be able to sustain the skills, management capacity and funding for the ESSP? • To what extent have the management skills and knowledge across the IAs improved and can any improvement identified be sustained?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can be done to improve sustainability? 	
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the approach to sector budget support likely to achieve what it was expected to achieve? If not, why not? What has worked well? What has not worked so well? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can be done to improve impact? 	

Criteria	Education	Management and Systems
Lessons Learned and Cross-Cutting Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key lessons from the ESSP – what works and what does not? • To what extent have cross cutting issues, in particular gender equality and disability inclusive development been effectively addressed in planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation? How have they been integrated into the sector? What is recommended to improve and to strengthen these? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are the constraints/opportunities for enhanced (a) sector engagement; and (b) donor engagement to further achievement of outcomes? How can these be exploited in the future? 	

5. Evaluation Approach

39. The methodology will be refined in consultation with the selected consultants and presented in the Evaluation Plan. The evaluation will consist of a desk review and in-country consultations with key stakeholders. The consultant team’s evaluation plan can revise and re- scope the evaluation questions and reduce the number of questions in order to improve focus. The Evaluation Plan will require DFAT and MFAT approval.
40. The methodology should include:
- a. the OECD- DAC budget support methodological approach;³
 - b. a desk review of documentation relating to DFAT and MFAT’s education response and partner documentation;
 - c. interviews with internal and external stakeholders involved in implementing the education response (e.g. development partners, Government of Sāmoa Ministry officials, school committees, principals and teachers, and key non-state actors including private sector and civil society organisations of the partner country).
 - d. Fieldwork in Sāmoa, which will include stakeholder interviews and will guide a detailed beneficiary analysis, possibly involving focus group discussions with communities including at least one in a remote location.
 - e. Data analysis and synthesis of findings into an evaluation report suitable for publication.

6. Outputs / Deliverables

41. Recommendations will be made against the criteria and specific questions of the evaluation. These should include changes that could be made to facilitate a potential design, implementation or management for any future investment.
42. The outputs / deliverables will include:
- a. **Evaluation Plan** – The plan will define the scope of the evaluation, articulate key evaluation questions, describe methodologies to collect and analyse data, propose a timeline linked to key milestones, propose a schedule for in-country field work, outline costs and a detailed breakdown of responsibilities of all team members. The plan will be developed in close consultation with DFAT and MFAT.

³ See <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/evaluatingbudgetsupport.htm>

- b. **Aide Memoire** – The aide memoire will present emerging issues, seek verification of facts and assumptions and discuss the feasibility of the initial recommendations. This will be a working document (no more than 5 pages), and the audience for this document would include all stakeholders.
- c. **Interim findings workshop** – The interim findings workshop is an opportunity to discuss the aide memoire and provide early feedback on the direction of the evaluation.
- d. **Draft evaluation report** – The draft evaluation report will be shared and discussed with the Government of Sāmoa and the development partners.
- e. **Final Evaluation Report** – The final Evaluation Report will incorporate any agreed changes or amendments as requested by DFAT and MFAT. The final Evaluation Report will include an executive summary (of no more than 2 pages), a clear summary of findings and recommendations (no more than 20 pages) and relevant attachments. This report will be published by DFAT on their website.

7. Indicative Evaluation Timeline

Activity	Due date
Document review and introductory brief with DFAT, MFAT (via phone)	TBC
Evaluation plan finalised based on Development Partners' feedback, including refining scope, results framework and key evaluation questions	TBC
Organise interviews and field work in Sāmoa	TBC
Field work	TBC
Document review	TBC
Aide Memoire and interim findings workshop	TBC
Analysis and report writing	TBC
Report finalised based on DFAT and MFAT feedback	TBC
Present key findings and conclusions to DFAT and MFAT and other stakeholders	TBC

8. Evaluation Management Arrangements

- 43. DFAT and MFAT contract managers in Sāmoa are responsible for the day-to-day management and administration of the evaluation. Their responsibilities include contracting, coordinating approval of the evaluation TORs, chairing the selection committee for the evaluation team, briefing the evaluators, reviewing and approving all outputs, and liaising with the evaluation team to ensure the activity is being undertaken as agreed.
- 44. A Steering Group for the evaluation will provide high-level strategic guidance to the review process. Specifically, the group will review and provide feedback/comments at key points in the exercise: the evaluation TORs, the draft review plan and the draft report (including participation at the peer review). The Steering Group will be chaired by Development partners.

45. The Steering Group is expected to be made up representatives from:

- DFAT Post in Sāmoa
- DFAT Canberra
- MFAT Post in Sāmoa
- MFAT Wellington
- Ministry of Finance (GoS)
- Education sector (GoS)

9. Evaluation Team Composition, Roles and Responsibilities

46. Applications and proposals from both individuals and a team will be considered. The successful respondents will form a team with the below knowledge, skills and experience to provide the services required. The following is an indicative composition of the team:

- a) Team Leader (also covers management and governance questions)
- b) Education Specialist
- c) Monitoring & Evaluation consultant

An organisation can propose either an individual for any of the above positions or can propose a team with the above indicative composition. MFAT reserves the right to change the composition of any team proposed by an organisation.

The attributes (knowledge, skills, experience) required of the evaluation team include:

- a. demonstrated expertise in the independent evaluation of education sector programs in a development context;
- b. experience of DFAT and MFAT systems and monitoring and evaluation standards;
- c. sound knowledge and understanding of aid effectiveness and funding modalities;
- d. excellent writing and analytical skills;
- e. extensive knowledge and working experience in Sāmoa and/or the Pacific will be highly desirable;
- f. strong background in education in developing countries with expertise in teacher development, school management and experience in managing education sector programmes;
- g. solid experience in evaluating aid programmes. Experience in education sector programs is preferable; and
- h. sound knowledge of monitoring and evaluation standards and principles.

The attributes (knowledge, skills, experience) required of the Team Leader include:

- a. successfully delivering quality and efficient projects/ programmes on time;
- b. sound knowledge and understanding of aid effectiveness and funding modalities;
- c. excellent writing and analytical skills;

- d. extensive knowledge and working experience in Sāmoa and/or the Pacific will be highly desirable;
- e. working with partners to successfully deliver projects, employing innovation and identifying and maximising opportunities to add value; and
- f. effectively identifying, managing and mitigating risks.

The attributes (knowledge, skills, experience) required of the Education Specialist include:

- a. strong background in education in developing countries with expertise in teacher development, school management and experience in managing education sector programmes,
- b. extensive knowledge and working experience in Sāmoa and/or the Pacific will be highly desirable;
- c. broad understanding of Pacific Island education contexts; and
- d. strategic thinking ability and research and analysis skills.

The attributes (knowledge, skills, experience) required of the Monitoring and Evaluation consultant include:

- a. solid experience in evaluating aid programmes. Experience in education sector programs is preferable;
- b. broad understanding of Pacific Island education contexts;
- c. strategic thinking ability, research and analysis skills;
- d. sound knowledge of monitoring and evaluation standards and principles;
- e. Demonstrated expertise in the independent evaluation of education sector programs in a development sector; and
- f. Experience of DFAT and MFAT systems and monitoring and evaluation standards.

