

**Evaluation of the Independent Mid-Term Review of Two Democratic Governance
Programs in Papua New Guinea
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

Initiative Summary

Initiative Names	Strongim Pipol Strongim Nesen (SPSN) Church Partnership Program Phase 2 (CPP)		
AidWorks initiative numbers	SPSN: INI382 CPP: INJ313		
Commencement dates	1 July 2010	Completion dates	SPSN: 30 June 2014 CPP: 30 June 2016
Total Australian \$	SPSN: \$105 million CPP: \$50 million		
Total other \$	N/A		
Delivery organisations	SPSN: URS International CPP: Uniting World; Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA); Caritas Australia; Salvation Army Australia; Transform Aid International; Australian Lutheran World Service; and the Anglican Board of Mission		
Implementing partners	SPSN: PNG Government agencies, civil society organisations and non-government organisations. CPP: Australian faith based non-government organisations in partnership with their seven counterpart PNG Christian churches (the United Church; the Catholic Church; the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Seventh Day Adventist Church; the Anglican Church; The Salvation Army; and the Baptist Union)		
Country	PNG		
Primary sector	Governance		

Initiative Names	Strongim Pipol Strongim Nesen (SPSN) Church Partnership Program Phase 2 (CPP)
Initiative objectives	<p>SPSN Goal: To enable civil society, together with the state and others, to better meet the needs and priorities of men, women and children in communities across PNG.</p> <p>SPSN works through five components::</p> <p>Component 1 – Strengthened Key Partners. Supports the strengthened practice and promotion of democratic governance by Key Partners.</p> <p>Component 2 – Communities Working to Meet Identified Needs. Grant funding to non-state actors to address service delivery and community development.</p> <p>Component 3 – Improved Local Governance. Supports community, government, development partners and the private sector to work together to identify and model how particular development needs (service delivery) can be addressed through improving local governance.</p> <p>Component 4 – Strengthened Collaboration. Builds or strengthens SPSN’s national collaboration between stakeholders (governments, the private sector, and civil society) for the promotion of democratic governance and to support local research initiatives.</p> <p>Component 5 – Strengthened Human Capital. Develops the capacity of men and women for the practice of democratic governance and to address capacity development gaps across SPSN components.</p> <p>The Church Partnership Program Phase 2 (CPP) aims to strengthen the seven mainline PNG Churches’ institutional capacity to deliver improved services to communities. It also aims to enhance their capacity to promote good governance, through strengthening their role in policy dialogue, service delivery, and peace and reconciliation activities.</p> <p>CPP has three outcome areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened PNG churches’ institutional capacity for development with a pro-poor focus; • Improved services delivered by PNG churches to local communities; and • Enhanced PNG churches’ involvement in improving public sector governance <p>CPP’s ultimate goal is the improvement of well-being for men, women, boys and girls in areas where the program operates. Phase 2 aims to provide: improved: coordination amongst the existing seven PNG churches; gender equality; coordination with the PNG Government, and to extend the program to other PNG churches to increase the program’s reach. CPP’s Program Strategy includes two additional outcome areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened CPP2 effectiveness; and • Mainstreamed cross-cutting issues throughout the program.

1. Evaluation Summary

Evaluation Objective: The purpose of the review was to assess implementation progress and achievements to date under both the Strongim Pipol Strongim Nesen (SPSN) program and the Church Partnership Program Phase 2 (CPP); recommend improvements to strengthen current arrangements, and identify lessons to inform the design of a future democratic governance program in PNG.

Evaluation Completion Date: 15 February 2013

Evaluation Team: Jonathan Hampshire (Team Leader) and Julie Klugman (Civil Society Specialist).

2. DFAT's overall response to the evaluation report

DFAT broadly supports the findings and recommendations made by the review, and acknowledges that the evaluation raises a number of important issues for consideration and action over the remaining life of the two programs. The review and ensuing report were of a high quality, and DFAT staff, delivery organisations and implementing partners have all commented on the usefulness of the review in feedback provided.

