



**NEW ZEALAND**  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE  
Aid Programme

# Evaluation Report for the Evaluation of New Zealand Customs Sector Development in the Pacific Program (2017-2021)

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# 1

## Executive Summary

The New Zealand Customs Sector Development in the Pacific activity (the Activity) was designed to support the development of the Customs sector in the Pacific from 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021 (extended to 30 June 2022), with a view to enabling long-term security and economic growth in the region. The Activity, implemented by the New Zealand Customs Service (NZCS) focuses on the Pacific Island countries (PICs) of the Cook Islands, Samoa, Fiji and Vanuatu along with a regional assistance component.

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the Activity that will be used by MFAT and NZCS to identify improvements that can be made to managing, implementing and achieving results from this Activity, inform decisions relating to a potential third phase of the Activity, and ascertain the level of sustainability and resilience of outcomes achieved by the Activity.

The evaluation involved reviewing the priorities of NZ and the partner countries, together with the stated outcomes and outputs of the Activity, assessing the actual outputs of the Activity and the way in which it was delivered; and identifying future proposals to take the Program forward. This was undertaken using surveys, interviews and a review of relevant documentation.

The Activity was found to be **relevant** to both the priorities of New Zealand and the partner PICs, providing a sound strategic direction and support for individual customs agencies in relation to its three key program goals of assisting PICs to facilitate legitimate trade and travel, to fairly and effectively collect revenue at borders, and to effectively manage borders to achieve safer communities. The Pacific Leadership Program (PLP) was found to represent the cornerstone initiative of the Activity.

**Delivery model** findings were that the approach and ways of working to deliver the Activity were effective. The use of NZCS staff in-country visits (2-3 week periods) and a long-term in-country adviser (currently 13 months) was found to be pivotal to the customs reform support, and coordination with NZ Inc agencies was found to be effective. In-country visits and face-to-face teaching of customs technical skills has, however, been constrained through COVID travel restrictions.

In terms of the **sustainability and resilience** of the Activity, it was found that continued support from partner governments is essential, in-country personnel are best placed in advisory roles, and the focus of the PLP on customs, immigration and police agencies is proving to be particularly effective.

**Future design and support** findings support retention of the strategy for the four partner customs agencies, the need for ongoing regional support and donor coordination, and identified a timely opportunity to review, plan and enhance the Activity through a capacity building model/lens.

A consolidated list of **recommendations** is provided in Section 5.



# 2

## Background

### CONTEXT

The **New Zealand Customs Sector Development in the Pacific activity** was designed to support the development of the Customs sector in the Pacific from 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021 (extended to 30 June 2022), with a view to enabling long-term security and economic growth in the region. The Activity focuses on the Pacific Island countries (PICs) of the Cook Islands, Samoa, Fiji and Vanuatu along with a regional assistance component. Work undertaken in the focus countries is guided by individual implementation plans which were informed by partner country priorities and needs analyses.

The Activity is **implemented by the New Zealand Customs Service (NZCS)**, which employs four full-time staff working as technical advisers who provide assistance and support to Customs officials in the focus countries (including via in-country visits of 2-3 week periods, and in one case, a long-term in-country adviser (currently 13 months)). These advisers are internal hires who have strong operational backgrounds with specialties in border management, trade facilitation, governance and leadership. This operational experience allows the advisers to directly mentor and support Pacific customs administrations, by adapting their expertise and knowledge of best practice to fit the Pacific context.

In order to support the three key program goals of the Activity, i.e. to assist PICs to facilitate legitimate trade and travel, fairly and effectively collect revenue at borders, and effectively manage borders to achieve safer communities, the Activity has employed the following **modalities of support**:

- **Output 1 – Analysis and planning assistance:** NZCS provides needs analysis and planning for future interventions/projects, matching NZCS internal specialist capability with PIC Customs administrations' needs.
- **Output 2 - Regulatory and policy reform:** NZCS works with PIC Customs administrations to ensure that the preconditions exist within the country to implement Customs legislation and address changes required in related legislation.
- **Output 3 - Organisational and staff development:** NZCS supports PIC Customs administrations to lead their own organisational and staff development processes to modernise Customs administrations and meet international standards; NZCS assists PIC Customs administrations to improve risk assessment and target Customs controls at the high-risk end of the risk continuum.
- **Output 4 - Stakeholder engagement and cooperation:** NZCS assists PIC Customs administrations in setting up good engagement strategies and mechanisms with clients to inform them of changes as they go through Customs modernisation process; NZCS assists PIC Customs administrations' readiness to share information with other national border agencies, in line with a global move towards coordinated border management.



## EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES & SCOPE

The **purpose** of this evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the Activity that will be used by MFAT and NZCS to:

- identify improvements that can be made to managing, implementing, and achieving results from this Activity;
- inform decisions on whether to proceed with a third phase of this Activity and if so, what should the future direction, design and support be; and
- ascertain the level of sustainability and resilience of outcomes achieved by this Activity.

The specific **objectives** of the evaluation are as follows:

- **Objective 1:** To assess the extent to which the Activity's outputs and outcomes remain a priority for the partner country and the New Zealand Aid Programme (**Relevance**)
- **Objective 2:** To review the suitability of MFAT's approach and ways of working to deliver the programme (**Delivery models**)
- **Objective 3:** To assess the sustainability and resilience of the activity to inform future direction (**Sustainability and Resilience**)
- **Objective 4:** To identify the key changes needed to deliver sustainable outcomes from a possible third phase of this Activity (**Future design and support**).

The **scope of the evaluation** includes:

- Time period - 2017 to 2021
- Partner countries – the Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, and Vanuatu
- Partner Customs administrations



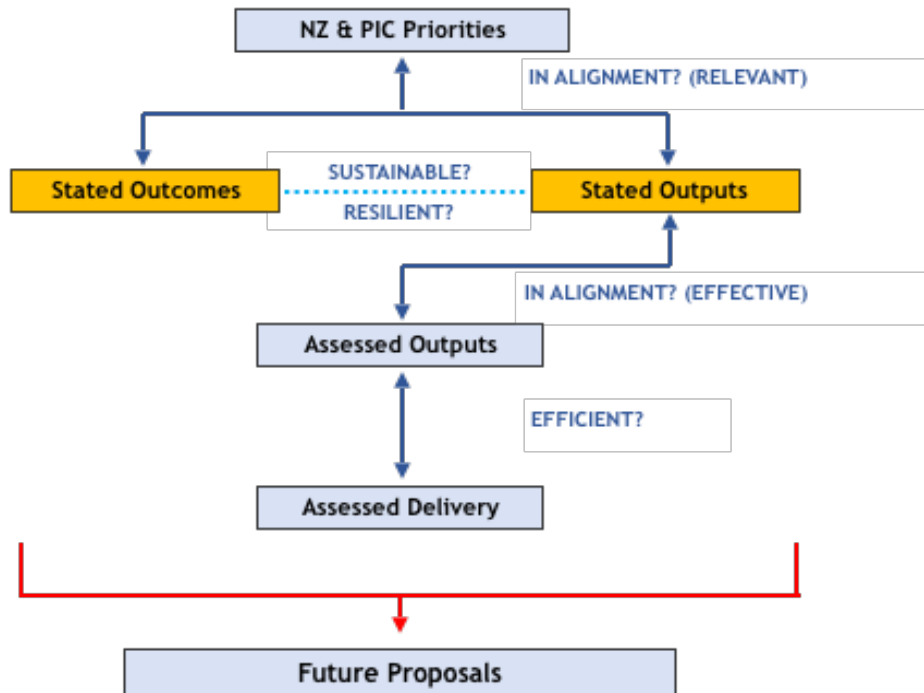
# 3

## Methodology

The evaluation was based on the framework shown in Figure 1, which involved:

- reviewing the priorities of NZ and the partner countries, together with the stated outcomes and outputs of the Activity;
- assessing the actual outputs of the Activity and the way in which it was delivered; and
- identifying future proposals to take the Program forward.

Figure 1: Evaluation Framework



Assessment of the relevance of the Program – that is, the extent to which the outcomes remain a priority for both NZ and the partner countries - was based on the identified alignment between the country priorities and the stated program outputs.

The effectiveness of the Activity was determined by comparing the stated outputs with the actual outputs as reported by stakeholders; and the efficiency of the program was determined by comparing the actual outputs with the way in which the program was delivered – again, as reported by stakeholders.

The sustainability and resilience of the Activity was assessed in the context of the current operating environment – including the impact of COVID-19; and bringing all these factors



together, an assessment was made as to whether any changes were needed to deliver sustainable outcomes from a possible third phase of the Program.

The Evaluation Team used three principal approaches to conducting the evaluation: surveys; phone (and zoom) interviews; and document review. A list of stakeholders that were contacted during the course of the evaluation is shown at Appendix 1.

### **Surveys**

Details of the survey are shown at Appendix 2.

A total of 40 responses were received from the survey, including primary (including all 4 Customs administrations), secondary and tertiary stakeholders. Of the respondents, 24 are men and 16 are women. The breakdown is as follows:

- 13 from NZ Inc. (MFAT, NZCS, NZ Police)
- 12 from Samoa
- 5 from Cook Islands
- 5 from Vanuatu
- 3 from Fiji
- 1 from Tonga
- 1 from Niue.

### **Phone/Zoom Interviews**

A total of 11 phone interviews were conducted with primary stakeholders, including MFAT, NZCS (4), NZInc (1), All four partner Customs administrations (5).

### **Document Review**

The list of reviewed documents is shown at Appendix 3.



# 4

## Findings and Conclusions

### OBJECTIVE 1 - RELEVANCE

In assessing the relevance of the Activity, a number of questions were examined, including:

- 1A. Whether the change in New Zealand's Pacific policy since 2016 has affected the relevance of the activity to New Zealand
- 1B. How Pacific Island country governments have viewed the support during the last five years of assistance, particularly in relation to its relevance to their domestic priorities
- 1C. Whether the impact of COVID-19 on Pacific Island countries has influenced the relevance of the identified outputs and outcomes of the Activity.

#### 1A. Relevance to New Zealand

**Findings indicate that the change in New Zealand's Pacific policy to Pacific Reset in 2016 has ensured the Activity has remained highly relevant to New Zealand throughout the evaluation period (2017-2021).**

Survey results and interview responses demonstrate that the Activity remains highly relevant to New Zealand, including the priorities for its work with partners in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, and Vanuatu. In this regard, it was found that Pacific Reset prioritises New Zealand's mature relationships with PICs and the policy has served to increase the relevance of the Activity with the four key mature partners. The following feedback from stakeholders is relevant:

- The change in policy has made the Activity's focus in the four countries more relevant, particularly during COVID (i.e. since 2020). In particular, NZCS support for customs administrations during this time is considered to have significantly increased the relevance of the Activity in the context of their experience of revenue loss, reduced economic activity, significant staff and resourcing reductions, increased attempts to defraud the revenue, and the necessary increased focus on community protection to prevent the spread of the pandemic. The Activity is also considered to be very relevant and necessary to support PICs efforts to rebuild their economies post-COVID.
- A key Activity goal and focus for NZCS is border management, which has become more important in the context of the Pacific Reset focus on these countries. It has become unquestionably intrinsic to inter alia the health responses of PICs. With the impact of the pandemic on overall government revenue through a reduction in tourism and travel, this has invariably meant that customs revenue collection – another important goal for New Zealand – has also increased in significance. In this regard, there is a notable increase in the lodgement of false declarations and attempts to defraud the revenue, and there are concerns that the impact of these trends on work demands may derail organisational commitment towards the achievement of Customs reforms and modernisation objectives.
- Moreover, with the entry into force of the PACER Plus Agreement, New Zealand now has greater involvement in the trade assurance space – another key goal of the Activity – through the provision of and support for the automated border management system





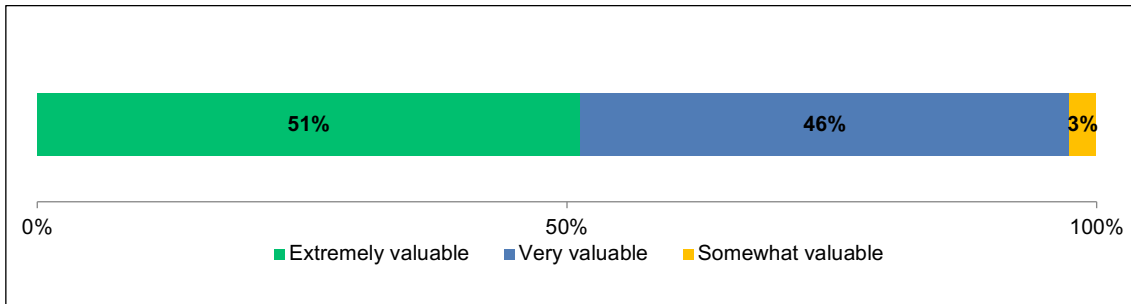
'ASYCUDA World' in several PACER Plus members, with all four partner countries having adopted ASYCUDA World.

