

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF
PROGRESS OF
WATER FOR WOMEN FUND
AND COVID-19 RESPONSE

AUGUST 2020

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Initiative	Water for Women Fund
Donor	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Managing Contractor	GHD Australia Pty Ltd
Reviewer	Marcus Howard, Independent Consultant
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Aid Activity Summary

Aid Activity	Water for Women Fund
Investment Number	INM136
Commencement date	1 January 2017
Completion Date	30 June 2022
Total Budget	AUD 110.6 million
Managing Contractor	GHD Australia Pty Ltd
Implementing Organisations	<p>Civil Society Organisations Centre for Advocacy and Research Habitat for Humanity International Development Enterprises (iDE) International Rescue Committee Plan International Australia SNV Netherlands Development Organisation Thrive Networks WaterAid World Vision Australia</p> <p>Research Organisations The International Water Centre and Griffith University The Institute For Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney. The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Monash University The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine International Water Management Institute</p>
Country/Program	Global – Water and Sanitation
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the findings of a review of Progress of the Water for Women Fund, and an assessment of the COVID-19 response by the Fund, conducted over the period 1 June – 7 July 2020. The methodology for the review was qualitative and included document review and key informant interviews. Interviews were conducted by an independent consultant through video conferencing, telephone and email with travel limited due to social distancing restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overall Progress of the Fund

Review findings strongly agree with the “Water for Women Fund, Progress to Outcome Report, February 2020” that “Based on evidence provided in the recent Civil Society Organisation’s (CSO) and Research Organisation’s (RO) Progress to Outcomes reports, the Fund is progressing well towards achieving its intended outcomes”.

The review found that overall, there is a positive impression of Fund governance, management, and implementation arrangements among participating CSO’s and RO’s with a high level of agreement by stakeholders that Fund implementation arrangements are working well. Fund governance arrangements were seen to be effective and were strengthened by collaboration of the Fund Coordinator (FC), DFAT and Fund Partnership Group (FPG).

Transaction costs, including a 6 monthly reporting cycle, were accepted by CSO’s and RO’s as appropriate. DFAT’s role in project management (when compared to the CS WASH Fund) has allowed the Water Section to play a more strategic role with greater focus on policy and public diplomacy.

The broad scope of the program strongly supports Fund’s aims to facilitate a range of development responses but there are tensions in getting balance between Gender and Social Inclusion (GSI), Systems Strengthening and WASH access. The strong GSI focus is working well and successfully challenged accepted approaches in design of CSO and RO projects.

Activity Implementation

Fund activity planning and approval processes are transparent and FC management systems accepted as generally efficient and effective. FC systems have been responsive to DFAT and implementing partner requirements. Outside of scheduled learning events the Fund developed terms of reference for the Fund Learning Agenda and The Hub as a knowledge platform though the Fund partners have been slow to confirm a Knowledge and Learning (K&L) workplan.

The FC team and DFAT worked with CSO’s to develop a partnership model which included RO’s and adopted 8 Principles of Partnership. An early focus of the FPG was resolving operational issues, then the COVID-19 pivot accelerated a shift to a Fund wide forum advising on strategic issues. The COVID-19 pivot is a good example of the FPG working strategically as intended. The Fund “Progress to Outcomes Report” was not available to stakeholders during the review so interviewees did not comment on Fund wide progress.

The Fund adopted Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Building Blocks as a framework for analysing WASH systems change. CSO’s and RO’s are engaging with rights holder organisations (especially disabled peoples organisations) and the Fund will undertake further

analysis of the different strategies used by CSO's and RO's and how effectively they are contributing to achievement of end of program outcomes.

The M&E system is working and helpful for project management. The FC has done a good job on analysis of information and sharing this with stakeholders. Overall, the view of CSO's and RO's was that current M&E information is useful but could be more effective.

A challenge is to facilitate sharing of Fund wide information to improve stakeholder awareness of overall progress. Learning and adapting is critical for success in achieving planned outcomes and the FC has developed TORs for the Fund's Learning Agenda and The Hub as an intranet platform. However, 2 years into implementation of the Fund a K&L workplan is still being finalised. There is a risk that learnings will come too late to benefit CSO's during the life of the Fund.