SPSN

DFAT agrees with the majority of recommendations made by the review team in relation to the SPSN program, including that the program should prioritise:

- plans for the design of the future phase;
- improved coordination and cohesion across the five components;
- seeking opportunities to improve links and synergies with other programs and other sectors;
- reviewing and revising ways of working to improve program efficiencies and effectiveness;
- promoting systems and mechanisms to improve collaboration across the five components;
- ensuring sufficient resources are available to implement the Gender and Social Inclusion Action Plan; and
- reviewing its own resource allocations and management practices to support program managers to carry out their duties.

In the time since the review was completed, a number of steps have been taken by the program to effectively address these recommendations. An eighteen month extension to the current program has been sought to ensure the successful completion of the grants component, and a smooth transition to the next phase of support. Planning for the next phase has also commenced. An internal evaluation of the program has been completed. This identified areas for improvement and lessons learned for both the current phase and any future support. A review of SPSN's management practices and resource allocations has also been completed. This included an analysis of the small grants mechanism, and a focus on improving program effectiveness and efficiency. Resources have been committed to implement the Gender and Social Inclusion Action Plan. The SPSN team in DFAT has been working closely with the DFAT sectoral teams to implement the program's health, education, law and justice, and gender activities.

While DFAT broadly supports the review's recommendations, it is felt that the review's assessment of the relevance and level of resources attached to the small grants program did not fully consider the context of democratic governance practice in PNG, in particular the need to support both supply and demand side activities and incentives. The issue of the current lack of demand side mechanisms (including information dissemination, advocacy, and shared decision making) in rural PNG, to promote democratic governance, was also overlooked. Demand can only grow with on-going support to progressive leadership with both state and civil society actors.

CPP

DFAT agrees with all of the recommendations made by the review team in relation to the CPP program, including that the program should prioritise:

- a review of CPP's governance and management arrangements;
- program monitoring, reporting and communication;
- developing and advancing strategies to more effectively progress enhanced PNG church involvement in improving public sector governance;
- pursuing opportunities to establish greater linkages with other governance and sectoral programs;
- continuing to strengthen the focus on gender and women's empowerment;
- reviewing and amending CPP contract/ financing agreements;
- reviewing its own resource allocations and management practices to support program managers to carry out their duties; and
- greater participation by key partners in the program, including through the Program Partnership Council.

Since the completion of the review, CPP has introduced a number of initiatives to address these issues. The review of governance and management arrangements has been completed, and during 2014 the program will focus on implementing the review's agreed recommendations. Significant steps have also been taken to improve monitoring, reporting and communication through the engagement of new staff; the finalisation of a new monitoring and evaluation framework and database; and the development of a new communications strategy. The program's gender reference group has been re-established, and DFAT is supporting this group

and the Program Management Committee to develop an agreed program-wide approach to gender. Contracting arrangements have been amended and, and more resources have been dedicated to managing the program. Further opportunities for CPP to support improvements to public sector governance have also emerged over the last six months, with GoPNG's invitation to CPP Church leaders to support the establishment of the Churches Development Council, which will oversee the redesigned Church State Partnership.

Democratic Governance Strategy

DFAT acknowledges there would be benefit from having greater clarity around the program's strategy and design. A new approach to PNG governance programming is being developed which will set the strategic direction for PNG's full suite of governance and sectoral programs, thereby negating the need for a separate democratic governance strategy.

Through partnerships between government, donors, the private sector and civil society, it is proposed that DFAT's new suite of governance programs should address the following key challenges:

- sustain macroeconomic stability while creating a more effective policy and regulatory environment which encourages broad-based private-sector growth;
- ensure basic services that increase the productive capacity of the country (law and justice, education, health and infrastructure) are delivered efficiently and effectively; enabling more people to participate in and contribute to sustained economic growth;
- enable more people, communities and businesses to participate in and capitalise on economic opportunities; and
- increase transparency and accountability in the pursuit of national development objectives with a focus on developing more reform minded leaders.

It is proposed that the finalisation of the designs for the new programs be undertaken concurrently from mid-2014, following the completion of the PNG Aid Assessment (agreed at the 22nd Australia-PNG Ministerial Forum in December 2013).