### **1B. Relevance to PIC Governments**

**Findings indicate that the governments of the Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, and Vanuatu have viewed the Activity over the past five years favourably.**

This is evidenced by survey respondents – including local police, immigration and other non-customs, government participants –79% of which felt the Activity's three goals (trade and travel, revenue collection, and border management) had increased in national importance in the past five years, demonstrating that the Activity shows clear relevance to their respective domestic priorities. A review of documents for the four partner countries confirmed that the Activity outputs align with the PICs' development strategies.

*Figure 2: Value of Support Provided by NZCS*



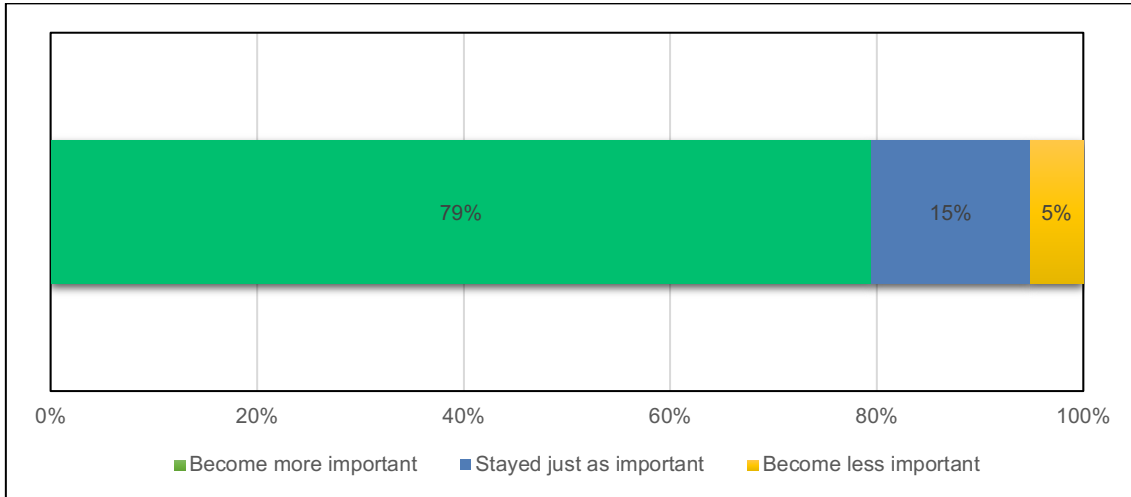
Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

The following specific feedback from stakeholders is also relevant

- "In-person training is impactful for Samoa; the relationships built between NZCS, and Samoa Customs is strong, and the New Zealand view and experience is highly valued by Samoa" (Samoa)
- "This program is very valuable; we need this support" (Vanuatu)
- "The NZCS staff were always flexible to our needs and easy to get in touch with for advice and guidance. How the assistance was planned and implemented has also worked well. Governance and monitoring and evaluation are prioritized so it also gets done" (Fiji)
- "NZ Customs have provided invaluable assistance to the Cook Islands Customs service by providing the assistance of experts in certain fields related to Customs such as Data access, training as well as equipment donations. Providing NZ Customs Officers to be seconded to our team to provide first-hand assistance for implementing and improving current Customs processes" (Cook Islands).

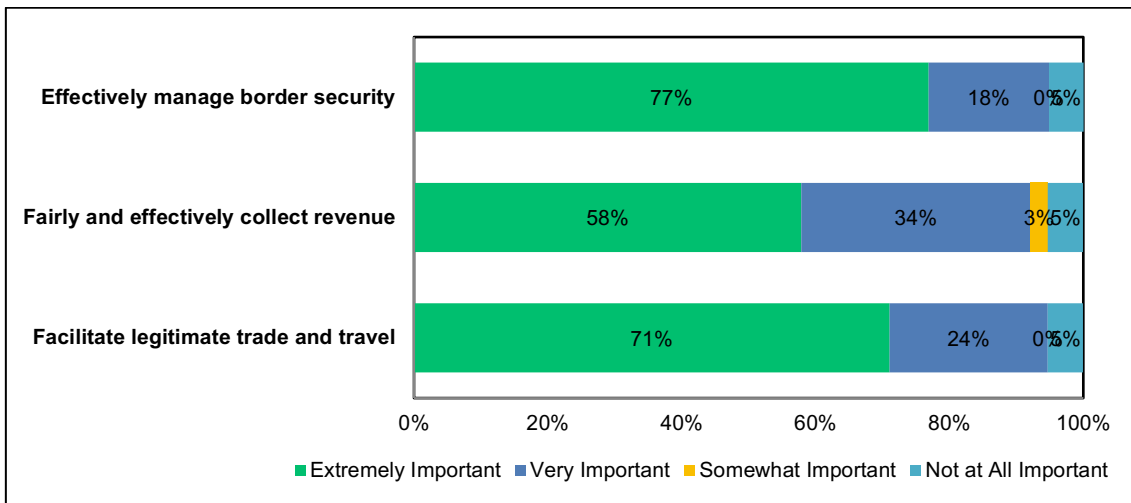


Figure 3: Importance of the Activity in the past five years



Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

Figure 4: Importance of Activity Goals to PICs



Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

Figures 3, 4 and 5 show the importance of the overall Activity, the Activity goals, and the Activity outcomes to the partner countries in the past five years as reported by survey respondents. This confirms the findings of the document review (NZCS Activity Progress reports, PIF Aid for Trade strategy (2020 – 2025), the Cook Islands and Samoa Results Framework Reports), which indicated that the three key Activity goal areas align closely with individual PIC development strategies. The evaluation also indicated a general shift in strategies since COVID from trade facilitation toward border management and the protection of the community from the spread of pandemic.



The Development Strategies with supporting policies for the Cook Islands<sup>1</sup>, Samoa<sup>2</sup>, Fiji<sup>3</sup>, and Vanuatu<sup>4</sup> each contain specific alignment to this Activity’s three goal areas. For example, in the Cook Islands, border management and trade/travel are referred to in Goal 5 of the Plan. In Fiji, border management (including systems, personnel, and equipment), trade/travel (includes trade policy, international connectivity, and trade and foreign relations) and revenue collection (relating to tax administration and business regulatory environment) are identified. In Samoa, border management relates to priority area 1 (key output 11), and trade/travel to priority area 1 (key outputs 4 and 10). Vanuatu has a National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2030 which includes facilitation of legitimate trade and travel, revenue generation and border protection.

The findings also indicated that the Activity’s focus on four customs reform and modernisation aspects align closely with capacity building initiatives in the PIF Aid for Trade Strategy (2020), the PACER Plus Agreement and the WTO Agreement. These include the adoption of modern processes and technology (e.g. ASYCUDA project), improved staff training and development (e.g. the Pacific Leadership Program (PLP), ranked highest by partner agencies), promoting the adoption of regional and international trade facilitation agreements (e.g. the PACER Plus Agreement), and encouraging transparency and information sharing amongst stakeholders.

Figure 5: Ranked Importance of Programme Outcomes to PICs

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not So Important	Not at all Important
Adoption of modern processes and technology	55%	32%	5%	0%	8%
Improved training and development of staff	74%	21%	0%	0%	5%
Adoption of regional and international trade facilitation agreements	37%	47%	8%	0%	8%
Improved transparency and sharing of information with stakeholders	41%	51%	3%	0%	5%

Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

<sup>1</sup> Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2020.

<sup>2</sup> Samoa Strategy for the Development of Samoa (2016/17-2019/20).

<sup>3</sup> Fiji 5yr and 20yr National Development Plan 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Vanuatu National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2030.



### **Stakeholder Insights**

*"Upskilling of officers in both new technology as well as improved processes and procedure means the Service is able to be agile and adapt to new challenges/threats"*  
(Cook Islands)

*"Department is growing, new recruits coming in and need capacity building. A big restructure has just been approved and 35 new recruits are coming in. We don't have enough trainers - we need more local expertise on the ground (Vanuatu)"*

*"Need to build capacity of in-country/local staff to complete their work to a high/internationally acceptable level; to build confidence and provide pathways for promotion internally" (Samoa)*

*"The implementation of modern processes helps with collecting the accurate revenue as well as the flow of the process in facilitating the trade of goods and services within Customs. In improving the knowledge and the capability of every customs officers in exercising their everyday task, it is very vital to have refresher trainings for the existing staffs and proper trainings (sic) for new recruit in order for employees fasten the process of clearance, and in improving Systemized process helps in the advances thinking of Custom in ways of improving and fastening process..." (Samoa)*

Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

As noted below, survey respondents indicated that the Pacific Leadership Program (PLP) represented a cornerstone project in the Activity (see Figure 6). Its key benefits were cited as facilitating different agencies working together; sharing ideas, information, and resources; and becoming jointly involved in operations. It was seen as maximising the efficient delivery of border management by moving away from the traditional compartmentalized approach to sharing resources and intelligence. There was also some commentary on how the PLP was assisting to make decisions and decision-makers more accountable than had been the case previously.

The following specific feedback on the PLP was also received from stakeholders:

- "PLP was an enabler to employees - Tools pivoted delivery of outputs + increased individual confidence + capability - Organizational restructure supported via People Focus, using framework + policies which were followed through operationally. Enabled ownership, encouraged transparency and organizational culture shifts" (Fiji)
- "PLP is a successful program not only in our community but also my personal development" (Samoa)
- "PLP - Code of Ethics and Governance with values plus other projects enhance the way we carry out our work plans/objectives efficiently and effectively in alignment with departmental and national frameworks" (Vanuatu).



Figure 6: Ranked Importance of Programme Outcomes to PICs (% of total respondents)

Activity/Program	Cook Islands	Fiji	Samoa	Vanuatu	Non-Country*	Total**
Pacific Leadership Programme	19%	13%	34%	3%	31%	82%
Improved customs processes and procedures leading to increased revenue and seizure of illicit goods	30%	9%	35%	0%	26%	59%
Ratification of the PACER Plus Agreement	44%	0%	38%	0%	19%	41%
Quarantine Free Travel Program	47%	0%	20%	13%	20%	38%
Organisational restructure	47%	7%	27%	0%	20%	38%
Customs Valuation workshops	31%	8%	38%	0%	23%	33%
Self-assessment and authorised operator programs	10%	0%	60%	0%	30%	26%
Regulatory reform on the treatment of low value goods and 'de minimis'	14%	0%	43%	0%	43%	18%
Boe Declaration	33%	0%	17%	0%	50%	15%

\* Responses from countries other than the four recipient PICs

\*\* Responses from all countries, including New Zealand

Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

Figure 6 provides valuable insight into the importance of programme outcomes as ranked by respondents. The responses indicate that:

- 82% of all respondents rated the PLP as the most successful program activity
- There is variation in the assessed importance of the support provided to the four recipient PICs. For example, the Cook Islands and Samoa view a diverse range of supported activities and programs as important, while Vanuatu does not (the latter only recently having joined the Program prior to COVID).
- In Samoa, support for establishing self-assessment and AEO Programs is rated as the most important project for that country, whereas in the Cook Islands it is the support for organisational restructuring that is seen as the most important activity
- While the views of non-Country respondents and those from in-country largely align, there are some differences. For example, support for implementation of the BOE Declaration.