There has been slow progress by CSO projects in changing hygiene behaviours and the FC is investigating approaches on hygiene to identify improvements and gaps in M&E.

Factors affecting Fund performance

The Fund progress report and CSO and RO interviews found several factors had affected Fund performance. Issues included low rates of progress in hygiene promotion and behaviour change, low AUD to USD exchange rates, duration of local government approvals and changes to reporting and M&E formats led to some inefficiency. The review found most CSO's and RO's considered implementation of Fund wide M&E and K&L has been slow to fully develop.

COVID-19 has restricted travel impacting on DFAT, FC operations, CSO, RO management, data collection, household surveys, fieldwork, triggering and community meetings. System strengthening work has been limited by low availability of government partners. The review found that all stakeholders have met the challenges of working remotely through changed work methods and use of technology.

Gender Equity and Social Inclusion

Review findings agreed with the progress report that CSO's and RO's are engaging with internal norms as a step towards broader GSI transformation. Fund partners are implementing activity which promotes women's leadership and empowerment through WASH, including engagement with women's rights holder organisations. Enthusiasm was expressed by CSO's and RO's adopting innovative GSI approaches in different country contexts. While it is too early to assess if the Fund is achieving transformational equity the intermediate results and stories from projects are strong.

Effectiveness of the Fund COVID19 Response

DFAT, FC and the FPG worked well as a partnership to develop an effective COVID-19 pivot. There is a good Fund wide story on stakeholders reaching quick agreement on principles for the pivot and balancing an emergency response with good development practice. The review found the partnership approach of the Fund disrupted usual project change management process in a positive way and enabled quick action to direct resources to meet local COVID-19 challenges.

WASH is an effective development response during a pandemic which contributes to Health Security, Stability and Resilience under the “Partnership for Recovery” strategy. WASH systems strengthening benefits health systems and improved governance, preparedness for pandemics, promotes good hygiene behaviours that are essential for infectious disease response and creates local employment opportunities in communities.

Implementation of WASH service delivery through existing CSO partners has the benefit of short lead times to become effective. Australia’s efforts in hygiene promotion under the Fund should be highlighted through aid program public diplomacy and can be promoted through local DFAT Posts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The FC should engage with the FPG and DFAT on management approvals to determine if CSO’s and RO’s can be given more flexibility to take adaptive management action. Any allowed changes in activity management and budget line variations would have to meet the FC corporate requirements and DFAT contractual reporting and risk management obligations.

Recommendation 2: Fund partners should finalise a K&L workplan and budget. This should provide adequate resources to complement FC led K&L activity with support for collaborative learning activity. CSO’s and RO’s identified as innovative and utilising best practice can share their knowledge and expertise across the Fund. COVID-19 travel restrictions will impact on delivery of a collaborative learning model but with new technology, including video conferencing and webinars, Fund Partners can address gaps in WASH systems strengthening and WASH access (hygiene behaviour change and disability inclusion).

Recommendation 3: The FC should strengthen efforts and direct resources to improve the flow of information to the FPG as outlined in the Learning Advisory Group TOR. This will allow the FPG to work more effectively as a strategic advisory mechanism. Actions will require allocation of FC management and specialist resources and facilitating early issue of documents. The FC should explore how The Hub can be used to improve flow of K&L information from learning events and how CSO’s and RO’s can share stories of transformation and relevant information and learnings from projects.

Recommendation 4: The FC should implement actions to better link M&E and K&L within the Fund. This can involve The Hub collecting and sharing transformational stories on projects and research. Sharing experiences closes the loop from evidence to practice, contributes to learning and exchange and supports the strategic advisory role of the FPG.

Recommendation 5: Action is required by Fund partners to progress implementation of a collaborative learning facility which can provide resources and facilitate knowledge sharing for systems strengthening and WASH access. The Fund has provision for collaborative learning to utilise CSO and RO strengths through cross learning and technical support.

Recommendation 6: The Fund should work with CSO’s to understand why beneficiary numbers are so low for people with a disability and work with the FPG on strategies to improve results over the remaining life of the Fund.