3. DFAT's response to the specific recommendations made in the report in relation to Strongim Pipol Strongim Nesen (SPSN)

Recommendation 1: Immediately initiate plans to undertake scoping and design work for a possible Phase 2 of SPSN

Response: Agree

An extension to SPSN is currently being sought to 31 December 2015. Plans for the design of the next phase of governance programs (including a successor to SPSN) are also in train. A new approach to PNG governance programming is currently being developed, informed in part by the findings of this review. The new approach will provide strategic direction for the current suite of governance programs (including SPSN), and the next phase, designs for which will commence in mid-2014.

Actions

1. Seek extension to SPSN. DFAT is currently seeking an extension of SPSN to December 2015, to enable sufficient time to complete implementation and wind down of current activities to transition to next phase of support.
2. Capture and draw on lessons learned. Lessons learned from SPSN assessments and research findings are being applied as much as practicable to the current program, but will also inform the design of the next phase. The new governance program's design will be guided by a new approach to PNG governance programming, which has also drawn on lessons learned from the current program.

Recommendation 2: Prioritise the development of improved coordination and cohesion across program components for the remaining program period.

Response: Agree

DFAT and URS acknowledge that improving coordination and cohesion across the program is a priority.

Actions

1. Endorsed and implemented the SPSN 2013-14 Annual Plan (and, if an extension is approved, will agree the 2014-15 Annual Plan).
2. Restructure staffing. SPSN's senior management team has been restructured to ensure greater focus on cross-component functions.
3. Centralise SPSN's management offices. Plans for this are already underway. Head office will manage most of the core field office functions and coordinate the monitoring and evaluation of grants implementation and completion of projects.
4. Finalise and endorse SPSN's hand-over plan for June 2014 and December 2015.

Recommendation 3: Increased attention to be given to promoting the understanding and implementation of SPSN 'democratic governance practices' across all program areas.

Response: Agree

SPSN's original design largely focused on delivering democratic governance outcomes, but in 2010, due to a shift in policy focus (agreed to by both the Australian and PNG governments), the objective of the program changed to service delivery.

A further challenge for the program is that it is both resource intensive and time consuming to partner with civil society and communities in the most remote parts of PNG to demand good governance. Adding to this challenge, poor governance practices in PNG are not easily addressed in, and by, communities that struggle to access basic services. DFAT acknowledges that future programs intended to influence democratic governance priorities will require more focused interventions over a long period to realise this objective.

Actions

1. Strengthen engagement. Ongoing, regular discussions between DFAT and SPSN partners to determine the most effective and appropriate engagement approaches.
2. Consult widely on the new PNG governance designs. The new suite of programs will be developed in close consultation with stakeholders and partners in PNG.
3. Promote understanding of democratic governance practices. An SPSN Evaluation has been completed includes an assessment of civil society organisations' and non-government organisations' understanding of democratic governance; transfer of skills for effective practise in society; and challenges and opportunities for better planning. The findings from this evaluation will inform the design of the future program.
4. Strengthen technical support for democratic governance practices. A Democratic Governance and Community Development advisor was recruited in 2013, and is providing technical support to the governance program.
5. Consider different approaches. The program has been conducting evaluations into the benefits and limitations of different participatory approaches, including the Kommuniti Prosek Planning and community driven development.

Recommendation 4: Increase focus on civil society organisations' capacity building for democratic governance.

Response: Agree

DFAT agrees this is a priority for the program. In PNG, because the state recognises civil society organisations are weak, it does not sufficiently recognise their potential as intermediaries between citizens and government.

Under SPSN's original design (and monitoring and evaluation framework), only component five was intended to focus on capacity development. In reality, however, capacity building is built into all five components of the program, to varying degrees. This disconnect has made it difficult to accurately report on the extent to which the program has contributed to building civil society organisation capacity for democratic governance.