10. Key Documents

47. DFAT and MFAT will make available to the team information, documents and particulars relating to the ESSP. These will include, but not be confined to, the following documents. The development partners shall make available to the evaluation team any other reasonable requests for information and documentation relating to the evaluation. The evaluation team is also expected to independently source other relevant material. A list of the documentation (not exhaustive) is presented below:
- a. Sāmoa Education Sector Plan 2013- 2018
 - b. Education Sector Support Program Design
 - c. Independent Verification Process Reports
 - d. Mid Term Review Reports
 - e. Annual Review Reports
 - f. Data Quality Assessment Framework

11. Evaluation Principles and Standards

48. The evaluation should meet the following standards:

- The purpose and objectives, and scope of the evaluation are clearly described in the evaluation report.
- The evaluation is undertaken as specified in the evaluation plan. Any variation to the agreed evaluation plan is stated in the evaluation report.
- The report clearly addresses the evaluation's purpose, objectives and evaluation questions.
- Findings answer the evaluation questions, are supported by evidence (with the source of the evidence clear), are disaggregated where appropriate (e.g. by variables such as gender, age etc.), and are separated from opinion and judgements.
- There is a clear flow from evidence-supported findings to conclusions to recommendations and to lessons learned.
- The recommendations are relevant and useful and directed to appropriate people/organizations. Lessons learned are also relevant, useful and applicable.
- Report is readable, flows logically, and its style/tone and length is appropriate. Any gaps in information are reported. The executive summary is well written, stands alone and provides a good summary of the evaluation. The report does not contain confidential information which would prevent public release of the report.
- Value for money of the activity is assessed using the most appropriate approach and tools.
- Development Assistance Committee (DAC) or other evaluation criterion selected for the evaluation is addressed appropriately.
- The integration of cross-cutting issues and the treatment of environmental and social impacts are addressed appropriately under the relevant criteria.
- When conducting the evaluation, the evaluation team will comply with the respective organizations' Code of Conduct.
- It is DFAT and MFAT policy to make the evaluation report publicly available (e.g. on public websites) unless there is prior agreement not to do so. Any information that could prevent the release of an evaluation report under the Official Information or Privacy Acts should not be included in the report.
- All the key deliverables and the data/information collected will become the joint property of DFAT, MFAT and the GoS.

APPENDIX B: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT LIST

DATE	AGENCY / ORGANISATION	STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED
30 Aug 2018	IVP consultant (Wellington)	Jane von Dadelszen
6 Sept 2018	MFAT and DFAT	Pati Gagau, First Secretary Development MFAT Felauai Tuaniu, Programme Manager, MFAT Amanda Jewell, Counsellor Development, DFAT Vicky Foalima, Programme Manager, DFAT Nick Hurley, High Commissioner, New Zealand
6 Sept 2018	Ministry of Public Enterprise ESAC Chairperson	Elita Tooala, CEO MPE
6 Sept 2018	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	Afamasaga Karoline Fuatai, CEO
7 Sept 2018	ESCD	Tapaaautasi Kovi Aiolupotea Hinorma Onesemo – procurement Talia – Monitoring and evaluation Aliitasi Su’a Afoa – policy and planning Olivee Leilua – budget and finance
7 Sept 2018	Sāmoa Qualifications Authority	Letuimanuasina Emma Vaai, CEO Maposua Mose Asani, ACEO Corporate Services
7 Sept 2018	Public Service Commission (ESAC member)	Salilo Margraff, ACEO Human Resource Management Jolly Papalii – manages contract employees inc principals and assistant principals Sydney Sua – education employees inc teachers Jason Hisatuke– ACEO senior executive services. (Leadership and Management) Osana Liki – ACEO public sector co-ordinator Assistant Human Resource Sarona Esera - ACEO human resource development
7 Sept 2018	World Bank (ESAC member)	Maeva Natacha Betham-Vaai
10 Sept 2018	Mission School (ESAC)	Fr Mikaele Tuimavave, Catholic Education Director
10 Sept 2018	Sāmoa Qualifications Authority	Lealiifano Easter Manila, ACEO Policy Maposua Mose Asani, ACEO Corporate Services
10 Sept 2018	Ministry of Sports, Education and Culture	Salima Lasalo Salima, ACEO Policy and Planning Alaifea Belford, ACEO Corporate Services Aveolela Burgess – Policy and Planning, Project Officer Sulamai Malo – Policy and Planning, Information analysis officer
10 Sept 2018	Strategic Planning Advisor	Julie Affleck, Technical Advisor

DATE	AGENCY / ORGANISATION	STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED
10 Sept 2018	National University of Sāmoa	Peseta Desmond Sua, DVC Academic research Lineta Tamaniyakaroi Sooalo Sydney Faasau Mandria Sua Lydal Visan
10 Sept 2018	Ministry of Sports, Education and Culture	Salima Lasalo Salima, Principal Officer Policy Alaifea Belford, ACEO Corporate Services Aveolela Burgess, Project Officer Sulamai Malo, Information Analysis Officer
10 Sept 2018	Palladium Group	Julie Affleck, Strategic Planning Adviser
10 Sept 2018	Ministry of Finance	Lita Lui, ACEO Aid Coordination Abigail Lee Hang, ACEO Budget
11 Sept 2018	Ministry of Sports, Education and Culture	Leota Valma Galuvao, ACEO Curriculum Vau Peseta, ACEO Monitoring and Evaluation Funealii Lumaava Sooaemalelagi, ACEO Assessments Perenise Stowers, ACEO School Operation Tauti Jenny Lauano, ACEO Teacher development Salima Lasalo Salima, Principal Officer Policy Aveolela Burgess, Policy and Planning Project Officer
11 Sept 2018	National University of Sāmoa and Sāmoa Qualifications Authority	Peseta Desmond Le Hang, DVC Academic research Mandria Sua, Director Governance Policy and Planning Sooalo Sydney Faasau, Manager In-Country Training Lealiifano Easter Manila, ACEO Policy SQA
11 Sept 2018	Australia Pacific Training Collaboration	Cheri Robinson Moors, Director Andrew Colquhoun
11 Sept 2018	Loto Tamafai (Special School)	Lagi Natanielu, Principal Ata'a Dan Devoe, President
12 Sept 2018	Saoluafata Primary School	Ae Lauese Moinge, School Inspector Vaisugi Malio, Principal
12 Sept 2018	Anoamaa College	Tuvale Leau-Mulinuu, Principal
12 Sept 2018	Sāmoa College	Reupena Rimoni, Principal
13 Sept 2018	Vaivase Primary School	Sa'o Tolai, Principal Fa'atoia Malele, Vice Chair School Committee
13 Sept 2018	Sāmoa Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Peseta Noumea Simi, CEO
13 Sept 2018	Sāmoa Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour	Sa'u Taupisi, ACEO Employment Faasuaga Soufale, Inspector of Apprentices