Recommendation 7: This review was undertaken without the inclusion of sector specialists, including gender and social inclusion, in the review Team due to COVID-19 restrictions. A priority for DFAT is to follow up with in depth analysis by GSI specialists (gender, disability and SGM) to further assess how the Fund is progressing on GSI transformation and how M&E systems can better measure fund wide progress.

Recommendation 8: DFAT should consider managing the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 through a 2-3 year extension of the Water for Women Fund with a strengthened alignment to the Partnerships for Recovery strategy. Delivery of a new WASH program will take several years to progress from concept to implementation and in a post COVID-19 period new project commencement will be higher risk, due to travel and distancing restrictions and possible new waves of infection. DFAT support for the WASH sector over the next 3-5 years would be an effective development response in support of Partnerships for Recovery. This approach would harness existing partnerships, utilise proven and effective management and grant arrangements, harness knowledge and learning and research findings from the Fund and deliver early results compared to a new investment program. Any project extension will require a review and necessary adjustment of the design Theory of Change and be subject to satisfactory performance of the FC, CSO and RO's and continued alignment with DFAT policy and budget limitations.

Table of Contents

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
RECOMMENDATIONS	6
Table of Contents	8
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations	9
1. INTRODUCTION	10
1.1. Document Purpose	10
1.2. Background	10
2. REVIEW PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES	11
3. METHODOLOGY	13
3.1. Methods	14
3.2. Limitations	14
4. FINDINGS	15
4.1. Overall Progress of the Fund	15
4.2. Efficiency	17
4.3. Effectiveness	22
4.4. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion	27
4.5. Effectiveness of Fund COVID-19 Response	28

Appendix A – Fund Organisations

Appendix B – Terms of Reference

Appendix C – Stakeholder Engagement

Appendix D – Review Plan

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DPO	Disabled Person Organisation
EOPO1	End of Program Outcome 1 Strengthened national and sub-national WASH sector subsystems with greater emphasis on gender, social inclusion, safely managed WASH and water security.
EOPO2	End of Program Outcome 2 Increased equitable, universal access to and use of sustainable WASH services, particularly for marginalised communities and community members.
EOPO3	End of Program Outcome 3 Strengthened gender equality and social inclusion in households, communities and institutions.
EOPO4	End of Program Outcome 4 Strengthened use of new evidence, innovation and practice in sustainable gender and inclusive WASH by other CSO's, national and international WASH sector actors.
FC	Fund Coordinator
FPG	Fund Partnership Group
GSI	Gender and Social Inclusion
iDE	International Development Enterprises
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
K&L	Knowledge and Learning
MEF	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PWD	People with a disability
RHO's	Rights Holder Organisations
RO	Research Organisations
RSG	Research Steering Group
SGM	Sexual and Gender Minorities
SoT	Stories of Transformation
SWA	Sanitation and Water For All
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organisation
WRA	WASH Research Awards
WRM	Water Resources Management

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Document Purpose

This document is a review of the overall progress and effectiveness and efficiency of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's investment in the Water for Women Fund, including its COVID-19 response. The primary audience of the review is DFAT and a secondary audience of the Fund Coordinator (FC), Fund Partnership Group (FPG) and implementing organisations.

Interviews for this evaluation were carried out in June and July 2020 by video conferencing and telephone. Face to face interviews were not possible due to COVID-19 social distancing restrictions. Interviews were held with representative from DFAT, the FC, 11 Civil Society Organisation (CSO's) and 3 Research Organisations (RO's). A schedule of interviews is provided in Appendix C.

1.2. Background

The Water for Women Fund (the 'Fund') is the Australian Government's flagship \$110.6 million (2018-2022) water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) program. The Fund recognises the critical role that improvements to WASH plays to address poverty and contribute to economic and human development. The Fund responds to increasing evidence that gendered approaches to WASH programming contribute to more effective and sustainable WASH outcomes, as well as offer an entry point to improve gender equality and women's well-being, voice, leadership and economic empowerment. The use of explicit gender and socially inclusive approaches in the Australian Government's commitment to the Fund is regarded globally and in the WASH sector as progressive, innovative and an important contribution to economic and social development in the region.