Actions

1. Consult widely. As part of the design for the new program, DFAT will consult widely with development partners in government, the private sector, and other donors, and through this exercise, identify appropriate approaches to effectively support and build the capacity of civil society organisations and community development workers to support improved democratic governance.
2. Continue the civil society organisation and community development worker training (under component 5).
3. Effectively utilise program tools to enhance opportunities for organisational capacity and change. The Joint Organisational Assessment Tool (originally used only under component 1) uses a strength based approach for assessing and building organisational capability and generating motivation for change. The program is now using the tool across the other components of the SPSN program.
4. Better demonstrate the program's results under capacity development. URS will capture and highlight results from the capacity building training of community development workers and government officers in reporting to DFAT.
5. Increase and strengthen monitoring and evaluation in this area. The program is undertaking monitoring and evaluation of capacity development activities being implemented outside of component 5 to demonstrate results in this area. Changes are also being made to the program's monitoring and evaluation database to more effectively capture data on capacity building activities.

Recommendation 5: Review and (as appropriate) revise current ways of working to improve program efficiencies and effectiveness**Response: Agree**

The SPSN program is currently due to end in June 2014, although an extension is currently being sought to December 2015. Given the potentially short life of the remaining program, DFAT will as much as practicable, revise work practices and approaches to improve program efficiencies and effectiveness. The 2013-14 Annual Plan includes a number of activities focused on achieving this objective.

Actions

1. Review work practices. In 2013, the DFAT governance team completed a review of its positions, workloads, and work practices to identify program efficiencies. Work practices will continue to be reviewed throughout the remaining life of the program to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.
2. Strengthen engagement. DFAT and SPSN staff will engage more frequently with regional staff in relation to initiatives and grants planned, or already operating in their regions.

Recommendation 6: Look for opportunities to improve links/synergies with other DFAT programs, including democratic governance, governance and sectoral programs**Response: Agree**

More frequent engagement and discussions are occurring between the DFAT governance team and the education, health, gender and law and justice programs, to more readily identify opportunities for linkages and synergies, and also to determine how SPSN can best complement the work of other sectors. The new approach to PNG governance programming will further assist in building alignment across the PNG program, as it will not only set the strategic direction for the governance program, but also inform the direction of governance work being undertaken through the health, education and law and justice sectors.

Actions

1. Increase focus on engagement with other programs. Activities focused on stronger engagement with other DFAT programs are being implemented under the 2013-14 Annual Plan, and (if the extension is approved), through the 2014-15 Annual Plan.
2. Finalise and implement new PNG governance designs: New program designs will set the strategic direction for Australia's governance programming in PNG.

Recommendation 7: Promote systems and mechanisms to improve collaboration between SPSN Partners across the five component areas

Response: Agree

In the initial phase of SPSN's implementation, the focus was on establishing the systems and mechanisms necessary to roll out the five components. DFAT agrees that the program now needs to shift its focus to strengthening collaboration across the five components for a more integrated approach. Activities focused on achieving this objective are being implemented through the SPSN 2013-2014 Annual Plan.

Actions

1. Identify additional opportunities for engagement with civil society organisations, the private sector, churches, and other development partners. The program is actively seeking further opportunities to increase engagement between SPSN partners across the program, and there are at least two examples where this has already led to improved collaboration. City Mission and the Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council (CIMC) are working in partnership to take an integrated approach to law and justice and gender violence issues, and Eastern Highlands Family Voice is working collaboratively with churches and the Eastern Highlands Provincial Health Authority to address family and sexual violence issues.

Recommendation 8: Ensure sufficient resources are available to ensure the timely implementation of the Gender and Social Inclusion Action Plan.

Response: Agree

The Gender and Social Inclusion Action Plan is currently being implemented.

Actions

1. Designate sufficient resources. The SPSN team will ensure that appropriate resources are designated to enable effective implementation of the Gender and Social Inclusion Action Plan.
2. Implement the Gender and Social Inclusion Action Plan. The Plan is currently being implemented through the PNG country program's component of the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (PWSPD) Initiative.

Recommendation 9: DFAT should review its own resource allocation and management practices with respect to how effectively it supports its democratic governance program managers to carry out the work expected of them.