DATE	AGENCY / ORGANISATION	STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED
13 Sept 2018	SUNGO	Tofua'iofoia Fuimaono Falefa Lima, CEO
13 Sept 2018	National Council of ECE Sāmoa	Kuinimeri Tamati, President Lauiva Ah Kuoi, Secretary Epenesa Esera, NUS Kuinileti Lauina, NUS
13 Sept 2018	Faculty of Education, National University of Sāmoa	Tofilau Dr Faguele Suaalii, Dean of Education
14 Sept 2018	Don Bosco Technical Centre	Mane Su'a, Principal Tuanai Onesimo Moli, Deputy
14 Sept 2018	National University of Sāmoa	Fui Leapai Asofou Soo, Vice Chancellor
14 Sept 2018	St Mary's College	Sister Pelenatete, School Principal Sina Fitu, Deputy Principal
14 Sept 2018	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	Leota Valma Galuvao, ACEO Curriculum Vau Peseta, ACEO Monitoring and Evaluation Funealii Lumaava Sooaemalelagi, ACEO Assessment and Examination Perenise Stowers, ACEO School Operation Jennifer Pemila – PEO IE Unit in Curriculum Division Dawn Rogers – IE specialist (AVID) working in MESC
17 Sept 2018	Development Partners	Felauai Tuaniu (NZHC) Vicki Foalima (Australian HC)
18 Sept 2018	Debrief with Chair, Sector Heads and ESCD on aide memoire and findings	Afamasaga Karoline Fuatai, CEO MESC Letuimanuasina Emma Vaai, CEO SQA Fui Leapai Asofou Soo, Vice Chancellor NUS Kovi Aiolutotea, ESCD John Patch, Education Consultant
19 Sept 2018	Debrief with stakeholders on aide memoire and findings	MESC, NUS, SQA, MCIL, MoF, St Mary's College, SUNGO, Loto Tamaufai, Sāmoa MFAT, APTC (35+ people).
19 Sept 2018	Final debrief with Development Partners	Pati Gagau and Felauai Tuaniu (NZHC) Amanda Jewell and Vicky Foalima (Australian HC) John Patch, Education Consultant Julie Affleck, Strategic Planning Adviser
1 Oct 2018	Inclusive Education Technical Assistance consultant	Sally Baker
1 Nov 2018	Consultation with MFAT (Development Partner)	Verity Smith, Former Development Manager, Sāmoa, MFAT Amy McAteer, Education Sector Leader, MFAT Wellington

DATE	AGENCY / ORGANISATION	STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED
2 Nov 2018	Consultation with DFAT (Development Partner)	Rosemary McKay, Director Education Section, DFAT, Canberra (Former Deputy High Commissioner in Sāmoa)
6 Nov 2018	Consultation with DFAT (Development Partner)	David Coleman, Senior Education Adviser, DFAT, Canberra

APPENDIX C: AIDE MEMOIRE – EVALUATION OF THE SĀMOA EDUCATION SECTOR SUPPORT PROGRAMME – INTERIM FINDINGS

In-country Evaluation team members: Vince Catherwood and Jacqui Haggland

NZ based Evaluation team members: Ned Hardie-Boys, Pounamu Aikman

Purpose

This Aide Memoire outlines the interim findings of the evaluation of the Sāmoa Education Sector Support Programme (ESSP) based on a review of existing policy and practice. Operational documents and published reports have informed the evaluation. Stakeholder engagement was undertaken in-country during the period 6-18 September 2018 with:

- the New Zealand and Australian development partners (DPs)
- key administrators in Government of Sāmoa (GoS) agencies responsible for the implementation of the Education Sector Plan (ESP) that the ESSP funds
- representatives from different types of education providers and the community.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation is being undertaken using the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Criteria to underpin and focus the assessments being made.

DAC Criteria	Key evaluation question for the Evaluation of the Sāmoa ESSP
Relevance	Whether and to what extent the ESSP has addressed the priorities of the target groups (schools/other education providers) and is aligned with GoS policies and priorities.
Effectiveness	Whether and to what extent the ESSP has achieved the desired outcomes.
Efficiency	The extent to which the ESSP could have been implemented at less cost without reducing the quality and quantity of the activities.
Impact	The positive and negative intended and unintended effects of the ESSP.
Sustainability	Whether and to what extent the benefits can be sustained after the end of the development partners’ assistance.

The evaluation team also considered the extent to which cross cutting issues (gender equality and inclusive education) have been identified and pursued in the implementation of the ESSP.

The initial findings from the evaluation are briefly outlined below with linkages to the evaluation criteria to which they relate. This approach has been used (rather than linkage to individual Key Evaluation Questions (KEQ) and sub-questions) as the focus for this Aide Memoire, specifically to:

- Present emerging issues
- Seek verification of facts and assumptions
- Discuss the feasibility of initial recommendations

This paper provides an overview of the issues that were raised, followed by a series of preliminary conclusions and initial recommendations.

ESSP objectives, scope and design (Relevance)

- The ESSP has a clear strategic framework aligned with Aus/NZ policy and GoS development objectives / educational objectives of education providers.
- The scope of ESSP encompasses the whole education sector and justifies the involvement of the three Implementing Agencies (IAs).¹
- The outcomes sought in the Education Sector Plan (ESP) and the ESSP are very ambitious within the relatively short timeframe.

Governance (Effectiveness)

- The Education Sector Advisory Committee (ESAC) and Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) provide the primary system of governance – the structure is good, and significant progress has been made recently to better utilise this structure.
- Revision of the ESSP could include consideration of the ESAC membership to ensure it provides appropriate representation of those with an interest in employment skills development, e.g., other TVET providers or Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour.
- The Education Sector Coordination Division (ESCD) is now better placed to support the ESWG to provide the required analysis before reports are forwarded to the ESAC for decision-making.
- Mission and Private schools are less engaged at the governance level – some stakeholders were concerned with the quality of teaching in some Mission schools due to lack of funding.

Monitoring and evaluation (Effectiveness, Efficiency)

- A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework exists and is being used to report on a broader range of indicators than are included in the ESSP (e.g. additional ESP indicators).
- The M&E framework needs to be updated, streamlined and simplified.
- ESAC and Ministry of Finance (MoF) expect quarterly reporting against the M&E framework and updates to the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) as part of the monitoring process – timeliness of reporting has been a problem to date.

Funding modality (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency)

- Difficult to assess the efficiency of ESSP without detailed analysis to disaggregate the impact of donor funding from ongoing GoS funding.
- Misalignment between the ESSP processes and GoS Budget timelines has provided challenges over the life of the ESSP programme, including the delivery of reporting.
- Fixed tranche disbursement of budget support component (70%) of the funding modality is appropriate.
- Some stakeholders questioned the fairness of the current practice of reducing the level of the fixed tranche component, based on the GoS self-assessment of progress against the 12 fixed process indicators, and the DP's assessment of the likelihood of an underspend in the current financial year.

¹ Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESCC), Sāmoa Qualifications Authority (SQA) and the National University of Sāmoa (NUS).

- One purpose of the 70% 'fixed tranche' is to provide the education sector with funding predictability from year to year.
- Use of ring-fenced funding within the fixed tranche component to support Inclusive Education (IE) was successful in ensuring progress was made in related activities.
- Mixed views about the effectiveness of the performance-based component (30%) – little evidence that withholding funding provided incentives to IAs to improve performance.
- Performance-based component KPIs were not SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound).
- In any new ESSP that is developed, consideration should be given to including process KPIs that demonstrate measurable steps towards achieving outcomes, as well as outcomes-focused KPIs.
- Poor initial communication about sector budget support modality, including IVP.
- Some evidence the three IAs are continuing to operate in silos and see the indicators as 'belonging to' individual agencies.
- Disagreement between IAs and MoF around the release of the 30% tranche of incentive money – clarity needed about how the money will be released, e.g., to the individual IA that reports on the KPI or to be shared across the three IAs.

Independent Verification Process (IVP) (Effectiveness)

- IAs and ESAC are generally supportive of the IVP. Many saw it as an opportunity to learn from external consultants and develop staff capacity in monitoring and reporting.
- Insufficient consultation at the ESSP design stage meant IAs ill-prepared to report on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at first IVP. The 2016 IVP was a 'big wakeup call', due to a lack of understanding about the IVP and its implications for funding.

Communications and guidelines for schools, ECE and PSET/TVET providers (Effectiveness)

- Lack of provider awareness of the ESSP beyond 'NZ and Australia provide funding for education'. This is consistent with a sector budget support modality.
- Effective guidelines were produced by GoS for the Minimum Service Standards (MSS). However, operationalisation of the MSS is labour intensive and could be rationalised.
- A Manual on school grants administration is available and will need to be reviewed as the new integrated approach to school grant provision is implemented.