### **1C. Impact of COVID-19**

**The major impact of COVID-19 on the four partner countries has been a reduction in the volume of tourism and trade (resulting in reduced economic activity and in turn, significant loss of government revenue). This has resulted in an increased relevance Activity outcomes, with customs administrations increasingly focusing on border management and their role in protecting the community from the spread of the pandemic.**

As previously noted, survey respondents reported an increase in attempts to defraud the revenue as traders sought to maximise their income in reduced trading conditions. The following comments from stakeholders are relevant:

- “We did not achieve the projected revenue amount due to COVID. If COVID didn't come, we would have achieved it. When passengers come, it creates more revenue. Now only cargo planes are coming. Sales dropped and revenue has reduced in 2020 with the tourism sector closed down. The result is that domestic economic activity has dropped.” (Vanuatu)
- “COVID has followed on from a measles epidemic so economically the country is struggling which is putting pressure on their Customs Service. Increased relevance significantly through now increased focus and attention and how people and goods are coming in and out of Samoa” (Samoa)
- “The activities remain relevant. COVID put a pause on some of the enhancements we were planning, and it also caused a rethink of our plans. The recovery and reopening of borders have become the new priority but in the long term the activities are still important. Fiji Customs is significantly impacted and has made a number of officers redundant which has severely impacted their overall capability as an organisation” (Fiji)
- “[Activity relevance has] Markedly increased as the Cook Islands has looked to both manage its border to keep COVID19 out and then to look for ways to reopen its crucial tourism industry as safely as possible” (Cook Islands).

The findings of the evaluation indicate that the impact of the reduction of trade and tourism on the Activity has been mixed. In the Cook Islands some program implementation has slowed, making different forms of Activity assistance more relevant. For example, while the implementation of the ASYCUDA system is still very relevant, COVID has seen delays as there were fewer experts able to travel to the island to support its implementation. In Fiji, where there has been a significant reduction in the volume of goods (and people) entering the country, the reduction in the volume of trade has meant that there are fewer delays in processing but an increase in traders seeking to reduce costs by avoiding duties and excise. As a result, there is less of a demand for FRCS to facilitate trade and an increased focus on border controls. The associated substantial shortfall in revenue has also prompted a major restructure of FRCS, resulting in a significant drop in the number of employees – particularly casual and part-time but also some full-time officers .

As indicated in Figure 6, Samoa is very supportive of the broad range of Programme outcomes and outputs. However, the impact of COVID has seen a full closure of borders (with the exception of repatriation flights), a delay in vessel arrivals, delays in receiving goods, changes in shipping schedules and an increase in shipping fees and charges. Samoa was only just emerging from a measles outbreak when the impacts of COVID started to be felt. Like other PICs this has seen a significant reduction in local economic activity, a reduction in revenue collection and an increased focus on border controls.



The impact upon Vanuatu was similar to that of other PICs in terms of a reduction in economic activity, reduced revenue collection and an increased focus on border protection. One of the immediate consequences was the cancellation of the proposed PLP and increased pushback from Government citing the lack of revenue to fund other customs reform and modernisation initiatives. This has made Activity support more critical.

Overall the view from PICs is that once the impact of COVID starts to lessen the Activity will increase in importance as customs agencies are tasked by Government to support local economic recovery. As PICs gradually open up, customs administrations will need to change their focus from managing border restrictions to the facilitation of trade and travel. To support this change in focus, education and training projects will need to be funded to address the loss of skills and experience that has inevitably occurred during the pandemic.

Some partner agencies have also observed that even when borders are reopened it will take some time to restore trade volumes to pre-COVID levels as issues continue with disrupted supply chains. For example, as trade volumes start to recover, border agencies will need to employ new staff to replace those that have retired, been retrenched, or gained employment elsewhere.

As was the case prior to COVID, many agencies relied on casual and part-time staff, and these will have to be re-employed. In this environment, programs such as the PLP will gain in importance as many agencies will have new people in leadership positions who need high level training. At lower levels there will be new recruits who will also need the benefits of education and training in core customs skills and processes. There will also be an element of normalising agency operations as the threat and impact of the pandemic eases.

#### **Conclusions: Relevance**

1. The strategic direction of the Activity is consistent with the needs of PICs
2. There is universal agreement that NZCS support has been pivotal in supporting individual customs administrations
3. In the past five years (particularly since COVID) border management has increased in importance
4. There is a continued need for staff training and development across the four customs administrations
5. The PLP remains the cornerstone development initiative of the Activity.

#### **Recommendations: Relevance**

1. MFAT and NZCS to retain the Activity's strategic direction consistent with PICs' needs
2. MFAT and NZCS to continue in its support of the four partner customs administrations
3. MFAT and NZCS to retain its three-goal focus, and to broaden the goal from border security to Border Management
4. NZCS to reinforce staff training and development in its modalities
5. NZCS to consider ways of delivering PLP remotely given restrictions to in-country delivery.



## OBJECTIVE 2 - DELIVERY MODELS

In reviewing the suitability of MFAT's approach and ways of working to deliver the Activity, the following questions were examined:

- 2A. Where have NZCS utilised the most effective and efficient modalities to achieve desired results in a timely way?
- 2B. How has flexibility in assistance contributed towards planned outcomes; and have there been downsides to the high level of flexibility demonstrated by NZCS?
- 2C. How can NZCS continue to deliver its programme of work in a travel constrained environment?
- 2D. How well have Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) arrangements worked in this activity by NZCS and partner administrations? How should the MERL approach be adapted moving forward?
- 2E. How can NZCS best coordinate with other donors working in the Customs space in the Pacific?

### 2A. Delivery Modalities

**Some of the most effective modalities utilised by NZCS to achieve timely results have included in-person training (e.g. in operating procedures and systems such as ASYCUDA), train the trainer, adviser assistance whilst in-country (e.g. initiatives in Fiji and Cook Islands), and delivery of the Pacific Leadership Programme (PLP).**

Findings indicate that one of the most effective and efficient modalities for timely results in leadership across the three goal areas is the PLP. It is deemed the most successful project and remains the cornerstone of the Activity. It was successfully delivered in Fiji and Samoa from 2017-2019 with additional participants from Solomon Islands, Tokelau, and New Caledonia. There were plans to host one in Vanuatu in 2020 however, owing to border closures this has been deferred to 2022. While it initially catered only to Customs and Tax officers, the PLP has since expanded to other border agencies such as the Police, Airport authorities, Biosecurity, and Immigration Departments.

Prior to COVID, the PLP was delivered in-person enabling direct engagement with trainers through activities, presentations, and discussions allowing for an exchange of ideas and networking with other agencies. Participant feedback shows expectations were exceeded with theoretical and practical knowledge of leadership principles and concepts being greatly enhanced. Stakeholder feedback suggested that additional monitoring and evaluation (e.g. tracer study/other) could facilitate further assessment of the impact and results of the PLP by following through on some of the key projects in each customs administration.

Travel restrictions and continuing border closures in New Zealand and elsewhere in the Pacific have obviously necessitated a re-think of the delivery modalities for this Activity, including remote learning (discussed further under 2C). It was, however, suggested that even in the absence of such restrictions, there may be an opportunity to focus on the greater use of online and virtual programmes to replace or supplement in-person delivery. It was noted that online learning has proved to be effective in teaching customs technical skills and knowledge which can be articulated into further learning pathways. In this regard, the OCO core customs curriculum may be considered as a template and appropriately adapted to target countries.





Feedback also suggests retaining PLP's focus on agencies that are active at the border, hence within NZCS' programme remit. This includes customs, immigration, and police agencies, as well as biosecurity, and potentially airports and port authorities as well. All have been engaged in the COVID pandemic response at the border, and are organisations with which customs authorities are required to coordinate their activities. This would develop a leadership cohort that has a common approach to border management across a number of leading national government agencies.

### Stakeholder Insights

*Effectiveness has inevitably reduced slightly, as the Cook Islands values the in-country delivery of programmes, and in-person delivery usually provides more depth. But the need to deliver remotely has also shown that it should be possible to deliver a greater breadth of programmes than is always possible when relying solely on an in-person delivery model..... I think that in-country delivery should also continue to be supplemented by virtual/remote delivery (Cook Islands)*

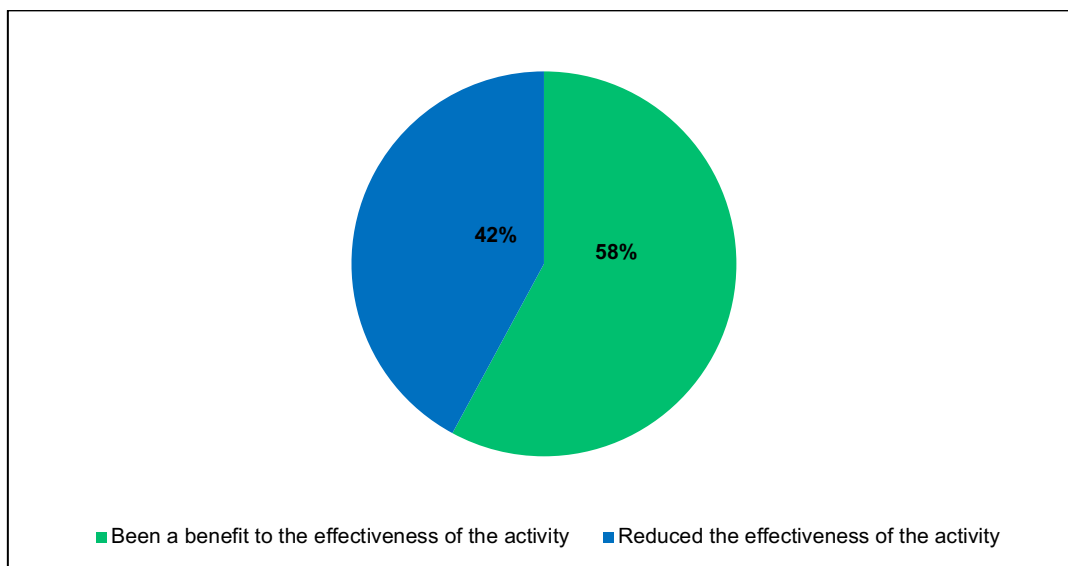
Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

## 2B. Flexibility in Delivery

**With a changing operating environment, flexibility in programming has enabled NZCS to respond to unusual events like the COVID pandemic, while maintaining continued linkages, trust and working relations with the customs administrations of partner countries.**

The findings also indicate that NZCS has used flexibility in its activity programming to retain interest when priorities are elsewhere. This has included technical expertise including via phone during COVID, when travel restrictions have not allowed more substantive capacity development work.

Figure 7: Effectiveness of NZCS Flexible Approach to Programme Delivery



Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey



### **Stakeholder Insights**

*[Flexibility] has benefitted, but connectivity must be improved. When officers could go abroad, they had good training. However, when meetings moved to online, we experience that when training was done while employees were on their individual devices, employees used connectivity as excuses resulting in missed attendance. But when everyone could gather at the Vila conference room the connectivity is good. But even still, people skip training and just rely on others to go to the training. There hasn't been a formal training. Australia ran a training that a certificate was issued, and people attended. This helps motivate people to complete training. (Vanuatu)*

*Weekly virtual meetings - more time at less cost Pacific Leadership program - staying connected by having coaching sessions SME - PCA/ Valuation/ Tariff/ Customs procedures/ new automated system (advise or assistance) (Cook Islands)*

Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

The achievement of outcomes in the Cook Islands has demonstrated the success of incorporating flexibility into delivery. NZCS Activity Design utilised a mixed method approach to achieve effective outcomes: ensuring flexibility in delivery; facilitating learning opportunities; and building relationships for all parties. The modalities included provision of technical assistance, leadership training, in-country capacity building, hosting study visits, and providing distance support and mentoring.