Response: Agree

In 2013, DFAT's SPSN team completed a review of its positions, workloads and practises to identify program efficiencies. The DFAT governance team was also restructured in early 2013 to ensure that there were more dedicated resources designated to managing its democratic governance programs.

Actions

1. Agree on roles, responsibilities and workloads. SPSN roles and responsibilities, at both the strategic and program management levels, have been agreed by both DFAT and URS. In early 2013, the DFAT governance team also completed a review of its positions, workloads, and work practices to identify program efficiencies.
2. Undertake greater program monitoring. DFAT has undertaken regular field monitoring to ensure effective implementation of the SPSN 2013-14 Annual Plan.

4. DFAT's response to the specific recommendations made in the report in relation to the Church Partnership Program Phase 2 (CPP)

Recommendation 1: The Program Partnership Council should bring forward their own planned review of CPP governance and management arrangements to the earliest opportunity.

Response: Agree

DFAT agrees that the program's governance, management and reporting structures require streamlining and clarification. The roles and responsibilities of each of the stakeholder groups and their relationships to each other require greater clarity, and key bodies, including the Church Leaders Council and the Program Partnership Council should have a more strategic focus. These issues have been of concern to both DFAT and the CPP partners.

Actions

1. Review CPP governance and management arrangements. The proposal to undertake a review of CPP's governance and management arrangements was approved by the Church Leaders Council and the Program Partnership Council in April 2013. The review was completed during August-September 2013, and the review document was endorsed by Church Leaders and DFAT in late October 2013.
2. Implement agreed recommendations from review. During 2014, CPP will focus on implementing the agreed recommendations from the governance review.

Recommendation 2: Consolidated CPP program monitoring, reporting and communication should be given more priority/attention

Response: Agree

DFAT agrees that CPP program monitoring, reporting and communication should be given greater priority, and as such has undertaken a series of actions over the past year to start to improve performance in these areas. In mid-2013, a new Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and Communications Officer were engaged by CPP. The new staff are being supported in their roles by the current Australian host church (ADRA), SPSN monitoring and evaluation staff, and DFAT staff.

Actions

1. Develop a new CPP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. A new CPP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and a program-wide set of indicators were developed and approved by the Program Partnership Council in April 2013, and are currently being used by the CPP Monitoring and Evaluation Officer.
2. Develop a database for capturing CPP program and project data. A new management information system for capturing CPP project and program-wide data has been developed. As of January 2014, the system has captured data for all new activities. All known data for historical activities has also been entered into the database. The system will assist in providing better, more comprehensive reporting on the program.
3. Strengthen program reporting. DFAT and CPP partners will support the host Australian non-government organisations and the CPP Monitoring and Evaluation Officer to review the program's annual and six-monthly reporting templates.
4. Build capacity of CPP Monitoring and Evaluation staff. The SPSN monitoring and evaluation team has identified opportunities where it can mentor the CPP Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (such as in the development of the new management information system and in shadowing them in monitoring and evaluation activities).
5. Select a small number of CPP projects for targeted monitoring and assessment. In consultation with CPP partners, a small selection of projects have been identified by the CPP Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for targeted monitoring by the program during 2014.
6. Improve program communications. A new Communications Strategy (linked to the M and E Framework) is currently being finalised for the program, with a view to commencing implementation in mid-2014.
7. Build capacity of CPP Communications staff. Mentoring is being provided to the CPP Communications Officer by DFAT on communication related issues and requirements.

Recommendation 3: The Church Leaders Council and Program Partnership Council members should give increased focus, both during their meetings and in-between meeting, to developing and advancing strategies to more effectively progress work under outcome Area 1, namely 'enhanced PNG church involvement in improving public sector governance.

Response: Agree

DFAT would welcome the Church Leaders Council and the Program Partnership Council giving increased focus to improving public sector governance, both during their meetings, as well as between meetings. While supporting the improvement of public sector governance is one of the objectives of CPP, to date CPP has made only limited progress in this area. The announcement by GoPNG in mid-2013 to establish a Churches Development Council to oversee the revitalised Church-State Partnership, and their request for CPP assistance to do so, is positive, and moving forward should provide a solid platform for the Church Leaders Council and Program Partnership Council to engage with the government on key policy issues, including public sector governance.