Progress in meeting objectives (Efficiency)

- ESCD was not initially successful in its coordination role, but this has significantly improved in recent months. Lack of coordination is a weakness in implementation, resulting in late reporting and missed deadlines.
- There is a need for stability of personnel in key roles across the IAs and clear articulation of their responsibilities as they relate to the ESSP.

ESSP role in strengthening the education system (Sustainability)

- Two recent reviews commented on inefficiencies in the way information is managed across the education sector. Progress has been made in data collection and analysis, but further work is required (fairly urgently).

- The three IAs are currently collaborating on a joint TVET policy and strategy, including TVET provision in schools. This approach should be encouraged.

ESSP role in strengthening the education sector via taskforces and technical assistance (Sustainability)

- The taskforces have met with mixed success.
 - The Teacher development taskforce had a role in supporting the development of a National Teacher Development Framework.
 - IE taskforce has been successful in developing policies and plans for the future. This work should be further integrated into any new ESP and ESSP.
 - Early childhood education (ECE) taskforce has made significant progress, seemingly without much support from ESSP; the work should be further integrated into any new ESP and ESSP.
- Technical assistance (TA) funding has mostly been used to supply short term capacity for individual projects. Any future use of the TA facility could include a capacity development component linked to a sector wide capacity development plan. This development plan should include activities to improve the quality of analysis and reporting across the education sector.

Alleviation of the funding gap (Impact)

- ESSP has provided IAs with a larger funding pool from which they can address big initiatives (e.g., the professional development of teachers and the qualification upgrade programme) or pilot new initiatives (e.g., an e-initiative that included training for teachers to use e-learning, and PSET trainer development programme).
- Some of both the 70% fixed tranche and the 30% performance-based tranche have not been made available, so this may have had a negative impact on some activity delivery.

Inclusive education (Cross-cutting issues)

- Ring fenced funding for IE has been successful. The sector is better prepared for future mainstreaming of people with disabilities in education.
- The Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Plan 2017-2020 (June 2017) and consideration of an MoU between MESC and the Inclusive Education Service Providers and Special Schools (March 2018) are evidence of progress in this area.
- New KPIs on inclusive education have been developed for the future with the goal of including these in a revised M&E Framework – this should be encouraged.
- Need to improve access to specialists (work with National Health Service) so those with disabilities receive the health support needed to engage with mainstream education.
- Ongoing focus is needed to upskill teachers/PSET trainers and education provider leadership on what is required to support successful inclusive education.

Gender (Cross-cutting issues)

- There are four KPIs within ESSP that report achievement results by gender – poorer results for males than females in three of these (literacy, numeracy, transition to formal PSET). Further analysis is required to identify reasons for these gender gaps.

- More work needed to ensure sufficient appropriate education opportunities in place to ensure that boys' education needs are being met at primary, secondary and PSET levels.

Preliminary Conclusions

The IAs with responsibility for the delivery of the ESP have made progress in many areas supported by the ESSP. The challenges they have faced are to be expected, specifically as they relate to the development and implementation of new approaches to the sector budget support modality which the ESSP, and specifically the IVP, necessitated.

While there has been positive learning about management of the ESSP, the time frame over which the ESSP has been operational has been too short to be able to point to hard evidence of improved learning outcomes. Furthermore, it is difficult to separate the effect of GoS budget funding from the effect of additional funds delivered through the ESSP.

Recommendations

1. Continue to use a sector budget support modality to deliver any future ESSP-type funding with the following conditions:
 - a. better alignment between the ESSP reporting and planning timelines and the established timelines of the GoS Budget process,
 - b. consultation at the design stage on the selection of suitable KPIs with teams across all three IAs who are to administer the system(s) and are expected to provide the required evidence, to ensure the KPIs are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound),
 - c. accountability requirements must be satisfied by regular reporting against appropriate KPIs, and
 - d. the 'fixed tranche' component of the education sector budget support modality should be delivered annually in total if a reasonable proportion of any fixed process indicators are met, and not be reduced except under exceptional circumstances (e.g., demonstrated underspend).
2. Continue to use an Independent Verification Process for a small number of agreed KPIs, with the following conditions:
 - a. include clear guidelines on how the individual KPIs for the sector relate to the release of the performance funding component, and
 - b. specify the steps for the release of funding, including whether any IA is entitled to a share of the funding disbursed.
3. Current work to develop a Sāmoa Education Data Quality Improvement Plan should be supported, and implementation of the plan prioritised to strengthen data collection and analysis, monitoring and reporting.
4. The M&E Framework should be updated, rationalised and simplified to ensure that it can be used effectively. Consideration should be given to ensure the framework covers the range of activities across the education sector (e.g., ECE, IE, primary, secondary, formal and informal PSET and TVET).
5. MTEF update processes need to be better integrated with other reporting to ensure the necessary updates actually occur.

APPENDIX D: RESPONSE TO ESP MID-TERM REVIEW

MFAT and DFAT have requested that the evaluation of the ESSP include consideration of the extent to which the recommendations identified by the 2016 Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Sāmoa Education Sector Plan (ESP) have been addressed. The evaluators note that MTR had a much wider scope than our evaluation of the ESSP.

The MTR noted that of the 34 (ESP) indicators reviewed, nine had been achieved at the time of writing the MTR report (February 2017), nine had been partially achieved, and may be achieved over the next three years, 13 had not been achieved, and three were very unlikely to be achieved by 2018.

The most intractable problem was found to be ineffective implementation of new policies and processes. Robust data for reporting on progress was lacking in a number of areas. While some progress was being made, key challenges persisted in areas such as numeracy, gender differences in student achievement, bilingual education, the limited impact of professional development on teaching and learning in schools, and weak support for schools.

The MTR found the budget support approach was complex, and the ESCD struggled (in 2016) to effectively implement the approach. Financial data to assess cost-effectiveness did not exist. Weaknesses in human resource capacity and ineffective implementation of policies were ongoing concerns. The October 2018 ESSP evaluation largely endorses these comments, and notes that the main concerns raised in the February 2017 MTR are largely still areas of concern in the Sāmoa Education Sector.

Table 4 outlines the 11 recommendations, the extent to which the ESSP has helped to address these, and the ongoing relevance of the recommendations. Please note the recommendations are worded exactly as they were in the MTR report provided to the evaluation team.

Table 4: MTR recommendations - have they been addressed and what is their ongoing relevance

MTR recommendation	To what extent has the ESSP helped to address this recommendation?	Ongoing relevance of the recommendations based on ESSP evaluation findings
1. Providing financial and human resource support should be provided forthwith for the ESCD in the areas of strategic management and coordination.	Significant improvements have been made in the ESCD coordination and management role in recent months, supported by the Strategic Planning Adviser role currently filled by Julie Affleck through the use of Technical Assistance. The Strategic Planning Adviser role has included advice on development of cross-agency reporting templates to support efficient and effective reporting of outputs and outcomes.	ESCD has only just begun to deliver in the area of strategic management and coordination of the ESSP implementation, and ongoing support in this area is required. See section 2.2.3 of the evaluation report.
2. Providing financial and human resource support should be provided for the ESCD to develop better financial data collection and analysis including procuring advice and support in the	There have been ongoing difficulties with ESCD’s ability to meet the requirements of efficient and effective expenditure review reporting. Recent appointments to ESCD have included an adviser with responsibility for budget and finance reporting.	It is too early to tell whether the new appointment to the ESCD will sufficiently address this recommendation. Further technical adviser assistance in this space is