The Fund is managed by DFAT as part of the aid program and GHD Australia Pty Ltd is contracted to provide Fund coordination. It will improve access to safe and affordable water and improve sanitation and hygiene practices for an estimated 2.9 million people in the Indo-Pacific region. Gender equality and social inclusion are a core focus. Under the Fund, 9 civil society organisations are delivering 18 projects across 15 countries in the Indo-Pacific. The Fund includes \$10 million for WASH research through a competitive grants process and is supporting 5 research organisations to deliver 11 research projects (see [Water for Women Fund CSO Projects](#) and [Water for Women Fund Research Projects](#)).

Since April 2020, the Fund has pivoted its CSO projects towards COVID-19 with approval to utilise up to \$100,000 of existing funding for each project. Subsequently on 18 May 2020, the Minister for Foreign Affairs approved additional COVID-19 funding of about \$3 million. These additional funds were disbursed at the end of the 2019-20 financial year. Fund management has finalised negotiations with CSOs and a couple of ROs, with the work to be done over the next 6-18 months, using these additional funds.

The **goal** of the Fund is '**Improved health, gender equality and well-being of Asian and Pacific communities through inclusive, sustainable WASH**'. Contributions will be made to the goal through **four end of program outcomes**:

1. Strengthened national and subnational WASH sector systems with greater emphasis on gender, social inclusion, safely managed WASH and water security
2. Increased equitable, universal access to and use of sustainable WASH services, particularly for marginalised communities and community members
3. Strengthened gender equality and social inclusion in households, communities and institutions
4. Strengthened use of new evidence, innovation and practice in sustainable gender and inclusive WASH by other CSOs, national and international WASH sector actors

A key delivery approach is the promotion of reflective, collaborative and learning-oriented effort, through partnerships and other alliances, both among Fund-supported CSOs and RO's and between CSOs, private sector and government agencies as well as Australian and international research teams.

The Fund K&L component contributes to quality of CSO and RO implementation and evidence-based practice as well as external profile and public diplomacy opportunities led by the FC Knowledge and Learning Manager (KALM). The component includes regional learning events, Innovation and Impact grants (I&I grants) to promote innovation in CSO implementation, a website and associated communications. This K&L component includes both an internal focus (to facilitate uptake and learning by Fund CSOs), as well as an external focus, to share Fund-generated evidence, practice and knowledge to a wider audience of CSOs, researchers and national and international WASH stakeholders.

The Research Component comprises grants (WASH Research Awards) to research organisations. These grants include two types, both of which would use gender and inclusive processes: (i) broader, longer-term WASH research addressing key knowledge gaps in Asian and Pacific regions; and (ii) research closely linked to CSO implementation in the Fund. Impact maximisation grants up to \$500,000 in total will be awarded on a competitive basis to high performing research projects. Grants are managed by the FC with strategic oversight through a Research Steering Group and contribute to the wider K&L activities of the Fund.

2. REVIEW PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the review defined the key purposes and objectives for this evaluation:

Purpose	Objectives
Review overall progress of the Fund	<p>Review implementation of the current Water for Women Fund program against the End of Program Outcomes as stated in the Water for Women Fund Design Document.</p> <p>Identify critical issues in the program's implementation that could be addressed in the final 2 years (to December 2022) of the program.</p> <p>Make recommendations on possible actions to improve Fund implementation.</p>

<p>Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the COVID19 responses by the Fund</p>	<p>Develop a framework to assess Fund COVID-19 responses, focusing on their effectiveness and efficiency. This assessment will be largely qualitative but where possible, draw on quantitative data.</p> <p>Apply the assessment framework to draw conclusions on the effectiveness and efficiency of Fund COVID-19 responses. Make recommendations for future preparedness including how to embed flexibility in future WASH programming.</p>
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Priorities for the review include:

- Program Governance and Efficiency: Structures processes and personnel
- Effectiveness: Review of progress against end of program outcomes. Are we making the progress we expected at this point in time? To what extent is the Water for Women Fund on track to achieve its end of program outcomes by December 2022?
- Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
- Assessment of COVID-19 Responses.