Prior to the arrival of the NZCS staff long-term in-country adviser in the Cook Islands, assistance was delivered remotely such as the assistance provided for the restructure of the Cook Islands Customs Service (CICS), management coaching for the office of Comptroller of Customs, and assistance in legislative change to allow for the entry into force of the PACER Plus Agreement. Prior to taking up the post, the adviser was known to CICS as he had travelled as part of the NZ delegation that assessed the Cook Islands readiness for a travel bubble with NZ.

Since then, the adviser has achieved a number of objectives in regulatory and policy reform, and in supporting organisational, staff development and stakeholder engagement. The continued use of NZCS advisers in-country (whether in 2-3 week periods, or long-term in country) (in advisory rather than in-line management roles) is observed as pivotal in supporting customs reform and modernisation. The case of Cook Islands though is anomalous when compared with Fiji and Samoa where the same flexible mechanisms were adopted, however with less success in achieving Activity outcomes due to partner agency constraints.

In the case of Fiji, the scoping assessment for placement of a long-term on-country adviser in an in-line role did not fully consider the impact of political pressures already existing within the civil service and government statutory bodies such as the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS). Following the NZCS adviser's departure, engagements with Fiji became limited and have largely remained this way. In Samoa, the onset of the COVID pandemic was a hindrance to the successful delivery of the activity and while a Results Measurement Table for the year 2019-2020 was forthcoming, it has been difficult to gain agreement to a governance meeting to discuss a way forward.



NZCS Activity Reports noted that there was a general organisational reluctance to change within Samoan Customs, but it did not specify whether this reluctance related to the pace of change (that the change was too fast or too much for their liking) or a resistance to change. While there is flexibility in arrangements from the NZCS side, Fiji and Samoa appear not to be responding to offers of assistance. However both Fiji and Samoa have actively participated in this review of the Program which potentially provides NZCS with an opportunity to re-evaluate their engagement strategy with both countries.

## **2C. Delivery in a Travel Constrained Environment**

**Findings indicate that, in an effort to continue the delivery of the Activity in a travel-constrained world, NZCS is doing well to consider the specific objectives of each output per country and seeking ways to tailor the most appropriate delivery mechanism to achieve the desired outcomes.**

While long distance working relations and the online delivery of programs and virtual courses are generally less effective in the Pacific, restrictions on movements mean that alternative means of delivery must be included in any overall development strategy.

The Activity supports a number of outcomes and specific projects to achieve the three development goals of trade/travel, border management and revenue collection. These include longer term objectives (such as organisational restructure) to more immediate goals (such as developing capacity in a particular customs skill set). By their nature longer term objectives require on-going advice and support which is best delivered by NZCS staff in-country visits (2-3 week periods) or a long-term in-country adviser. However, to achieve more immediate goals, properly structured online courses and virtual programs can be a very effective method in teaching specific customs skill sets, knowledge, or programs.

### **Stakeholder Insights**

*The leadership program had people on the ground providing support and then when borders closed the support ceased. Virtual programs need to be motivating with issuing of certifications, and courses well organised and coordinated. Both on ground and virtual work. For example, Australia had us go through modules of study, modules that individual officers can access online which proved to be more effective. Ex. They are taking modules on Enforcement, compliance, etc for Level 1 and by the end of year they will have their certificates. If the leadership program went through modules, quizzes, and assignments through modules it would be better use of online training (Vanuatu)*

*At the moment speaking from my own experience, we currently have a NZ Customs officer seconded with our team for the year and he has been most helpful with all our questions as well as being able to email and sometimes chat via video online with Customs officers in NZ seeking advice and data. I am acting Senior Customs Officer for Trade and this role was given to me in such short notice as a fairly new officer so having the accessibility to Shane and Colin during this period has been most effective in order for me to fulfil my role and that of my team. I guess for NZ Customs to continue to deliver its programme, just continue to allow us access to your officers so we may pick their brains, in a sense (Cook Islands)*

Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey



The findings suggest that, while NZCS already has extensive experience with placing a long-term in-country adviser, their online course and virtual programs are less well developed. In designing future programs, while the course content is easily defined, consideration needs to be given to the motivation of, and engagement with students.

In relation to the PLP – in its cross agency and cross-country focus – as well as other NZCS-unique training, stakeholder feedback indicates that efficiency would be enhanced through consideration of virtual or online delivery, particularly given that COVID travel restrictions has meant that the PLP has been put on hold.

## **2D. MERL Arrangements**

**As indicated in the workshop, the surveys and the literature reviews, the Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) process for the Activity is currently not as effective as it could be, with limited data being reported.**

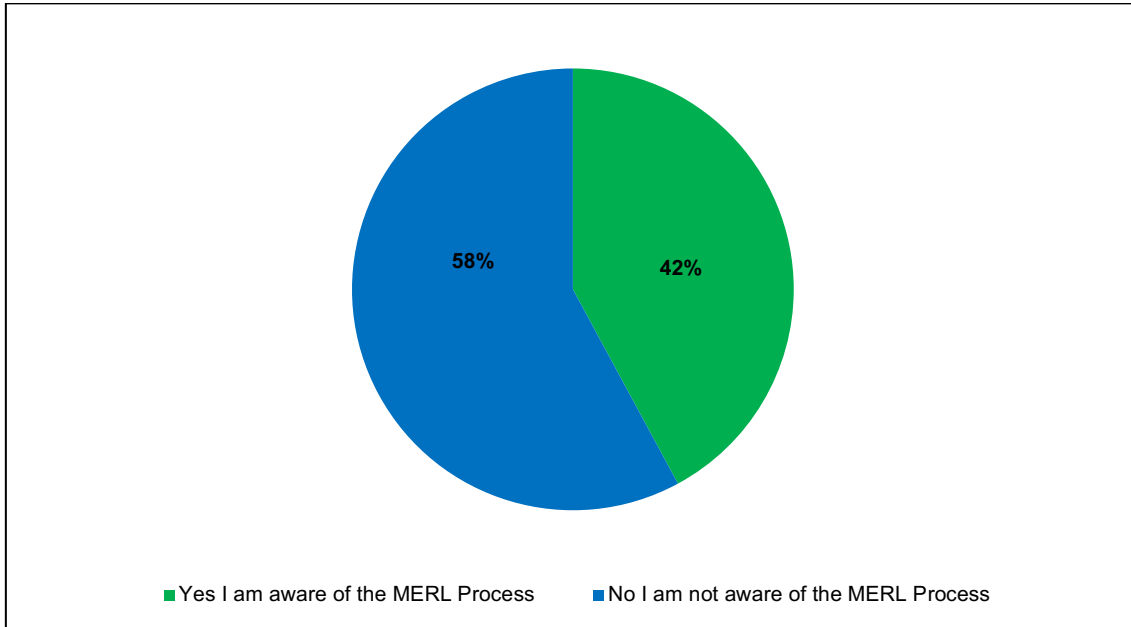
Survey and interview responses indicate that this may be attributed to a number of factors such as large sets of criteria not being fully understood, measures of Activity success being viewed as unrealistic, partners being unaware of or disengaged from the process (lack of real buy-in or commitment), or data that fails to benefit both NZ and partner countries.

Whether being handled by customs administrations or other implementers in the Pacific, MERL is traditionally a difficult area to manage well in an activity, with many donor activities investing significant resources (time and personnel) to assist. An exception is the Cook Islands who have their data managed by NZCS, which while effective, has not developed the intended in-house data collection and analysis skills in-country.

Specific feedback from stakeholders includes:

- *"Presentations [on MERL were available] but online since borders are closed. We do this on our own devices" (Fiji)*
- *"This is of great importance to any institution (Private/Public) and therefore should be adapted by our government by the administering ministry to all for continuous improvement to workplans and objectives of the Government" (Vanuatu).*
- *"I reckon the evaluation side needs to be re-evaluated particularly around the area of measuring success for each program. Sometimes the outputs that are decided and how to measure the successes of these programs can sometimes be too unrealistic or too vague. Also, the amount of time I can recall it took to collect data for the evaluation process was very time consuming. If this process could be further refined to make it easier for the customs organization to provide the data or the program providers can provide assistance to help streamline the data collection process" (Cook Islands).*

Figure 8: Awareness of the MERL process



Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

One option for moving forward with MERL may be to consider specialist Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) resources, which could work with NZCS and the partner agencies to test and arrive at a basic set of quantitative and qualitative data (as well as providing follow-up support). Ways to do this could include contracting a part-time or short term adviser to provide key intermittent inputs into the design and ongoing M&E for the programme. The adviser could alternatively, or in addition, work with a national consultant in the recipient country on an intermittent basis to support the customs agency in collecting the data needed and/or help to explain the data in context. Other tasks could form part of a scope of work for an M&E Adviser and/or M&E Team that supports the technical and programme management by NZCS. A basic MERL Framework which links to the new Activity logic could also be established and aim to meet both NZCS and partner agency needs, as well as drawing on existing reporting capacity within systems such as ASYCUDA (which all four customs agencies have).

An M&E tool that could prove valuable for use as a benchmarking exercise (before major changes are made at a customs agency level) is the WCO Time Release Study (TRS). NZCS conducted a TRS in 2015 across Cook Islands, Fiji and Samoa (before Vanuatu joined the programme). The TRS identifies and helps to remove operational and procedural bottlenecks and improve clearance procedures. It could be used for example, prior to and following major changes to agency procedures, in order to track process improvement.

In addition to its link to the Activity's trade/travel goal, the TRS may also inform cross-agency activities, modernisation programs, including for border management, as well as highlighting revenue collection deficiencies. It is not, however a particularly useful tool in small operational environments (for example, Niue's population of 1,400 people), and can be



resource intensive. NZCS has one staff member who is able to undertake a TRS and could work with the World Bank or WCO to support the partner customs agency.

## **2E. Donor Coordination**

**The findings indicate that NZCS has existing effective mechanisms in place for working with other donors in the Customs space in the Pacific, the strongest example being the monthly meetings among NZ Inc agencies such as immigration and police. NZCS also works with other donors including Japan, the U.S. and Australia (including the ABF) across the region.**

NZCS' donor coordination work shows evidence of being effective, with a key example being its annual (and more regular) engagement with the Australian Border Force (ABF) resulting in NZCS ceasing activities in a partner customs agency in the event that ABF has additional funds and plans to commence that same activity in the agency. NZCS has made more use of technology (e.g. videoconferencing) with other donors during COVID, given restrictions on travel. This has included a six-weekly dialogue with ABF, OCO, partner agencies, as well as DFAT, US Coast Guard and World Bank. NZCS plans to formalise their donor dialogue with regular scheduled meetings that will likely strengthen this donor coordination work and programme.

It is also worth noting some additional considerations and developments in this space:

- The Pacific Islands Chief of Police (PICP) (NZ Secretariat) is a newer entrant which is trialling work in a donor coordination role. NZCS should identify potential advantages such as leveraging relevant PICP coordination activities, as part of NZCS dialogue with NZ Inc agencies.
- NZCS may also wish to explore OCO's own education and training programs centred around a core curriculum at the basic and intermediate levels, that may help to complement some NZCS training initiatives. We note that NZCS are sometimes engaged by OCO to deliver this training, showing positive coordination work already exists.
- While NZCS and ABF currently share their development plans for the region, consideration could be given to developing a single joint program for the region (not dissimilar to the current funding of the PACER Plus Implementation Unit).