Actions

1. Identify areas where DFAT can support Churches to engage with GoPNG. DFAT is supporting members of the Church Leaders Council and Program Partnership Council in their efforts to engage with GoPNG, in particular the Department of National Planning and Monitoring to establish the Churches Development Council. CPP partners are well placed to utilise their skills and experience to support GoPNG establish this mechanism, and GoPNG has actively sought their assistance to do so. The mechanism will provide a dedicated opportunity for the Church Leaders Council to engage with GoPNG on a range of policy issues, including improving public sector governance issues.

Recommendation 4: Opportunities to establish greater linkages/synergies with other DFAT governance and sectoral programs should be identified and more vigorously pursued.

Response: Agree

The DFAT governance team is engaging more with the education, health, gender and law and justice programs, as well as other governance programs, to more readily identify opportunities for linkages and synergies, and also to determine how CPP can best complement the work of other sectors. A new approach to PNG governance programming will further assist in identifying linkages across the PNG program and set a new strategic direction for the governance program.

Actions

1. Strengthen engagement between CPP partners and DFAT provincial representatives. DFAT has encouraged CPP partners to establish relationships with the DFAT provincial representatives working in provinces where they are implementing CPP activities. As much as possible, the provincial representatives have also been provided with briefings on the CPP activities being implemented in their provinces. It is anticipated this sharing of information will, over time, further assist in identifying linkages and synergies with other sectoral programs, as well as with programs being implemented by other partners and donors.
2. Encourage mentoring and sharing of information and experience across the democratic governance program. DFAT has encouraged CPP partners across the program to undertake joint projects, and also to work closely with the SPSN team on issues of shared importance.
3. Strengthen engagement with sectoral programs. Regular discussions with the health, education, and gender teams on issues relevant to CPP and the work of the Churches more broadly are underway.

Recommendation 5: Continue to strengthen the focus on gender and women's empowerment within CPP funded church work programs

Response: Agree

DFAT agrees that CPP should strengthen its focus on gender and women's empowerment, and will continue to treat this as a priority for the program. The program has had some success to date at strengthening this focus at a project level. However, as a program, CPP has been challenged in what it can do to bring about improvements in this area. Each church involved in the partnership has a different perspective on, and approach to gender, and this is reflected both in the work they do within their individual churches as well as in the work they undertake within their communities. Only two churches in the partnership have a gender strategy in place for their church. Adding to this, often a church's PNG view on gender does not align with the same church's global view. While this has not impacted on individual projects, it has translated into delays in being able to develop and implement a gender strategy for all of CPP, agreed to and supported by the seven churches in the partnership.

Actions

1. Reinvigorate the CPP Gender Reference Working Group. The Gender Reference Working Group has been re-established, to oversee the development of the CPP gender strategy. The group comprises representatives from each CPP Church (from both PNG and Australia) and a member of DFAT's gender team (who has joined to provide technical assistance and support).
2. Develop a set of gender principles for the program. Given the challenges that have occurred with developing the strategy, DFAT has proposed that as a starting point, the partners develop an agreed set of gender principles. Over time these could be expanded, and developed into a full strategy. This proposal is currently being considered by the CPP partners.
3. Improve data and reporting on gender. The new management information system will capture gender disaggregated data. This information will be drawn on for reporting purposes, and to inform lessons learned, from 2014.

Recommendation 6: CPP partner contract/financing agreements should be reviewed, and as appropriate amended, to ensure that these are not unnecessarily complex or restrictive with respect to making timely required amendments and ensuring funds are released in timely manner.

Response: Agree

DFAT agrees that CPP's contracting and funding arrangements should be more flexible and simple, to ensure the timely release of annual funds to the Australian non-government organisation partners.

Actions

1. Flexible, multi-year agreements were developed and introduced for all seven Australian non-government organisation partners for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 financial years.

Recommendation 7: DFAT should review its own resource allocation and management practises with respect to how effectively it supports its Democratic Governance program manager to carry out the work expected of them.