MTR recommendation	To what extent has the ESSP helped to address this recommendation?	Ongoing relevance of the recommendations based on ESSP evaluation findings
conduct of Cost Effectiveness Analysis.		likely to be beneficial for the success of any future ESSP. See section 2.2.3 of the evaluation report.
3. Funding a rapid TA assignment that examines how to best provide direct support for Principals.	There has been investment in developing capacity such as Principal leadership and other in-service training courses. However, it is not clear to what extent this investment has been supported by technical advisers.	Further technical adviser assistance in this space is likely to be beneficial for the success of any future ESSP. See section 2.4.1 of the evaluation report.
4. Providing financial and human resource support to agencies to develop procurement plans.	Procurement was not a focus of the ESSP. However, new procurement appointments have been made across the IAs.	This issue was not a focus of the ESSP, so has not been directly addressed in the ESSP evaluation.
5. Filling the two key positions at MESC which have leadership responsibility for literacy and numeracy.	No evidence that these positions have been filled. However, other initiatives are in place e.g. minimum service standards in literacy and numeracy.	Leadership is still required in literacy and numeracy. See section 2.5.1 of the evaluation report.
6. Developing new performance-based indicators for inclusive education.	Progress has been made in IE, and some draft performance indicators for IE were sighted by the Evaluators. The draft performance indicators, however, need more work in order to accurately report against progress towards achievement of agreed inclusive education objectives.	Changes to existing KPIs, including the development of appropriate performance indicators for inclusive education, are included in the ESSP evaluation recommendations.
7. Developing a centralised EMIS.	This objective has not yet been achieved.	Included in ESSP evaluation recommendations.
8. Developing new relevant and measurable indicators should be created for Early Childhood Education.	While progress has been made in ECE, this has not been reflected in the development of indicators that are able to be accurately reported against, or that will demonstrate real progress towards quality early childhood education delivery.	Changes to existing KPIs, including the development of appropriate performance indicators for early childhood education, are included in the ESSP evaluation recommendations.
9. Defining clear roles and responsibilities for Task Forces.	It was reported that the taskforces have met with mixed success. Three task forces (IE, ECE and teacher development) have had some success in developing and implementing a work programme. It is disappointing that more has not been achieved by the literacy, numeracy and assessment taskforces over this period.	Further work is required to ensure the education sector gets the full benefit out of all six Task Forces. See section 2.5.1 of the evaluation report.

MTR recommendation	To what extent has the ESSP helped to address this recommendation?	Ongoing relevance of the recommendations based on ESSP evaluation findings
<p>10. Reviewing the validity of outcome indicators where data is missing and where it is likely data will not be collected in the next two years.</p>	<p>A number of indicators have been revised based on the IVP findings, although further work is required as many are still unlikely to be achieved due to data collection and analysis gaps.</p>	<p>Changes to KPIs are included in the evaluation recommendations. Improvements in data collection and analysis capability are included in the ESSO evaluation recommendations.</p>
<p>11. The sector should prioritise sector wide gender analysis looking at a range of issues to do with performance and access, and it should develop a medium-term strategy for addressing ongoing gender issues.</p>	<p>The gap male and female student achievement remains, and it appears that little (if any) focus was placed on addressing gender issues over the period of the ESSP.</p>	<p>Gender issues continue to be areas of concern, and more work needs to be done in this area. This finding is included in section 2.6.1 of the evaluation report.</p>

APPENDIX E: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: EDUCATION SECTOR SUPPORT PROGRAMME

These Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) below are those originally attached to the Joint Funding Arrangement (August 2015 – December 2019) signed by the Government of Sāmoa and Development Partners in 2015 and 2016. It is acknowledged that changes to the wording of some KPIs were made by ESAC during the course of the programme.

Annual Fixed Process Indicators for 70% Tranche Disbursement

Disbursement Triggers	Indicators	Sources of Verification
The overall strategy policy and governance arrangements are on track as envisaged in the ESP or as subsequently amended through the annual review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No concerns raised at the preceding annual review or ESAC about major divergence from ESP strategy, policy or governance. ESWG is meeting at least quarterly At least two weeks before the January meeting, suggestions for priorities for implementation in the coming year and any adjustments to the ESP arising from the annual review are circulated to ESAC members ESAC is meeting on a quarterly basis, and the January meeting is providing the guidance needed to enable the sector MTEF to be updated All approved task forces met at least quarterly each financial year (Not applicable for the 2015/16 disbursements) Maintenance of mutual understandings between the GOS and DPs on pre-sector budget support arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review, meeting reports, agendas and approved minutes; Annual budget estimates and MTEF
ESP funds are not leading to a reduction in the government's own financial commitment to the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fraction of the Estimated Payments to Education from the Treasury fund for the current financial year exceeds 14% after deducting ESSP contributions 	Budget Estimates for coming financial year; Financial Management Reports; audits of financial accounts
Financial allocation is on track, in accordance with the sector plan as subsequently amended through the January meeting of ESAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 10% divergence between the final estimates and the MTEF approved at the January meeting of the ESAC for the previous financial year 	Education sector estimates; Minutes of January ESAC meeting; Financial Management Reports; Audits of financial accounts

Disbursement Triggers	Indicators	Sources of Verification
Implementation is on track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No critical path outputs are more than a year behind schedule except for those for which deferral has been approved by the ESAC 	Annual progress reports
Monitoring and reporting are on track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of annual ESP progress reports sent to stakeholders at least two weeks before the annual review, including an analysis of progress against the KPIs and other indicators in the ESP results framework (and with a complete set of baseline results included in 2015/16) Consolidated quarterly and annual Financial Management Reports (including findings from the audit reports) provided on time by ESCD for consideration by the ESAC and annual review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual progress reports Consolidated reports from ESCD and ESAC minutes Final Report on the Annual Review issued by the ESAC Finance sector and PFM annual progress report
Risk management is on track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal audit reports and ESCD follow-up on these reports show progress on reducing the residual PFM and procurement risks within the sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidated reports from ESCD and ESAC minutes Final Report on the annual review

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs for the Sector) (for the 30% tranche disbursement)

Responsible IA(s)	KPI	Key Outcome Indicators	Subcategory	2012 baseline	2019 targets ¹
MESC	1	Year 4 & 6 primary school children at risk in literacy (English and Sāmoan)	Male	35%	23%
			Female	18%	12%
MESC	2	Year 4 & 6 primary school children at risk in numeracy	Male	26%	10%
			Female	16%	5%
SQA, NUS, APTC	3	Percentage of PSET graduates finding employment within 6 months (<i>gender disaggregated rates to be determined in first year of ESSP</i>)		31% ²	70%
MESC	4	Percentage of children commencing Year 1 Primary and completing Year 8 by gender (Primary Completion Rate MDG2)	Male	86 (2014)	95%
			Female	85 (2014)	95%
MESC, NUS, SQA	5	Transition rate from Year 13 to formal PSET (target to be confirmed in Year 1 of ESSP)	Male	37%	50%
			Female	63%	70%
MESC	6	Percentage of children with disability enrolled in mainstream government schools		105 (<i>in 2010</i>)	150
MESC	7	Percentage of teachers meeting teacher performance standards		Appraisal process in place	TBD
MESC	8	Number of schools meeting minimum service standards related to literacy and numeracy		TBD	50%
SQA	9	Number of accredited courses provided by PSET providers		6	20

¹ End targets may be adjusted based on mutual determination in the Annual Review Processes. KPI indicators reflect the most critical indicators identified by the sector drawn from its sector plan and Monitoring and Evaluation Tracker as part of the annual review process in 2014.