Some specific feedback from stakeholders on these issues include:

- *"Work closely with other donor organisations, share draft yearly plans of what sort of programs, workshops, and trainings NZCS has, to ensure that it does not clash or can be worked with by any regional organisations providing similar workshops and trainings. e.g., OCO and workshop closely with customs administration to seek views on what sort of trainings or workshops to be delivered as priority" (Cook Islands)*
- *"Better collaboration with other regional organizations that are doing similar work would be good such as OCO, APG, PTCN, PTCCC. PIDC to name a few. There are a lot of programs being run by these organizations that I feel are doubled up. A prime example of coordinated efforts was the PRIIP intelligence training program that involved several NZ Government Agencies and other country agencies conducting joint intel training with officers from Customs, Immigration and Police from Pacific countries. This was one of the best intelligence programs I had participated in. Not too sure why this program was stopped. A combined approach should be taken when it comes to training particular in generic areas such as intelligence, investigations, inspections where regional bodies*



*across the region such as OCO/APG/PIDC/PTCN could deliver joint training programs that include agencies from Customs, Police, Immigration, FIU and other agencies. PRIIP was a prime example of this where NZ agencies (NZ Police, NZ Customs, NZ Immigration) had come together with the PTCCC network to deliver intelligence training to reps from each pacific region (a rep from Customs, Police, and Immigration per country). Doubling up in my opinion is counterproductive if the same training is being offered by several regional organizations where it could be just offered once. It may be beneficial however if programs that are doubled up are specific to a particular skill set for CICS. Say for example NZCS may provide specific intelligence training for Customs Intelligence where is a regional training may provide a general intelligence training package” (Cook Islands).*

### **Conclusions: Delivery Models**

6. The use of NZCS staff in-country visits (2-3 week periods) and the placement of a long-term in-country adviser has been pivotal in supporting customs reform and modernisation
7. The primary delivery model of in-country visits and face-to-face teaching of customs technical skills and knowledge has been constrained through COVID with travel restrictions in place
8. There has been good use of and coordination with other NZ Inc agencies working in-country, and some support for OCO work across the region.

### **Recommendations: Delivery Models**

6. NZCS to continue use of NZCS staff in-country visits (2-3 week periods) and the placement of a long-term in-country adviser where feasible and where budgets permit, to support customs reform and modernisation
7. NZCS to seek greater use of online and virtual programs for training delivery, and identify opportunities for further learning pathways
8. MFAT and NZCS to strengthen work with NZ Inc agencies, and consider support for OCO as a regional coordinator of programs



### OBJECTIVE 3 - SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

To assess the sustainability and resilience of the Activity to inform future direction, the following questions were examined:

- 3A. What evidence exists to demonstrate that the development outcomes achieved by the activity are or likely to be sustainable?
- 3B. What evidence exists to demonstrate that the development outcomes achieved by the activity are or likely to be resilient i.e. withstand shocks? and protects the environment, ecology, and resource base?
- 3C. What evidence exists to demonstrate that the development outcomes achieved by the activity are or likely to be continued beyond the lifetime of the investment?

#### 3A. Sustainability

**The Evaluation has identified three key areas where development outcomes have the highest likelihood of sustainability. These include: the PLP (including where it may be expanded and/or delivered virtually and online); technical training (including where NZCS-valued training is further refined/commercialised); and certain technology and equipment (when paired with technical assistance).**

A longer-term capacity building staged model with a results framework and select sustainability indicators could help to underpin more specific sustainable Activity gains. As discussed in the M&E Section, engaging an M&E Adviser could assist with the programme's evaluation and measurement of how it is tracking against its goals, as well as key aspects such as sustainability. For example, at the outset of the next Phase Design work the M&E Adviser could facilitate the establishment of a M&E Framework with key sustainability indicators that match each of NZCS, MFAT and partner customs agency needs.

To date the Activity's most notable achievement, with likelihood for long-term benefit and sustainability of outcome, is the Pacific Leadership Programme (PLP). This has trained and invested in the professional development of numerous earmarked staff from a number of customs administrations and other border agencies from 2017-2019. The PLP is guaranteed a place within individual customs administrations' training strategies and the overwhelming consensus is that it should continue, albeit delivered through alternative means as restrictions to travel remain in place.

Although no clear sustainability can be shown, as an example, the PLP work in seeking to build strategic leaders who can carry forward projects, as well as to break down inter-agency silos via information sharing, could in future have some legacy. For example, the PLP conducted in Samoa, helped to inform the work of the Pacific Games. In future, tracking whether the information sharing that began there has continued or ceased would be one such indicator of sustainability.

As previously discussed, stakeholder feedback also suggests retaining PLP's focus on agencies that are active at the border, hence within NZCS' programme remit. This includes customs, immigration, and police agencies, as well as biosecurity, and potentially airports and port authorities. This would develop a national leadership cohort that has a common approach to border management across relevant government agencies.

Other relevant stakeholder feedback includes:





- *"PLP was an enabler to employees - Tools pivoted delivery of outputs + increased individual confidence + capability - Organizational restructure supported via People Focus, using framework + policies which were followed through operationally. Enabled ownership, encouraged transparency and organizational culture shifts" (Fiji)*
- *"PLP is a successful program not only in our community but also my personal development" (Samoa)"*
- *"PLP - Code of Ethics and Governance with values plus other projects enhance the way we carry out our work plans/objectives efficiently and effectively in alignment with departmental and national frameworks" (Vanuatu)*
- *"Good leadership is critical to Agencies/administrations (modernisation/improvements/cohesiveness/reputation) and therefore the PLP should continue as the cornerstone of the programme. There is a need in my opinion to also develop a model where NZ can support administrations in the trade/revenue environment by way of data analytics/intelligence support remotely. This would be a way to connect to administration's, utilise trade information and intelligence, not be reliant on personnel moves, provide direction for capability development support" (New Zealand).*

Other feedback indicates that the development benefits of training in the technical subjects have a likelihood of sustainability. These include subjects such as Valuation, Tariff, Advance Rulings, Rules of Origin, and Investigation techniques. This is particularly the case if online and/or virtual delivery modalities are introduced. In this regard, an opportunity also exists to partner with the OCO, given OCO's footprint in this area with partner agencies.

The provision of technology and equipment such as radio communications for the Cook Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu Customs is reported to have bridged an operational gap, although its long-term sustainability is dependent on associated training support. The need for ongoing technical assistance should, however, diminish over time once domestic technical capacity is developed, for example in relation to maintenance of equipment.

NZCS are working with Cook Islands to transition over from CUSMOD (current Border Management System) to ASYCUDA World. The previous use of CUSMOD was developed using code from New Zealand to make a basic module for the Cook Islands, but with the NZCS move to a new system, sustaining the original system with the separate Cook Islands module has not been sustainable. Part of the transition will include migrating data from CUSMOD to the new ASYCUDA system, cloud hosted on servers in Fiji.

### **3B. Resilience**

**It is difficult to make an assessment as to what extent the development outcomes of the Activity will be resilient and/or protect the environment, ecology, and resource base.**

This is partly due to a lack of data, including baseline data by which to measure any change or resilience. That said, stakeholder feedback suggests that this Activity has done comparatively well *vis a vis* some other activities in PICs that have been unable to effectively deliver in-country training or other forms of capacity building support. Even without the PLP in operation, the long-term in-country adviser in the Cook Islands has continued to make gains, and NZCS in collaboration with NZ Inc is working bilaterally in the border management space, albeit remotely.



In the Cook Islands, NZCS work has been ongoing and the placement of a long-term in-country adviser within CICS has further strengthened the resilience of these outcomes over time. NZCS has had continuous engagement in the organisation's legal, administrative, governance and operational structures. Through Projects Kaveinga I/II, NZCS was able to assist CICS with its modernisation project which led to the adoption of new Customs legislation. This enabled the creation of necessary subsidiary legislation, along with the development of strategic plans, policies and procedures, work plans, the creation of a training programme and the identification and updating of work technologies and systems.

The Pacific Leadership Programme (PLP) is the cornerstone of the activity delivered in the PICs and is likely to generate resilient outcomes, although this needs to be measured. There is overwhelming consensus of its relevance and its continuation as part of the broader capacity building and training strategy in partner administrations. Moving its delivery to a well-designed and user-friendly online and/or virtual format ensures that it continues to deliver the outcomes it has achieved in an in-person format.

### **Stakeholder Insights**

*I would suggest that the next Project looks at not only **further developing CICS's capabilities and modernization** but should also focus on **preparing CICS to eventually stand on its own two feet** and operate effectively and efficiently without the need to NZCS to continually provide support in country.*

*NZCS have been awesome and have been a key supporter of CICS for the last ten years. **Moving towards an operational partnership** should be a key outcome of the next project where CICS and NZCS are working side by side to protect each other's borders and CICS have reached the level where they are capable of collecting revenue, facilitating trade, and protecting the Cook Islands borders efficiently and effectively with the tools and experiences that have gathered from the partnership between NZCS and CICS.*

*It can be achieved it just needs to be an **outcome that is visualised, written down and programs put in place to work towards this**. This best resource that needs investment in it is people, if you can **train, equip, and identify key personnel** within CICS that can carry the service into the next decade ...*

*... From my time with CICS **leadership** was always an issue for the organizations ... Having a NZCS officer within the team helped under Project Kaveinga I as they were able to help navigate CICS through that project but as soon as the NZCS officer left the team started reverting back to old ways and habits. ...*

***Expatriate assistance is still needed and local leaders [should be] identified and mentored by the expatriate to eventually take over leadership of CICS (Cook Islands).***

Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

### **Stakeholder Insights**



*From a NZ inc perspective we all have a common goal and we have worked well together to achieve some good results. **Collaboration** across the various programmes working in the Pacific **is the key to long term success and sustainability**. The feedback from the PDDP management team is really a summary of general comments. We have worked closely with NZCS officers for a number of years in Fiji, Samoa, and the Cook Islands. Both programmes have achieved a lot over the years and have supported each other on numerous occasions. It is evident though that during COVID and the closed borders Pacific countries have been badly impacted. This has resulted in Government agencies having reduced budgets, redundancies and loss of frontline capability and experience. **The environments we will deploy into will be different as the various countries look to recover from a global pandemic.** (New Zealand)*

Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

Re-establishing and strengthening relationships with partner agencies in Fiji and Samoa will provide an opportunity to embed more resilient development outcomes in the respective administrations. Moving forward, it is suggested that common ground and interests between NZCS and partner agencies need to be addressed clearly in written agreements with detailed development plans and prescribed activities and performance measures. This should be based on a diagnostic / Joint Organisational Assessment (JOAs) to identify areas of need and the most appropriate donors and methods to address these. Various tools across sectors exist to conduct JOAs (or similar names) to assist organisations and their partners to identify key areas of focus moving on. A M&E Adviser or similar could assist with this, and it could inform a capacity building approach or toolset.

Broader resilience thinking can also inform any (including customs) efforts across PICs including the Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, and Vanuatu. As part of future programming, answering questions such as, 'how do we build in reflective learning?' can help to develop more adaptive capacity skills and aid in decision making in times of uncertainty.

### **3C. Continuation of Development Outcomes**

**There are indicators which demonstrate the likely continuation of development outcomes beyond the lifetime of the investment. However, the risk remains that in some instances, the continuation of outcomes may and can become contingent on continued reliance on NZCS or other forms of external support.**

Stakeholder feedback indicates that, in order to mitigate this risk, a greater focus on human resources development (HRD) and succession planning is required. This should invest in a range of people and relationships - including the development of train-the-trainer components to build local training capability – in order to build in more layers of redundancy into the investment.

The importance and value of the Pacific Leadership Programme (PLP) will likely have outcomes that should continue beyond the lifetime of the investment. The PLP has remained unchanged for Pacific Island countries (PICs) despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on domestic priorities. Where necessary and depending upon travel restrictions, shifting its delivery from in-person to a virtual and/or online setting ensures its continued relevance and place within PIC customs administration's capacity building and training strategy.