Response: Agree

DFAT agrees with this recommendation, and has implemented a number of actions over the past twelve months to ensure that the team is supported to carry out the duties expected of them.

Actions

1. Restructure the DFAT governance team. In early 2013, the team was restructured; this resulted in more dedicated resources being designated to democratic governance, and in particular to managing the CPP program.
2. Regularly review roles, responsibilities and workloads. The CPP team undertakes regular reviews of the team's roles, responsibilities and workloads to ensure that each members is able to effectively meet their deliverables, and well supported to do so.
3. Implement the agreed recommendations from the review of CPP governance and management arrangements. During 2014-15, CPP will focus on implementing the agreed recommendations from

the 2013 review. Implementing the outcomes of this review should assist in lessening the administrative burden placed on CPP program managers.

4. Strengthen relationships with the DFAT provincial representatives and partners working across the governance program. DFAT has encouraged CPP partners to establish relationships with the DFAT provincial representatives working in provinces where they are implementing CPP activities. DFAT has also encouraged CPP partners across the program to undertake joint projects, and also to work closely with the SPSN team on issues of shared importance. These actions will not only lead to more effective outcomes for the program, but will also lessen the workload being placed directly on CPP program managers.

Recommendation 8: Key GoPNG strategic partners in the CPP, namely the Department of National Planning and Monitoring and Department for Community Development, Youth and Religion, make additional efforts to participate more regularly and actively in the Program Partnership Council, as well as to strategically support achievement of CPP outcomes more generally.

Response: Agree

DFAT acknowledges the resource constraints which inhibit GoPNG engagement, but would welcome greater GoPNG participation (particularly the Department of National Planning and Monitoring and the Department for Community Development, Youth and Religion) in the Program Partnership Council.

Actions

1. Facilitate and encourage GoPNG's active participation in the program. DFAT will continue to utilise discussions with Department of National Planning and Monitoring and Department for Community Development, Youth and Religion to also encourage their active participation in CPP, including in the Program Partnership Council. An engagement strategy for CPP, currently being drafted by DFAT, will identify opportunities for DFAT staff at all levels (but in particular senior management) to engage with partners (including GoPNG) on issues of strategic importance to the program, such as the recently announced Churches Development Council and Office for Religion. Senior management could utilise discussion around these issues to extend invitations to GoPNG to attend key program meetings, such as the Program Partnership Council.
2. Support regular engagement between the CPP Church Leaders Council and GoPNG. DFAT will continue to encourage the CPP Church Leaders Council to seek regular meetings with GoPNG to discuss issues of importance to the program, and the churches more broadly.

5. DFAT's response to the specific recommendations made in the report in relation to the Democratic Governance Strategy

Recommendations: The governance review should assess whether a separate democratic governance strategy is required. Future sub-national support programs (new phases or new programs) should ideally be designed at the same time, including with common implementation periods, areas of geographic focus, and specific mechanisms to promote their integration/ synergies. DFAT's expectations for core governance / democratic governance to demonstrate service delivery outcomes should be clarified.

Response: Agree

DFAT acknowledges there would be benefit from having greater clarity around the program's strategy and design. A new approach to PNG governance programming is being developed which will set the strategic direction for PNG's full suite of governance programs, thereby negating the need for a separate democratic governance strategy.

Through partnerships between government, donors, the private sector and civil society, it is proposed that DFAT's new suite of governance programs should address the following key challenges:

- sustain macroeconomic stability while creating a more effective policy and regulatory environment which encourages broad-based private-sector growth;

- ensure basic services that increase the productive capacity of the country (law and justice, education, health and infrastructure) are delivered efficiently and effectively; enabling more people to participate in and contribute to sustained economic growth;
- enable more people, communities and businesses to participate in and capitalise on economic opportunities; and
- increase transparency and accountability in the pursuit of national development objectives with a focus on developing more reform minded leaders.

It is proposed that the finalisation of the designs for the new programs be undertaken concurrently from mid-2014, following the completion of the PNG Aid Assessment (agreed at the 22nd Australia-PNG Ministerial Forum in December 2013).