² This is based on only six PSET providers and on the 2006 Tracer Study. Tracer study undertaken in 2013 for TVET providers only. NUS will work on undertaking annual tracer surveys. Scope exists to combine with those for TVET.

APPENDIX F: ESSP FUNDING TIMELINES

Figure 2: Alignment of GoS Budget and ESSP timelines

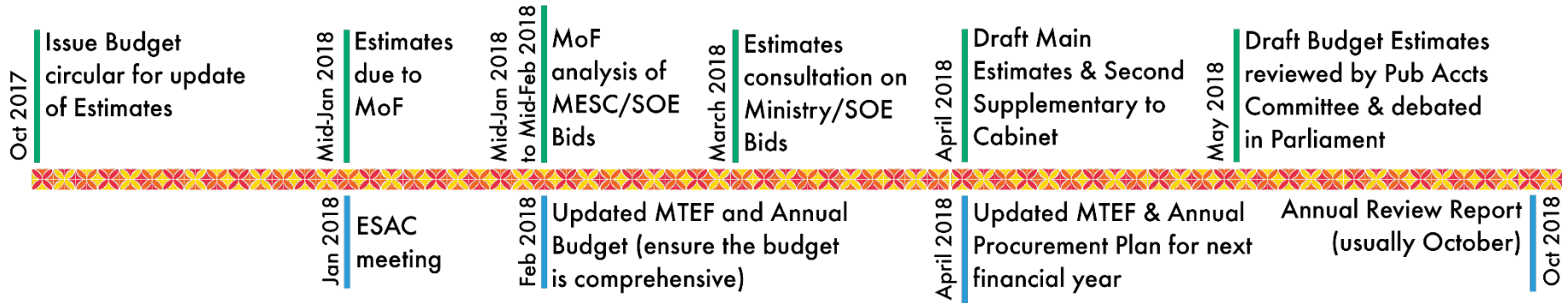
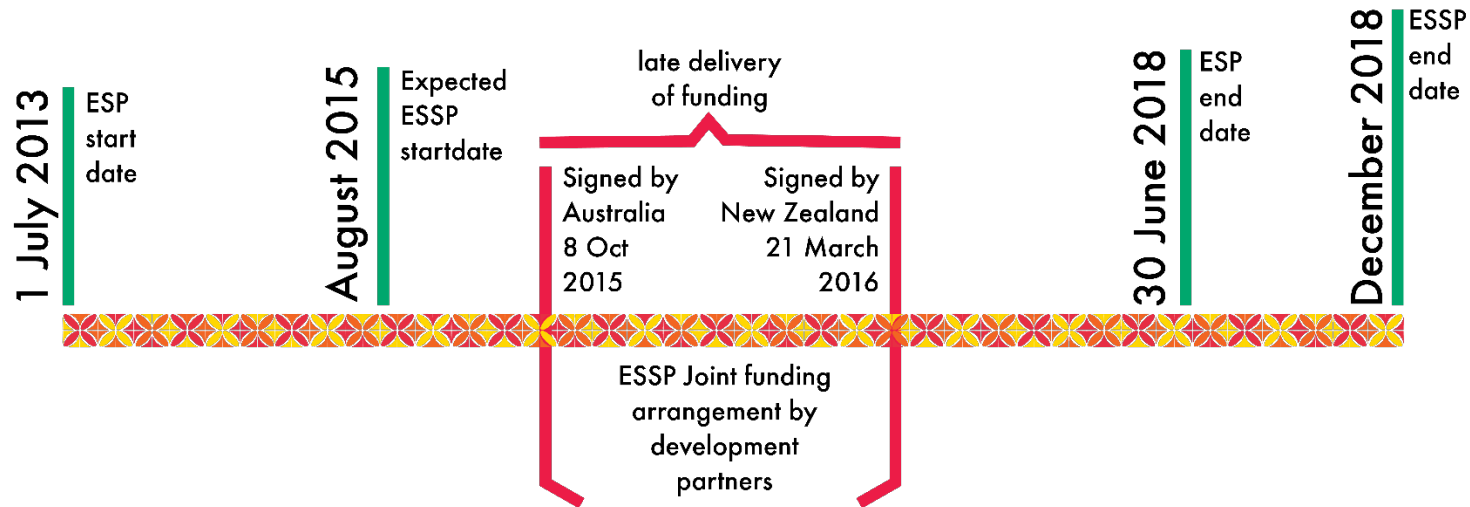


Figure 3: Timing of ESSP funding availability



APPENDIX G: LINKAGES BETWEEN KEY EVALUATION SUB-QUESTIONS AND SECTIONS OF THE DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT

Relevance	
KEQ 1: Relevance – To what extent is the design of the Sāmoa ESSP relevant to the key issues facing the education sector?	
Key Evaluation Sub-Questions	Source of Response in Draft Evaluation Report
1.1. Does ESSP have a clear strategic framework, and is this aligned with the DFAT and MFAT development policy and the GoS development objectives?	See <i>ESSP objectives, scope and design</i> in the draft report under ‘Relevance’
1.2. Is the funding modality the most appropriate way to achieve the intended outcomes?	See <i>The Funding Modality</i> in the draft report under ‘Effectiveness’
1.3. To what extent is the ESSP aligned to the key issues facing the education sector?	See <i>ESSP objectives, scope and design</i> in the draft report under ‘Relevance’
1.4. How have the governance, planning, and reporting arrangements contributed to the relevance of the ESSP?	See <i>Governance</i> in the draft report under ‘Effectiveness’
1.5. To what extent does the design of the ESSP assist education providers to meet their educational objectives?	See <i>ESSP objectives, scope and design</i> in the draft report under ‘Relevance’
1.6. To what extent are the objectives and scope of the ESSP still relevant?	See <i>ESSP objectives, scope and design</i> in the draft report under ‘Relevance’
1.7. To what extent has the implementation of the ESSP been consistent with its design?	See <i>Implementation</i> in the draft report under ‘Efficiency’

Effectiveness	
KEQ 2: Effectiveness – To what extent has the ESSP been effective in improving the quality of learning and enhancing educational access and opportunities?	
Key Evaluation Sub-Questions	Source of Response in Draft Evaluation Report
2.1 To what extent is the ESSP meeting each of its strategic outcomes? What activities are progressing well, and which not so well?	See <i>Improving Quality and Access</i> in the draft report under ‘Effectiveness’
2.2 What are the main factors enabling and constraining the achievement of the ESSP’s strategic outcomes?	See <i>Improving Quality and Access</i> in the draft report under ‘Effectiveness’