In relation to other development outcomes, the relevance and priority placed on each will largely depend upon each partner agency's assessment of its importance against the backdrop of its government's agenda. Therefore, the adoption of a strategic planning process that incorporates a holistic approach to projects and activities should help to build high level buy-in and support from partner countries. Aligning programme goals and objectives with the OCO workplan may also help to reaffirm continued focus on HRD and succession planning. This goes some way to ensuring the sustainability, resilience, and continuation of outcomes as part of an embedded culture within partner agencies.

#### **Conclusions: Sustainability and Resilience**

9. Inconsistent understanding of customs reform and/or support from partner governments can impede ongoing success
10. NZCS staff in-country visits (2-3 week periods) and any placement of a long-term in-country adviser, are best placed in roles to support local customs leadership to develop a clear direction for customs, structures, and processes, and educate staff on their roles and responsibilities
11. PLP focus on customs, immigration and police agencies has served to develop effective leadership cohorts.

#### **Recommendations: Sustainability and Resilience**

9. NZCS to reinforce relationships across customs and related agencies to ensure support from partner governments enables ongoing success. This includes understanding customs reform.
10. NZCS to prioritise use of NZCS staff in-country visits (2-3 week periods) and any placement of a long-term in-country adviser, to support local customs leadership.
11. NZCS to retain PLP's focus on agencies that are active at the border, hence within NZCS' programme remit. This includes customs, immigration and police agencies, as well as biosecurity, and potentially airports and port authorities.



## **OBJECTIVE 4 - FUTURE DESIGN AND SUPPORT**

To identify the key changes needed to deliver sustainable outcomes from a possible third phase of this Activity, the following questions were examined:

- 4A. What are the lessons learned from the activity and wider NZ Inc state sector capacity development activities that could usefully inform its future direction, particularly with respect to delivering on outcomes in a travel constrained environment?
- 4B. What are the lessons learned from the activity and wider NZ Inc state sector capacity development activities that could usefully inform its future direction, particularly with respect to ensuring partner agency commitment that withstands personnel change on either side?
- 4C. What are the lessons learned from the activity and wider NZ Inc state sector capacity development activities that could usefully inform its future direction, particularly with respect to geographic reach?

### **4A. Lessons Learned: Delivering in a Travel Constrained Environment**

**The Activity has been supporting capacity development in PICs for over 10 years, with numerous lessons learned that inform its future direction, including in relation to the impact of COVID-19.**

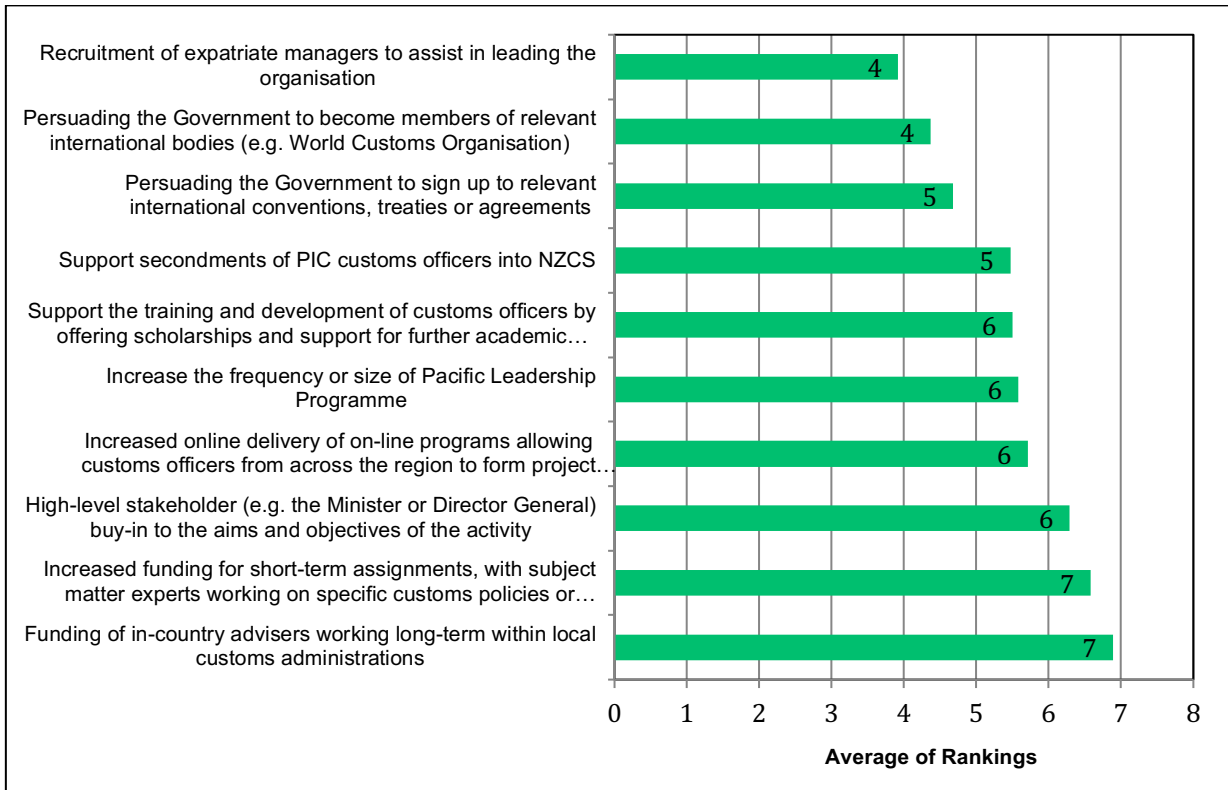
Findings indicate that the lessons learned cover a wide span and include careful and targeted selection of countries as part of the Activity; best placement of NZCS staff in-country visits (2-3 week periods) or the placement of a long-term in-country adviser; training modalities including inter-agency, online, virtual, and in-country training delivery. Significantly, methods of Activity delivery and the need for flexibility have been driven by COVID travel restrictions.

NZCS has already been revisiting delivery modalities in light of ongoing travel constraints and should continue to explore cost effective ways of expanding the reach of the Activity despite such constraints, without diminishing its success. For example, stakeholder feedback indicates that, while online and virtual training courses are well suited to training in customs processes and procedures, they could also be used to develop skills in areas such as management, leadership, and policy development.

Restructuring the PLP to accommodate a hybrid delivery model consisting of online modules followed by an intensive face-to-face session could also be considered. This would allow this extremely valuable course to continue in the current environment. Specific customs skills or knowledge may also be better addressed by a hybrid training and education model that sees officers undertake some online study and research ahead of a face-to-face short course or program.



Figure 9: Factors Necessary for Ongoing Success



Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

As indicated in Figure 9, other lessons learned include how best to support the ongoing success of the Programme in achieving long-term cultural change or modernisation within an organisation. This is where support is needed to fundamentally change the direction of the national customs agency, not just one aspect of their administration such as improved revenue collection or the adoption of new technologies at the border. Responses from stakeholders indicate that NZCS staff in-country visits (2-3 week periods) or the placement of a long-term in-country adviser are most effective when they are placed in advisory roles that support local management to lead long-term change. The less successful strategy is placing advisers in line management positions where their influence is limited to a particular area.

### Stakeholder Insights

*The PLP program stopped, but if there was an online module we could have continued. There was no contingency plan when borders. 2. NZ has helped with the design of the biosecurity checks, layout, etc that cost 30mil. Government secured some funds but is still short. We are fortunate that the Government and NZ have helped us, but now we*



*need to accommodate for social distancing etc for COVID19 which is also expensive. (Vanuatu)*

*The constrained environment has shown that it is able to keep programmes going through online delivery - but also that in-person delivery is not completely replaceable. Going forward the two modes of delivery can be combined to maximise both breadth and depth in programmes. (New Zealand)*

*The virtual training has far more reach than F2F, but a blended approach will assist. Develop E modules and training videos for easy use by Customs officers to view when they have the time to do so. (Fiji)*

*The training of Trainers and strengthening national capacities through short term attachment and leadership building should continue. This needs to be tailored with an understanding how the Pacific countries work thus having regional expertise to support national expertise is paramount to building a regional sustainable Pacific solution. This also strengthens the experts' network in the region (OCO)*

Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

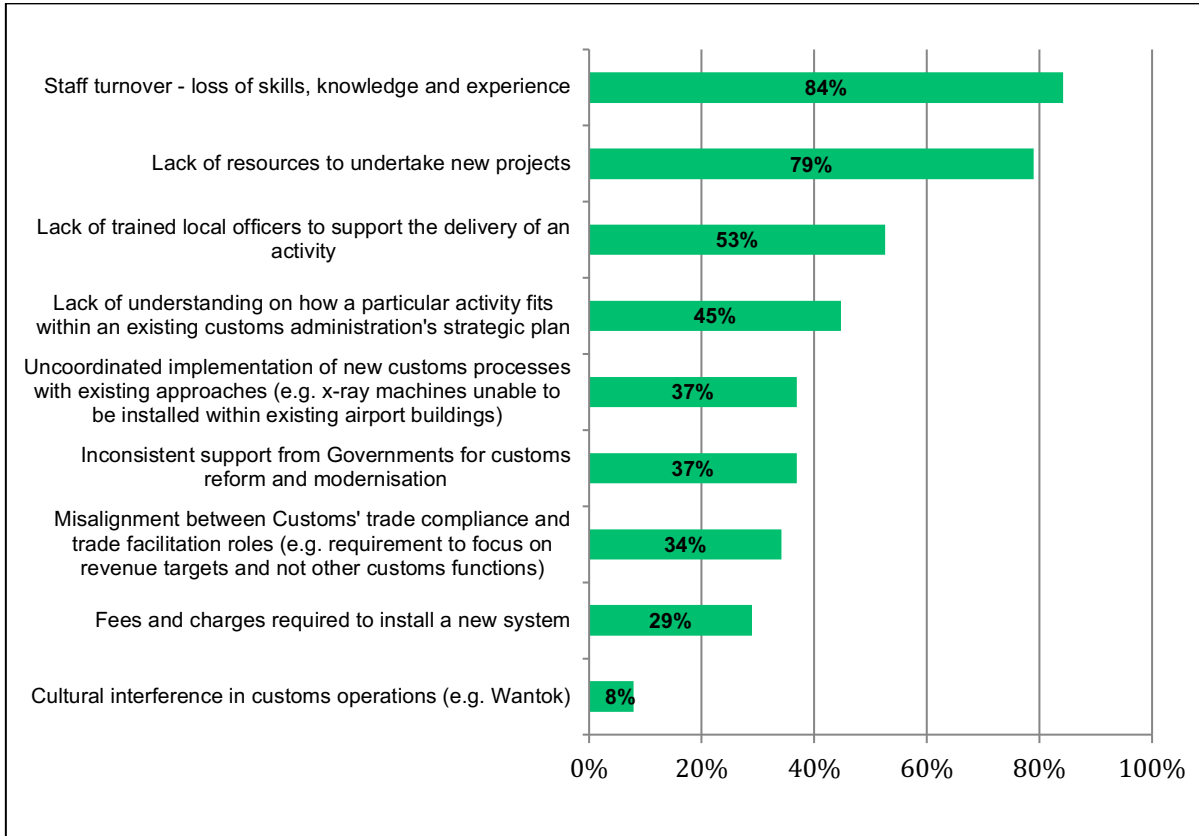
#### **4B. Lessons Learned: Partner Agency Commitment**

**The Activity relies heavily upon partner agency commitment and continuity in both PIC and NZCS personnel, for its success. While the support provided by the NZCS is highly regarded by each of the four major recipients, there continue to be opportunities to enhance ongoing partner agency commitment.**

The importance of building effective working relationships with local partners cannot be overstated. Stakeholder feedback indicates that NZCS has particular strengths in this area of engagement through the valuable support they provide to a manageable number of comprehensive development projects in a targeted group of four countries.