Assessment Framework for COVID-19 responses

The assessment framework for Fund COVID-19 responses detailed below assessed policy alignment, technical merit, benefits, adverse impacts, viability in implementation and broader economic and social considerations.

- a) **Technical:** Have response options been technically assessed for their alignment with DFAT COVID-19 policy and core action areas of Health Security, Stability and Economic Recovery? Have responses been technically assessed for effectiveness using the best available evidence and analysis and expected outputs and outcomes? Analysis could include political economy analysis, ease of implementation under COVID-19, limitations due to restrictions to movements of counterpart staff and communities.
- b) **Efficiency:** Have responses been assessed for efficiency in implementation including taking into account how easy will it be to make program changes. What are the impacts on Fund Coordination and CSO staff and overall Fund outcomes? What is the likelihood of success in the time left for implementation?
- c) To what extent will COVID-19 responses make a difference to **gender equality and social inclusion?**

Questions are detailed in the Work Plan in Appendix D

Key Review Questions

There were four key review questions:

- a) To what extent is the Fund on track to achieve its expected outputs and outcomes against end of program outcomes. In particular is it making progress to achieve outcomes to strengthen Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
- b) What are the critical issues in program implementation, including for the COVID-19 pandemic, that could be addressed in the final two years (to December 2020) of the program.
- c) What changes are recommended to improve Fund implementation.
- d) How effective and efficient are Fund COVID-19 responses and what has been learned for future program preparedness.

3. METHODOLOGY

Consultations with stakeholders occurred in June and July 2020. Interviews were conducted by email, video communications or telephone. Face to face interviews were not possible due to COVID-19 social distancing restrictions.

The methodology for data collection was qualitative and based on responses to stakeholder review questions.

The approach to addressing review priorities	Approach
Review overall progress of the Fund to assess if it is on track to achieve planned outcomes	Key informant interviews with DFAT, Fund Coordination and a representative sample of implementing NGO's. Review of documentation, progress to outcomes reports and other outputs.
Identify critical issues in program implementation (leading up to the time of the COVID19 pandemic) and recommendations on possible actions to improve implementation.	A running list of issues will be documented during the review and raised for discussion and consideration with DFAT and FC at the end of the review process.
Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the COVID19 responses by the Fund.	Key informant interviews with DFAT, Fund Coordination Team and a representative sample of implementing CSO's. Review of documentation including FC reports and CSO project pivot proposals.

3.1. Methods

The review involved a range of qualitative research methods:

- **Document Review:** a comprehensive review of key documents produced for the Fund by DFAT, FC and implementing CSO's and Researchers. Relevant sector literature and published research helped to identify key issues for further investigation and informed the basis for any quantitative data analysis presented in the report.
- **Key Informant Interviews:** with selected groups and individuals provided the majority of the fieldwork inputs. Those interviews and a synthesis of stakeholder views and perspectives concerning the Fund informed the findings.
- **Observation:** general observations, including video interviews and video observations of sites, were used to confirm or challenge conclusions arising from other methods; for example the interactions/relationships between stakeholders, the degree of professionalism of implementation as observed in the field, the quality and appropriateness of outputs, and the general view of stakeholders. Observations based on CSO staff who provided video interviews and visual records from site locations.

The review sought verbal consent to ensure key informants and local partners consulted were adequately informed of the purpose of the review, its potential outcomes and consequences, and type of information sought from them.

In the absence of a broad range of skills in the Review Team, due to COVID 19 restrictions, the reviewer will discuss issues where there are a range of views (from CSO partners) with the Fund Manager and DFAT and note these in the report.