Effectiveness

2.3 To what extent has the ESSP contributed to strengthening the education system? (<i>including in teacher development, classroom-based assessment, school leadership and inclusive education</i>)	See <i>Capacity building in the education sector and Strengthening the education system</i> in the draft report under ‘Sustainability’
2.4 Have management structures improved coordination among agencies?	See <i>Improving Quality and Access and Governance</i> in the draft report under ‘Effectiveness’
2.5 To what extent has the development of internal assessment staff capacity helped the programme meet set objectives?	See <i>Implementation</i> in the draft report under ‘Efficiency’
2.6 To what extent has the ESSP assisted education providers with their development planning?	See <i>Communications and Guidelines for School, ECE and PSET/TVET Providers</i> in the draft report under ‘Effectiveness’
2.7 How has data and information management been used for evidence-based planning and decision-making?	See <i>Data and Information Management</i> in the draft report under ‘Effectiveness’
2.8 Has the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework been an effective tool for monitoring progress?	See <i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i> in the draft report under ‘Effectiveness’
2.9 To what extent is the sector budget support modality achieving benefits? (e.g. in terms of reducing transaction costs and fragmentation, facilitating policy engagement, and leveraging donor investments)	See <i>The Funding Modality</i> in the draft report under ‘Effectiveness’
2.10 How effective is the Independent Verification Process (IVP) and should it be continued?	See <i>Independent Verification Process</i> in the draft report under ‘Effectiveness’
2.11 How effective has the ESSP’s governance been in supporting the management of risks, resolution of programme issues, and achievement of ESSP outcomes?	See <i>Governance</i> in the draft report under ‘Effectiveness’
2.12 What training and guidelines (if any) have been developed to assist schools in their management of the ESSP, and how effective have these been?	See <i>Communications and Guidelines for School, ECE and PSET/TVET Providers</i> in the draft report under ‘Effectiveness’
2.13 How well have communications about ESSP been managed?	See <i>Communications and Guidelines for School, ECE and PSET/TVET Providers</i> in the draft report under ‘Effectiveness’
2.14 What can be done to improve the effectiveness of the ESSP?	See <i>Improvements to Effectiveness</i> in the draft report under ‘Effectiveness’

Efficiency

KEQ 3: Efficiency – To what extent is the implementation of the ESSP being managed efficiently?

Key Evaluation Sub-Questions	Source of Response in Draft Evaluation Report
3.1 To what extent has the implementation of the ESSP's activities been efficiently managed by GoS and education institutions?	See <i>Implementation</i> in the draft report under 'Efficiency'
3.2 To what extent have the development partner management arrangements (MFAT Wellington/MFAT Post/DFAT Canberra/DFAT Post) supported efficient implementation?	See <i>Development Partner Management Efficiency</i> in the draft report under 'Efficiency'
3.3 Does GoS have the right systems in place to efficiently manage MFAT/DFAT funding?	See <i>Systems Efficiency</i> in the draft report under 'Efficiency'
3.4 Were funds delivered to education providers / intended recipients in a timely way	See <i>Implementation</i> in the draft report under 'Efficiency'
3.5 To what extent has ESSP added value (technical assistance, governance, managing for results), reduced transaction costs and reduced duplication?	See <i>Implementation</i> in the draft report under 'Efficiency'
3.6 How well has MFAT's /DFAT's engagement to support the education sector (policy dialogue, participation in management bodies) worked?	See <i>Development Partner Management Efficiency</i> in the draft report under 'Efficiency'
3.7 What can be done to improve the efficiency of the ESSP?	See <i>Systems Efficiency</i> in the draft report under 'Efficiency'

Impact

KEQ 4: Impact – What is the likely impact of the ESSP?

Key Evaluation Sub-Questions	Source of Response in Draft Evaluation Report
4.1 Is the approach to sector budget support likely to support the achievement of the ESSP goals and sector outcomes?	See <i>Impact of funding via budget sector support</i> in the draft report under 'Impact'
4.2 What is the likely impact of ESSP on families?	See <i>Impact on communities, families and schools</i> in the draft report under 'Impact'
4.3 What is the likely impact of ESSP on schools?	See <i>Impact on communities, families and schools</i> in the draft report under 'Impact'
4.4 What can be done to improve the long-term effect(s) of the ESSP impact?	See <i>Capacity building in the education sector</i> and <i>Strengthening the education system</i> in the draft report under 'Sustainability'

Sustainability

KEQ 5: Sustainability – Are the benefits of the ESSP likely to be sustainable?

Key Evaluation Sub-Questions	Source of Response in Draft Evaluation Report
5.1 To what extent has the ESSP supported the financing gap in the education sector?	See <i>Impact of funding via budget sector support</i> in the draft report under 'Impact'
5.2 To what extent would the implementation partners likely be able to sustain the skills, management capacity and funding for the ESSP without continued assistance?	See <i>Capacity building in the education sector and Strengthening the education system</i> in the draft report under 'Sustainability'
5.3 What challenges does the GoS face in maintaining the benefits of the ESSP?	See <i>Challenges and Opportunities</i> in the draft report under 'Sustainability'
5.4 What can be done to improve the likelihood that the ESSP's benefits will be long-lasting?	See <i>Capacity building in the education sector and Strengthening the education system</i> in the draft report under 'Sustainability'

Cross-cutting Issues

KEQ 6: Cross-cutting issues – To what extent have cross-cutting issues (gender equality and disability inclusive development) been identified and pursued in the ESSP?

Key Evaluation Sub-Questions	Source of Response in Draft Evaluation Report
6.1 To what extent have cross-cutting issues been effectively addressed in planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the ESSP?	See <i>Inclusive Education and Gender equality</i> in the draft report under 'Cross-cutting issues'
6.2 How have cross-cutting issues been integrated into the education sector?	See <i>Inclusive Education and Gender equality</i> in the draft report under 'Cross-cutting issues'
6.3 What can be done to strengthen the ESSP's inclusive and equitable development outcomes?	See <i>Capacity building in the education sector and Strengthening the education system</i> in the draft report under 'Sustainability'

APPENDIX H: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY

A key reason for the investment of funds through the ESSP was to improve student achievement. ESP Goal I is “enhanced quality of education at all levels”, ESSP outcome No 2 is “improved literacy and numeracy scores at years 4 and 6”, and ESSP investment aim 2 is “support implementation of reform policies designed to improve learning outcomes and skills development linked to realistic employment expectations”. This appendix summarises at a high level some of the data relating to student achievement available in recent MESC Education Statistical Digests and in other recent reports. These reports have commented on student achievement in Sāmoa, in relation to literacy (Sāmoan and English), numeracy, and science, technology engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Sāmoa Early Grade Reading Assessment 2017

A Sāmoa Early Grade Reading Assessment (SEGRA) was conducted in Sāmoa from August to September 2017. The assessment was supported by the Global Partnership for Education, the World Bank, and Education Technology for Development, and was carried out in collaboration with the Pacific Community (formerly the South Pacific Commission) and MESC. EGRA is a simple instrument that measures foundational reading skills of early primary school students in Grades (Years) 1 to 3. The overall purpose of SEGRA was to provide an initial measurement of how well students are learning to read and write in their local language in the first three years of primary schooling. A national sample of 1196 students (600 girls and 596 boys) who were enrolled in Years 1, 2 and 3 were tested. The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) tool was adapted for the Sāmoan context by staff of the MESC and selected early grade teachers in Sāmoa who attended a workshop facilitated by language and education experts.

Several findings resulted from the assessment. First, early reading achievement in Sāmoa is low. Overall, students in Sāmoa, even after 3 full years of schooling, are not yet able to read with fluency and accuracy. This inability is preventing them from reading with comprehension. The international benchmark for reading fluency is 45-60 correct words per minute, depending on the complexity of the language. Overall, Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) scores for Sāmoa averaged 16 correct words per minute across the years. Year 3 students are reading at an average of 29 correct words per minute and only 16% of them could comprehend 80% to 100% of the text.

Secondly, students show progression in word reading skills from Years 1 to 3. In order to assess progression in reading skills across all three years, the same SEGRA instrument was applied to students in Years 1-3. While the degree of progress varied per subtest, the SEGRA results showed that there was progress between Years 1-3 in all subtests. In addition, it was noted that there was significant learning progress between Year 1 and Year 2 and very little learning is happening in Year 3 as shown by the graphs in the full report for SEGRA.

Third, students lack decoding skills. Students scored low across the three sub-tests that measure decoding skills: letter sounds, initial sounds, and non-words. Overall, students correctly identified an average of 23 letter sounds out of 100 letters, 3 initial sounds out of 10 words and 7 nonwords out of 50.