Figure 10: Impediments and Risks to Long Term Sustainability



Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

### Stakeholder Insights

*... if key personnel leave there need to be others ear-marked to step in and continue the work needed. Also there should never be a single point of failure if key personnel leave the organization. While I was with CICS I was not aware of a **succession plan/planning** in place. This may have changed now with the new structure they have. (Cook Islands)*

*I believe that customs modernization needs to be made a priority for government, that way there will be more support for the project. Had NZCS not **stepped in and provided assistance with Customs modernization since 2009** under Project Kaveinga I and II then CICS would still have an outdated piece of legislation today with no automated system. Leadership within Customs need to get the political support for this in order for government to give its full support. ....Having better **leadership** where staff are looked after, and the direction of the agency is clearly laid out and making sure staff are held accountable for the work the deliver. Office culture - Need to create a good culture where staff feel valued and hard work is rewarded (Cook Islands)*

*To deliver successful development outcomes **partnerships** are critical, internationally between like for like agencies, as well as domestically. Domestically the relationship*





*between customs and MFAT is vitally important to the delivery of a successful programme for customs sector development.*

*When working with partners in the Pacific, look for **common ground and interests** because that is where you will get genuine buy in. In small organisations, one person can have a huge impact, invest in people and relationships. If we want to support change, it is Better to do a few activities well and with on-going support than a lot of things 'lightly once over'. By this I mean **narrow and deep is better** than broad and shallow (providing you have clearly established why you are doing it, and everyone is on the same page about the outcomes you are looking for) to support change.*

***Interagency activities and training** are useful for building relationships but don't forget the context. We (NZ and Australia) struggle to do this well so no surprises that similar challenges exist in the Pacific. Delivering training aimed at building competence or expertise (so deeper than just raising awareness) to agencies who do not have the legislative mandate or direction to undertake the role is a waste of time and resource. **Coaching and mentoring** should be the focus, **limit training to what is actually needed once you understand the context and environment**. Courses are well and good for raising awareness but **building competence and expertise requires 'doing'** (70/20/10).*

*Support should be **delivered in person and in country**. If you do not understand the context your partners are working in, you can't tailor your delivery to meet the needs. Off the shelf training should be avoided as a general rule if you are looking to build competence or expertise in an area of customs practice. In country support is expensive but worth the investment if we are serious about partnership with our Pacific colleagues and supporting them to meet their development goals. At the end of the day we all benefit from a secure and prosperous Pacific. (New Zealand)*

Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

To gain support and endorsement by senior levels of government, early design and planning of the Activity should continue to engage partner countries. This involves, per practice to date, NZCS working with partners to identify common ground and interests and aligning proposed activities with country development plans and strategies. This also requires partner countries to undertake a realistic evaluation of how a proposed placement/training activity/new technology is aligned or will benefit their existing development goals.

One of the issues faced when ensuring ongoing partner agency commitment has been changes in senior personnel who may have different priorities to those previously agreed. In a smaller customs agency, a single person can have a huge impact upon the success of an activity. Where an investment has been made in the education, training and mentoring of such an individual, success of the programme becomes reliant upon that person remaining in a position of influence over a longer period of time.

An alternative strategy is to avoid such potential single points of weakness and invest in a range of people and relationships that support changes/outcomes that are to be embedded in organisational culture.



Another issue impacting on long term commitment to the Activity, is that most PICs have less well-developed human resource management (HRM), staff development and training, and succession planning processes in place. One means of addressing this issue is for the Activity to increase its investment in a partner administration by developing outputs Activity that focus on these key HRD outcomes.

The experience of the existing Activity has also been that partner agencies may appear to lack commitment, whereas the problem is actually a lack of skills and resources to effectively contribute to required outputs – such as an inability to effectively collect data and measure performance. Consideration should therefore be given to developing local skills in this area as well as the more operational customs skills.

Once such issues are agreed, both parties can work on a country-specific capacity development model/matrix. A matrix showing examples in a low capacity quadrant and the key points that could shift to a high capacity quadrant, could also show the key tools or levers that could be used to 'switch the dial' to a higher capacity scenario. Those could also be detailed by resource/cost basis so that practically, for example in travel-restricted COVID times, appropriate options to support a partner agency that cost more comparatively could be selected (as an offset for the otherwise higher cost travel in-country that would be in place).

The framework around this model/matrix could also include:

- Multi-year and country level plans, as well as in-country/remote delivery models to dial up or down depending on available resources and country level of capacity
- Strategy pathways from current position to the future goal/objective
- Definition of the NZCS suite of offerings that articulates the value add provided by NZCS (and NZ Inc) including its unique value proposition
- The issues that would be encountered from deviations to the plan.

#### **4C. Lessons Learned: Geographic Reach**

**It is evident from feedback received that the NZCS strategy of focusing resources on comprehensive development programs within a limited number of countries has proved to be a successful approach.**

This approach has achieved structural reorganisation and longer-term cultural change by providing NZCS staff in-country visits (2-3 week periods) or in the case of Cook Islands, a long-term in-country adviser (currently 13 months) to support national customs leadership groups in reforming and modernising their organisations. Similarly, customs education and training programs have been delivered by relying upon intensive face to face delivery in an effort to keep participants engaged and motivated.

At the same time, a number of PICs outside of the target group have approached NZCS seeking support and assistance in reforming and modernising their customs administrations. However, given limited resources and the prospect of on-going travel restrictions in the short to medium term due to the COVID pandemic, this is not considered to be a sustainable strategy going forward.

A review of NZCS Activity Progress Reports reinforced by responses to the online survey indicates that expanding the geographic reach of the Programme would require an adjustment of the existing strategy to include a suite of approaches.



Given its success to date, the Activity should continue its support of comprehensive development projects in the four existing target countries. This approach should be aligned to the longer-term objectives of organisational and cultural change within the partner organisation. To support this approach, the Programme should consider adopting:

- capacity development models/matrices that include multi-year and country level plans
- strategy pathways from the current position to future goals/objectives
- an approach that develops relationships across recipient organisations.

To meet the increasing needs of other PICs seeking support and assistance, NZCS should continue to support and supplement (where appropriate) the OCO's development and adoption of a common core curriculum in the education and training of custom's policies, processes and procedures and the online delivery of these programs. This will increase access to customs education and training and place administrations in a better position to benefit from potential future NZCS support.

Where NZCS is seeking to support the development of a discrete set of customs skills within an administration, consideration should be given to the development of a hybrid education and training delivery model that may involve:

- adaption of existing activities from face-to-face to a mix of online and classroom delivery
- increased use of assessment tools to gauge competency
- integration and articulation into further learning pathways.

### **Stakeholder Insights**

*... A key lesson is the fact that the pacific countries have common constraints and therefore training and capacity building interests. This was factored into the design of the program where common interests and training needs were done in a regional basis and specific were conducted in an individual basis (Samoa)*

*Due to Covid we have been able to undertake other taskings which haven't been a part of the programme which have been successful and helped to maintain excellent relationships with other administrations. Future design of the programme could be different to what we are used too. Consideration of other delivery modes e.g. self-paced online, mixed mode class and virtual etc? (Vanuatu)*

Source: Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021 Stakeholder Survey

### **Conclusions: Future Design and Support**

12. The current strategy is sound: a manageable number of comprehensive development projects; regional support; and coordination with donor agencies to avoid duplication
13. Key programming approaches and outputs have been valuable, in particular building relationships, trust and rapport and establishing common ground and interests between NZCS and partner agencies. It is timely to review/plan development plans, written agreements, activities, and performance measures.



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14. There is an opportunity to enhance the Activity through a capacity building model/lens, with greater focus on human resource development (HRD) and succession planning, investment in a range of people and relationships, and train-the-trainer components to build local capability

**Recommendations: Future Design and Support**

12. MFAT and NZCS to retain a forward Activity strategy that includes a manageable number of comprehensive development projects across countries, regional support (i.e. supporting a partner within a larger work plan), and coordination with other donor agencies to avoid duplication
13. NZCS forward planning to include common interests between NZCS and partner agencies, development plans, written agreements, activities, and performance measures
14. NZCS to consider a stepped/ staged capacity building model for any future Activity, with a greater focus on human resource development (HRD) and succession planning, investing in a range of people and relationships, including train-the-trainer components to build local training capability



# 5

## Summary of Recommendations

### **Objective 1: Relevance**

1. MFAT and NZCS to retain the Activity's strategic direction consistent with PICs' needs
2. MFAT and NZCS to continue in its support of the four partner customs administrations
3. MFAT and NZCS to retain its three-goal focus, and to broaden the goal from border security to Border Management
4. NZCS to reinforce staff training and development in its modalities
5. NZCS to consider ways of delivering PLP remotely given restrictions to in-country delivery.

### **Objective 2: Delivery Models**

6. NZCS to continue use of NZCS staff in-country visits (2-3 week periods) and the placement of a long-term in-country adviser where feasible and where budgets permit, to support customs reform and modernisation
7. NZCS to seek greater use of online and virtual programs for training delivery, and identify opportunities for further learning pathways
8. MFAT and NZCS to strengthen work with NZ Inc agencies, and consider support for OCO as a regional coordinator of programs

### **Objective 3: Sustainability and Resilience**

9. NZCS to reinforce relationships across customs and related agencies to ensure support from partner governments enables ongoing success. This includes understanding customs reform.
10. NZCS to prioritise use of NZCS staff in-country visits (2-3 week periods) and any placement of a long-term in-country adviser, to support local customs leadership.
11. NZCS to retain PLP's focus on agencies that are active at the border, hence within NZCS' programme remit. This includes customs, immigration and police agencies, as well as biosecurity, and potentially airports and port authorities.

### **Objective 4: Future Design and Support**

12. MFAT and NZCS to retain a forward Activity strategy that includes a manageable number of comprehensive development projects across countries, regional support (i.e. supporting a partner within a larger work plan), and coordination with other donor agencies to avoid duplication
13. NZCS forward planning to include common interests between NZCS and partner agencies, development plans, written agreements, activities, and performance measures
14. NZCS to consider a stepped/ staged capacity building model for any future Activity, with a greater focus on human resource development (HRD) and succession planning, investing in a range of people and relationships, including train-the-trainer components to build local training capability



# Appendices

## APPENDIX 1: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS

Organization	Name	Designation
Respective country Programme and Activity managers and other relevant staff	Anna Woods	Activity Manager
Respective country Programme and Activity managers and other relevant staff	Dieter Michel	Programme Manager
Respective country Programme and Activity managers and other relevant staff	Chris Day	Senior Policy Officer, State Sector Agencies
New Zealand Customs Service	Max Broadfoot	Regional Manager, Australia and Pacific,
New Zealand Customs Service	Colin Brown	Trade and Revenue Advisor
New Zealand Customs Service	Andrew Walker	Programme Manager (until June 2020)
New Zealand Customs Service	Shane Pannettiere	Leadership and Organisational Development Advisor
New Zealand Customs Office	Nichola Mark	Border Security Advisor, International Pacific Team
Cook Islands Customs Service	Walter Tangata	Programme Coordinator, Senior Customs Officer Maritime and Cargo
Cook Islands Customs Service	Maria Matua-laone	Senior Customs Officer, Trade and Revenue Assurance
Cook Islands Customs Service	Elisabeth Tetauru	Customs Officer – Revenue Assurance and Client Services, Trade Team
Cook Islands Customs Service	Wayne Robati	Former Programme Manager, Cook Islands
Fiji Revenue Customs Office	George Mow	Manager International Relations