3.2. Limitations

The following limitations were mitigated through pragmatic design and including them transparently in the review report

- **Time and resources:** the rigour of the data gathering and analysis processes for this review will be constrained by the time available.
- **Access:** since the Fund covers a wide geographic area in the Indo-Pacific the evaluation will only be exposed to perspectives from a limited range of stakeholders/locations. Access is further restricted due by communications, travel and physical distancing limitations implemented during COVID-19 restrictions in Australia and country locations.
- **Measurement** of sector system changes are difficult to describe and assure. Systematic analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, including direct quotes from informants, will be used to make the most value of the information collected.
- **COVID-19 limitations** on team structure, travel and meeting formats as well as disruptions to workplaces and communities add additional limitations to this review.
- **Attribution:** initiatives such as the Fund are implemented through CSO and Research partners such that multiple factors contribute to and/or detract from the achievement of outcomes and outputs. The attribution of outcomes to particular Fund interventions will be difficult to determine.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Overall Progress of the Fund

The “Water for Women Fund Progress to Outcomes Report February 2020” and “Supplementary Fund Coordinator Progress Report” provides an update of progress of the Water for Women Fund (the “Fund”) to December 2019. The progress report is based on analysis and synthesis of annual reports from Civil Society Organisations (CSO’s) and Research Organisations (RO’s) submitted to the FC Team in January 2020.

The Progress to Outcomes Report states “Based on evidence provided in the recent CSO and RO Progress to Outcomes reports, the Fund is progressing well towards achieving its intended outcomes”. CSO’s and RO’s reported on their progress to December 2019 before recent COVID-19 pandemic restrictions came into effect which will impact on deliverables in 2020.

The \$110.6 million, five-year program (2018-2022) was to be delivered through FC managed grant agreements with 10 CSO’s delivering 19 projects in 15 countries and RO’s undertaking 11 research projects. Highlights from the Progress to Outcomes Report that support an assessment of satisfactory progress include:

- Most CSO projects were reported as performing well in terms of deliverables. Overall, 53% of activities are on track, 23% were completed and 23% were delayed. 11 Type 1 and Type 2 research projects were on track.
- The Fund is approximately one third of the way into the 5-year program with CSO projects 12-18 months (include 6-12-month design phase) into implementation. Research projects are 6-18 months into implementation.
- Oxfam Australia CSO projects in Philippines and Myanmar did not proceed beyond the design phase due to operational links with Oxfam Great Britain which has been sanctioned by donors, including Australia. After the cancellation of the Philippines project, a competitive process resulted in an additional project in PNG being selected, delivered by Plan Australia. Termination of the Oxfam projects (Philippines - March 2019 and Myanmar – January 2020) and selection of the Plan PNG project (May 2019), reduced the scope of the Fund to deliver 18 Projects in 15 countries through 9 CSO’s.
- The FC reported as at December 2019, the overall utilisation of funds disbursed was 75% which was satisfactory. Based on expenditure compared to progress against the workplan and an assessment of programmatic risk 17 of the 18 CSO projects are progressing satisfactorily. One CSO assessed as having low financial performance and was encountering implementation delays was assessed as high risk. The CSO has been asked to prepare a Performance Improvement Plan to manage identified risks.
- End of Program Outcome 1: There are promising signs of change emerging among Fund partners in the area of Systems Strengthening. The Fund has adopted the Sanitation and Water For All (SWA) Building Blocks as a common framework for analysing and communicating WASH systems change. Climate change is also

identified as a critical sustainability risk and responding to climate change has seen increased attention within the Fund.

- End of Program Outcome 2: Providing equitable universal access to sustainable WASH services, the Fund has achieved nearly a quarter (24%) of its total beneficiary target for water, sanitation and hygiene, creating better WASH outcomes for an estimated 690,869 people. Most beneficiaries are in South- East Asia (Cambodia and Indonesia). Beneficiaries comprised 49% women/girls and 48.4% men/boys located mainly (98%) in rural areas. There is a low proportion of people living with a disability among beneficiary numbers (less than 1%) which is significantly lower than expected, when compared to targets and in light of the Funds emphasis on disability. Much greater progress occurred in water (17%) and sanitation (23%) than hygiene (4%). The FC identified low progress on hygiene as an area for follow up action with CSO's.
- End of Program Outcome 3: Most projects emphasised they had integrated gender and social inclusion (GSI) into WASH systems strengthening. CSO's and RO's are piloting approaches to ensure the Fund reaches a diverse range of beneficiaries and engagement with Rights Holder Organisations (RHO's) is prominent, as intermediaries in enabling program outcomes. All CSO's were engaging with internal norms change as a step towards broader GSI transformation. Most Fund partners are implementing activities which promote women's leadership and empowerment. The FC will work closely with CSO partners to better understand the issue with low disability beneficiary numbers and what can be done to improve access. The progress report noted that despite a relatively low number of diverse beneficiaries there are high levels of engagement with marginalised groups and RHO's on challenges.
- End of Program Outcome 4: Type 1 and Type 2 research components of the Fund are progressing well, with all 11 projects on track in contributing to strengthened use of new evidence, innovation and practice. A draft learning agenda, findings from the Fund Progress to Outcomes Report using the "strength of evidence tool" will provide the basis for increasing the transparency, reliability and quality of evidence used.
- The Fund Partnership Group (FPG) has been established as an important governance mechanism. Processes and systems required for the FPG to support Fund outcomes are evolving and will be strengthened through partnership monitoring.