Fourth, reading comprehension levels are well below the international benchmark. An analysis of zero scores revealed that over 96% of students in Year 1, 72% in Year 2 and 50% in Year 3 could not correctly answer a single comprehension question about the oral reading passage. The majority of students in the sample across the three years are achieving well below the internationally accepted reading comprehension benchmark of 80%. Only 6% of all students tested met the benchmark (80%) and above.

Fifth, girls have higher reading fluency and comprehension. There were important differences between boys and girls, with girls outperforming boys in all of the subtests except for the non-word and listening comprehension subtests.

Finally, regional differences were significant. Students in the Savai'i region consistently performed better than 'Upolu Urban' and 'Upolu Other' regions in 9 out of 10 subtests. 'Apia Urban' students scored the lowest in all subtests.

Student Results across Sāmoa

Shayne Boyd, a secondary curriculum adviser with MESC, produced a number of reports and tables in 2017 and 2018 that examined student achievement in Sāmoa. These reports are noted elsewhere in this report, in the list of references. The following text draws on Shayne Boyd's work.

An important issue in a bilingual country like Sāmoa is the policy stance taken on bilingual education. Shayne Boyd has prepared a useful background paper entitled *Bilingual Policy in Sāmoa* that discusses some of the issues as they relate to student achievement. An important issue for the education system in Sāmoa is how best to assist young students to be fluent and literate in Sāmoan (for most, the language of the home), and how best to make the transition from Sāmoan to English. The issue of bilingual policy is therefore significant for Sāmoa, but is beyond the terms of reference of this evaluation.

The Sāmoa Primary Education Literacy Level Test 1 (SPELL 1) tested students at Year 4 level. Table 5 below shows an increasing percentage of Year 4 students categorised as 'at risk' in the years from 2013 to 2017. Note that in the 2017 MESC Education Statistics Digest, the 'at risk' categories for 2017 in SPELL 1 are labelled 'Beginning- Critical', 'Beginning- Basic' and 'Developing'.

Table 5: SPELL 1 Percentage of Students at Risk - at Beginner level

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
English	26	27.4	37	68	64
Sāmoan	16	19.5	12	44.5	69
Numeracy	29	41	59	68	76

The Sāmoa Primary Education Literacy Level Test 2 (SPELL 2) tested students at Year 6 level. Table 6 below shows an irregular percentage of Year 6 students categorized as 'at risk' in the years from 2013 to 2017. Note that in the 2017 MESC Education Statistics Digest, the 'at risk' categories for 2017 in SPELL 2 are labelled 'Beginning- Critical', 'Beginning- Basic' and 'Developing'.

Table 6: SPELL 2 Percentage of Students at Risk - at Beginner level

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
English	42	55.9	44	54	72
Sāmoan	14	30	13	39	30
Numeracy	61	74.2	59	46	51

The Sāmoa Primary Education Certificate Assessment (SPECA) is a test that primary students in Sāmoa sit at the end of primary schooling (Year 8). SPECA was introduced in 2013. It replaced the Year 8 National Examination. The test was an aptitude test in 2014, 2015, and 2016. Reporting

has changed, so that rather than report a raw score average, reporting now lists percentages of students at ‘advanced’, ‘proficient’ and ‘beginning’ level. 2014, 2015, 2016 scores record students at the beginning stage. In 2017 the examination changed to an achievement Test for all subjects, designed to test learning outcomes. The scores in Table 7 below for 2017 are for students who are not yet proficient (i.e. who are at Level 1). The change in both the nature of the test and reporting makes comparisons from year to year difficult.

Table 7: SPECA: Percentage of students at the ‘beginning’ level/ level 1

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
English	35.5	71.4	72	56	81
Sāmoan	27.6	19.5	21	21	82
Numeracy	31.4	61.3	69	76	98
Science					82
Social Science					98
Health/Phys Ed					98
Visual Arts					81

The data in Table 7 highlights that there has been a decline in student achievement over the years 2013 to 2017, with fewer students achieving ‘advanced’ level, and increasingly more students testing at the ‘beginning’ level. Only in Sāmoan are the majority of students achieving proficiency. However, in 2017 this score also declined.

The Sāmoa School Certificate (SSC) is sat by students at the end of Year 12. In 2014 the MESC Educational Statistical Digest changed the manner of reporting Year 12 and Year 13 achievement, replacing average percentage marks with the scale: ‘beginning’, ‘achieved’, ‘merit’ and ‘excellent’. The majority of Year 12 students were at the ‘beginning’ stage in Mathematics (78 %) and English (64%). The results for the other science subjects are not recorded in the Educational Statistical Digest. Table 8 below shows the results for core subjects for the last ten years.

Table 8: Year 12 SSC Results: Pass Rates

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014*	2015	2016	2017
English	37	51	46	50	49	41		30.5	55.5	54.3
Sāmoan	55	53	50	50	46	61		62	61.5	80.6
Maths	36	51	46	53	49	19		11.5	7.5	8.3
Biology	61	57	53	57	54	37		30.5	19.5	31.9
Chemistry	68	59	60	58	57	35		14	20.5	37.8
Physics	87	61	60	59	59	32		19	53.5	86.8

The Sāmoa Secondary Leaving Certificate (SSLC) is sat by students at the end of Year 13. Between 2012 and 2016 there was a significant decline in student marks in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. As shown below in Table 9, a change occurred in

the 2017 results, for a number of subjects, which show a dramatic turnaround. The increase in results was more than one would expect statistically over a twelve-month period. The following pass rates for 2017 were recorded.

- The physics pass rate improved from 27% to 77% - an improvement of **287%**
- The chemistry pass rate improved from 12% to 35% - an improvement of **201%**
- The biology pass rate improved from 12% to 50% - an improvement of over **420%**
- The English pass rate improved from 44% to 67% - an improvement of **153.4%**

Table 9: Year 13 SSLC Results

	2014*	2015	2016	2017
English	36	45.5	44	67.5
Sāmoan		78.5	91	92.9
Maths	22	4	5	10.9
Biology		25	12	50.4
Chemistry		27.5	12	34.9
Physics		37	26.5	77.4
Geography				38.7
History				18
Computer Studies				51.6
Accounting				34.4
Economics				63.2
Food and Textiles				53.4
Design Tech				30.2
Visual Arts				44.6
HPE				65.5
Development Studies				100

The variability in student results in 2017 raises a number of questions. Statistically, student results over time should be within a reasonably close range, with results either steadily improving, showing consistency over time, or demonstrating slight declines. When numbers of students are smaller, there is a greater chance of wider variations from the norm.

Conclusions

The overwhelming evidence from these results of student achievement in Sāmoa is clear: student achievement across the board in Sāmoa primary and secondary schools is low, and needs to improve.

There are legitimate questions and caveats that can be raised about the comparability of data from year to year, since, when baselines change, it is inadvisable to make direct comparisons from year to year. It is therefore important for administrators to ensure that data is comparable from year to year in order to be able to assess the 'health' of the education system. In spite of any caveats about data comparability, the situation with respect to student achievement in Sāmoa is clear.

An important strategy that the education system in Sāmoa needs to consider is to appoint a reading specialist to a position in the education faculty of NUS. Good teachers are the cornerstone of quality education. Well-trained teachers of reading are essential to teach young people to read at an early age. Students who do not learn to read in the early years of schooling will struggle with their education throughout their school years. Poor readers who do not understand printed information or who cannot follow written instructions risk falling further and further behind those who can read well. A lack of skill in reading will affect peoples' social and economic well-being later in life.