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Fiji Revenue Customs Office	Robeen Chand	Principal Customs Officer, Maritime Suva, Border
Samoa Ministry for Customs and Revenue	Talaitupu Lia	Programme Coordinator, Deputy Chief Executive
Samoa Ministry for Customs and Revenue Delivery	Mauisiisii Alama Mose	Principal Customs Officer - PCA
Vanuatu Department of Customs and Inland Revenue	Jerry Toran	A/G Deputy Director
Vanuatu Department of Customs and Inland Revenue	Harold Tarosa	Director
Vanuatu Department of Customs and Inland Revenue	George Pakoa	Manager Customs Revenue Unit
Tonga, Ministry of Revenue and Customs	Kepueli Vea	
Niue, Customs Department	Sione Sionetama	Head of Customs
People Focus	Michelle McCormack	Contracted to run the Pacific Leaderships Programme (PLP)
PLP 2019 - Samoa	Tyron Lam	Principal Safety and Security Compliance Officer, SAA
PLP 2019 - Samoa	Faatosina Naititi	Aviation Security Supervisor, SAA
PLP 2019 - Samoa	Edwina Naioti	Aviation Security, 21C, SAA
PLP 2019 - Samoa	Nafanua Elbony Malele	Senior Technical Policy Officer - Quarantine, MAF
PLP 2019 - Samoa	Tanumafili Tufuga	Senior Quarantine Inspector - Team Leader, MAF
PLP 2019 - Samoa	Henry McCarthy	Principal Customs Officer - Ports, MfR
PLP 2017 - Fiji iTaukei Land Trust Board	Joana Tira	Manager, Human Capital
PLP 2018 - Fiji FRCS, Fiji	Fane Vave	Previous Acting CEO
New Zealand Police	Mariska Keckskemeti- Zhu	Manager International Strategy and Planning
New Zealand Transnational Crime Unit	Aaron Holloway	NZTCU Manager



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New Zealand Transnational Crime Unit	Jeremy Laga'aia	Customs Advisor
Oceania Customs Organization	Richard Brennan	Head of Secretariat
Oceania Customs Organization	Irma Daphney Stone	Operations Manager
Vanuatu, Department of Customs and Inland Revenue	Luke Gaskin	First Secretary
NZ Inc Agency	Kevin Kneebone	Programme Manager, Pacific Capacity
MFAT	Matthew Ayers	Cook Islands Desk Officer





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## **APPENDIX 2: SURVEY**



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### Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021

#### 1. Overview

DevDAS and the Centre for Customs and Excise Studies (CCES) has been engaged by the NZ Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) to undertake an evaluation of the Customs Sector Development Program in the Pacific (CSDP).

The evaluation will focus on four countries - Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu. Its purpose will be to provide an independent assessment of the CSDP, and will be used by MFAT and New Zealand Customs Service (NZCS) to:

- identify improvements that can be made to managing, implementing and achieving results from this Activity
- to inform decisions on whether to proceed with a third phase of this Activity and if so what should the future direction, design and support be, and
- ascertain the level of sustainability and resilience of outcomes achieved by this activity.

As part of our *contribution analysis approach* to this review, we are keen to obtain your feedback on the Program to ascertain its relevance, the suitability of the current delivery models, and the sustainability of the Program going forward.

Please complete this survey by Friday 19 November. You can return it either online or by sending a PDF version to [cidee.despi@devdas.com.au](mailto:cidee.despi@devdas.com.au).

Following receipt of your survey, we may be in contact to seek a follow-up interview with you (up to 1 hour) between MON 15 NOV - FRI 26 NOV. If you work with a Customs Administrations or closely on this program with NZ MFAT, we will be in direct contact with you via email in early - mid NOV to schedule this.

If you have any further queries regarding this Evaluation, please contact DevDAS or CCES via [cidee.despi@devdas.com.au](mailto:cidee.despi@devdas.com.au). In the meantime thank you for your participation in this evaluation.

DevDAS/CCES Evaluation Team



**1. Contact Information**

Name	<input type="text"/>
Position	<input type="text"/>
Customs Administration	<input type="text"/>
Country	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>

**Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021**

**2. Evaluation Objective 1: Relevance**

To assess the extent to which this Activity's outputs and outcomes remains a priority for the partner country and the New Zealand Aid Programme

**2. Objectives 1A and 1B**

The CSDP has the long term goal of increasing security, economic growth, and good governance in the Pacific, through enabling PICs to facilitate legitimate trade and travel; fairly and effectively collect revenue at borders; and effectively manage borders resulting in safer communities.

Please rank the importance of each of these long term outputs to your country and provide any additional comments you feel are appropriate?

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not so Important	Not at All Important
Facilitate legitimate trade and travel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fairly and effectively collect revenue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effectively manage border security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Additional comments to your support your rankings?

**3. Objectives 1A and 1B**

Has the importance of these three outputs changed over the past five years?

Become more important	Stayed just as important	Become less important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please explain your reasoning behind your ranking for each output above?



#### 4. Objectives 1A and 1B

The CSDP has the short term objective of supporting customs administration to reform and modernise. This includes the adoption of modern processes and technology (e.g. ASYCUDA); the improved training and development of staff (Pacific Leadership Programme); promoting the adoption of regional and international trade facilitation agreements (e.g. PACER Plus) and encouraging greater transparency and sharing of information amongst stakeholders (e.g. the trading community, other Government agencies, the transport and logistics industry).

Please rank the importance of each of these outcomes to your customs administration?

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not so Important	Not at All Important
Adoption of modern processes and technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved training and development of staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adoption of regional and international trade facilitation agreements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved transparency and sharing of information with stakeholders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please explain your reasoning behind your ranking for each output above?

1. Technology -
2. Training -
3. Agreements -
4. Transparency -



**5. Objectives 1A and 1B**

Has the importance of these four outcomes changed over the past five years?

	Become more important	Stayed just as important	Become less important
Adoption of modern processes and technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved training and development of staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adoption of regional and international trade facilitation agreements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved transparency and sharing of information with stakeholders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Can you please explain your reasoning behind your ranking for each outcome above?

**6. Objectives 1A and 1B**

NZCS supports these short-term outcomes by funding particular projects, programs and activities. Can you please indicate which of these you think has been **the most successful activity** in your country (Only tick those projects relevant to your country)?

	Cook Islands	Fiji	Samoa	Vanuatu	All
Pacific Leadership Programme	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved customs processes and procedures leading to increased revenue and seizure of illicit goods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quarantine Free Travel Program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ratification of the PACER Plus Agreement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Boe Declaration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organisational restructure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regulatory reform on the treatment of low value goods and the 'de minimis'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self assessment and authorised operator programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customs Valuation workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide any additional comments to support your ranking?



**7. Objectives 1A and 1B**

Following on from Question 6, can you please tell us what aspects of these projects have not been as successful in your country?

	Cook Islands	Fiji	Samoa	Vanuatu	All
Pacific Leadership Programme	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved customs processes and procedures leading to increased revenue and seizure of illicit goods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quarantine Free Travel Program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ratification of the PACER Plus Agreement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Boe Declaration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organisational restructure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regulatory reform on the treatment of low value goods and the 'de minimis'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self assessment and authorised operator programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customs Valuation workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please explain the reasoning behind your response?

**8. Objective 1C**

How has the impact of COVID-19 (e.g. reduction in government revenue, border closures, health impacts etc) increased or decreased the relevance of these activities in your country?

Cook Islands	<input type="text"/>
Fiji	<input type="text"/>
Samoa	<input type="text"/>
Vanuatu	<input type="text"/>
All	<input type="text"/>

**9. Objective 1C**

Notwithstanding the impact of COVID-19, how do you rate the support provided by the New Zealand Customs Service in the past five years in achieving these outcomes. Please explain your reasoning?

- Extremely valuable
- Very valuable
- Somewhat valuable
- Not so valuable
- Not at all valuable

Please explain the reasoning for your answer?



### Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021

#### 3. Evaluation Objective 2: Delivery Models

To review the suitability of NZCS's approach and ways of working to deliver the programme?

##### 10. Objectives 2A and 2B

As a result of COVID restrictions, NZCS have demonstrated a flexible approach by increasingly using online or remote delivery of support for its programs. Has this approach benefitted or reduced the effectiveness of these programs?

- Been a benefit to the effectiveness of the activity
- Reduced the effectiveness of the activity

Please provide any reasons for your response?

##### 11. Objective 2C

NZCS has traditionally relied upon in-country work to deliver its activities. However in the current absence of on-ground support and direction, some projects are falling short in meeting their identified outcomes. How should NZCS continue to deliver its programme of work in a continuing travel constrained environment?

##### 12. Objective 2D

Are you aware of the NZ Government's MERL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning) approach to activity delivery? Does this approach need to be adapted to be relevant in your country (e.g. how could the Results Measurement Tables be improved to increase the quality of reporting)?

- Yes I am aware of the MERL Process
- No I am not aware of the MERL Process

How could the approach be adapted to improve the quality of reporting?

##### 13. Objective 2E

NZCS is seeking to better coordinate its programs with other donor organisations working in the Pacific. Do you have suggestions on how this could be achieved?



## Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021

### 4. Evaluation Objective 3: Sustainability and Resilience

To assess the sustainability and resilience of the activity to inform future direction.

#### 14. Objectives 3A to 3C

In considering the design of future programmes, what do you consider are the greatest risks or impediments in your country to the ongoing success of a project (Please select all of those that apply)?

- Lack of resources to undertake new projects
- Misalignment between Customs' trade compliance and trade facilitation roles (e.g. requirement to focus on revenue targets and not other customs functions)
- Inconsistent support from Governments for customs reform and modernisation
- Staff turnover - loss of skills, knowledge and experience
- Cultural interference in customs operations (e.g. Wantok)
- Lack of understanding on how a particular activity fits within an existing customs administration's strategic plan
- Lack of trained local officers to support the delivery of an activity
- Uncoordinated implementation of new customs processes with existing approaches (e.g. x-ray machines unable to be installed within existing airport buildings)
- Fees and charges required to install a new system
- Other (please specify)



### 15. Objectives 3A to 3C

In considering the design of future programmes, which do you consider would be factors necessary to ensure ongoing success, including beyond the life of the initial investment? (Please rank your answers 1 to 10)



Funding of in-country advisers working long-term within local customs administrations



Increased funding for short-term assignments, with subject matter experts working on specific customs policies or procedures



Increased online delivery of on-line programs allowing customs officers from across the region to form project teams



High-level stakeholder (e.g. the Minister or Director General) buy-in to the aims and objectives of the activity



Persuading the Government to sign up to relevant international conventions, treaties or agreements



Persuading the Government to become members of relevant international bodies (e.g. World Customs Organisation)



Recruitment of expatriate managers to assist in leading the organisation



Increase the frequency or size of Pacific Leadership Programme



Support secondments of PIC customs officers into NZCS



Support the training and development of customs officers by offering scholarships and support for further academic study in customs management and administration





Evaluation of Customs Sector Development Program 2017-2021

**5. Evaluation Objective 4: Future Design and Support**

**To identify the key changes needed to deliver sustainable outcomes from a possible third phase of this Activity**

**16. Objective 4A**

What are the lessons learned from the activity and wider NZ Inc state sector capacity development activities that could **usefully inform its future direction?**

**17. Objective 4B**

What are key lessons learned you have learned from this programme or wider NZ Inc activities **about delivering on outcomes in a travel constrained environment?**

**18. Objective 4C**

What are **key lessons** learned you have learned from this programme or wider NZ Inc activities **about ensuring partner agency commitment that withstands personnel change on either side?**

**19. Objective 4D**

What are **key lessons** learned you have learned from this programme or wider NZ Inc activities **about geographic reach** in a programme like this?

**20. Objectives 4A to 4D**

In addition to the responses above, do you have any additional comments or suggestions you would like to make, particularly on the future design and support of the Program to ensure sustainable outcomes?



### **APPENDIX 3: REFERENCES**

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