The Fund Progress to Outcomes Report was not available to stakeholders during the Review. As they did not have access to necessary information they could not provide useful comment on Fund wide progress. Most CSO's and RO's were confident of their work in different country contexts and individual project progress was satisfactory but most considered that more strategic information from the FC was needed to inform them on Fund progress towards End of Program Outcomes.

The March 2020 Fund Progress to Outcomes report is a good document and provides relevant Fund wide reporting (based on end of 2019 reports), evidence on progress from the M&E system and good analysis of issues affecting progress. A challenge for the FC and DFAT is to facilitate sharing of Fund wide information with the FPG, CSO's and RO's to improve stakeholder awareness of overall progress.

Design of the Fund set out to influence wider WASH policy and practice through strengthened use of new evidence, innovation, and practice. The FC has delivered several

learning events including the Inception Workshop in March 2018, a global learning event with a GSI and K&L focus in March 2019, contribution to Stockholm Water Week in August 2019, a Post Stockholm learning event for Fund Stakeholders in October 2019 and a South Asia Regional Learning event with a System Strengthening focus in December 2019. Participation in Water Week is an example of the Fund reaching out to other CSO's, researchers and global WASH sector actors. The FC has developed a TOR for the Fund Learning Agenda and is implementing The Hub as the Fund intranet platform.

4.2. Efficiency

Program Governance and Efficiency

The review found there was an overall positive impression of Fund governance, management, and implementation arrangements among the participating CSO's and RO's. CSO's and RO's interviewed responded with a high level of agreement that Fund implementation arrangements are working well. The FC is resourced with appropriate management and specialist staff and are progressing GSI and other specialist issues. Fund management operates flexibly and the Fund Manager is respected and responsive to stakeholder issues.

Fund governance arrangements are seen as effective and strengthened by the partnership approach taken by the FC and DFAT working collaboratively with the FPG focal points. The FPG is providing a mechanism for stakeholder voices to be heard by DFAT and the FC and the participatory approach taken in development of the Knowledge and Learning (K&L) agenda is valued.

Termination of two CSO grants (Philippines in March 2019 and Myanmar in January 2020) due to implementation difficulties is evidence of Fund governance and management systems working effectively. In those cases the CSO, DFAT and FC worked collaboratively on identified problems and agreed they could not be resolved to allow the grants to proceed satisfactorily in the Fund timeframe. The FC was able to take appropriate management action including requesting completion by the CSO of K&L deliverables and a termination report that could provide a foundation for future activity and cancelling the grant agreements.

Stakeholder interviews indicated several issues had impacted on implementation of the Fund. Issues included limitations in management resources leading (in some cases) to slow decision making on change, staffing and recruitment delays in key areas of M&E and K&L, delays in actioning agreed K&L themes, changes to report and M&E formats, unmet demand by several CSO's to engage with Fund specialists on WASH and Systems Strengthening and a Fund approach to public diplomacy is not fully developed.

Delays in implementation of K&L activity supporting agreed themes had a significant impact on progress towards End of Program Outcome 4. These delays impeded development of CSO learning to close the loop with improvements in project implementation and slowed transformation of the FPG from an operational advisory group to a strategic advisory one.

Several organisations noted that the FC had shown flexibility in changing management requirements during implementation but observed some reporting requirements were still too detailed and reporting formats could be more strategic. The level of detail required for operational changes provided CSO's and RO's with a relatively narrow window for

adjustment of budget line items compared to other projects they manage. Both issues reduced CSO and RO flexibility and timeliness of adaptive management processes. CSO's and RO's understand the need for FC fiscal and risk management actions and achieving performance against Fund outcomes. Within allowable limits there is an opportunity to reduce time spent on some administrative tasks. Decisions on how best to manage changes in activity and budget lines will have to meet FC corporate risk management requirements and their contractual obligations to DFAT for effective fiscal and risk management.

DFAT and the FC are acting to provide additional resourcing in identified management and specialist areas. Additional FC resources will improve operational management responses to CSO and RO issues. These resources are particularly needed to manage activity during the COVID-19 period and will allow more space for strategic management and working with the FPG.

Recommendation 1: The FC should engage with the FPG and DFAT on management approvals to determine if CSO's and RO's can be given more flexibility to take adaptive management action. Any allowed changes in activity management and budget line variations would have to meet the FC corporate requirements and DFAT contractual reporting and risk management obligations.

Fund Transaction Costs

The review found that Fund transaction costs, including the 6 monthly reporting cycle, were accepted by all CSO's and RO's interviewed as being appropriate. CSO's consider the design and planning process of the Fund had generally allowed them to plan and budget resources needed for grant management and reporting. RO's were initially not involved in the FPG and appreciated their inclusion but had not budgeted for their level of involvement. They considered that the FPG was valuable for the Fund and contributed the necessary resources to make it work effectively. CSO managers involved as focal points also reported that the FPG had taken more of their time than anticipated.

Several CSO's reported that changes in reporting and M&E formats, some of which came at the last minute, had an impact on their efficiency and increased transaction costs at CSO head office and country offices. The FC recognised it was an issue, but changes were asked for if considered essential to improve reporting and accountability.

The review found the Water for Women FC mechanism has shifted DFAT's role in project management (when compared to the CS WASH Fund) away from detailed grant management to a more constructive and strategic role. Management arrangements allowed greater opportunity for the Water Section to engage strategically with sector stakeholders and support public diplomacy work and events i.e. World Water Day.

Management actions already being taken by DFAT and the FC include allocation of additional resources, with additional time allocated for a Deputy Fund Manager. This additional resource will allow the FC to respond more quickly on CSO and RO issues and will improve engagement with Fund stakeholders, including the FPG.

Scope and Budget

The review found overall scope of the program and budget strongly supports the Fund Theory of Change and is recognised by CSO's and RO's as appropriate. The broad scope strongly supports Fund aims to facilitate a range of development responses to sector challenges. Fund activity provides for a diverse range of development responses to meet the Goal of "Improved health, gender equality and wellbeing of Asian and Pacific communities through inclusive, sustainable WASH" to deliver planned outcomes. The scope of the Fund has allowed DFAT to take risks in innovating to achieve transformational sector change and enabled CSO's and RO's to work across a wide range of geographic and sector contexts.

Strengths of the Fund were in supporting a shift in Australia's aid investment through CSO's and RO's to take a more transformative and innovative approach. These include the strengthened GSI focus in CSO and RO WASH projects, improving sustainability of WASH systems by adopting a system strengthening approach and support for use of evidence-based knowledge and innovation in implementing WASH activity. The WFW Theory of Change responds to the contemporary development challenge of achieving universal access under the 2030 Agenda.

Aiming to deliver end of program outcomes through the Fund is seen as a contemporary approach in aligning a WASH program with aims of increased equity of access and systems strengthening for sustainability.

While the scope of the Fund supports a range of projects responding to development challenges at sector and national levels, Fund stakeholders identified there is a resource challenge to balance FC specialist support to all the outcomes of equity, access and systems strengthening.

Activity Implementation

The review found that Fund activity planning and approval processes are highly transparent and FC management systems were accepted as generally efficient and effective. FC systems have been responsive in considering DFAT and implementing partner requirements. Development of WASH activity from concept to implementation through a FC managed grant mechanism has worked well for DFAT, CSO's and RO's. The inception workshop allowed development of CSO designs which pushed their initial aims in particular to achieve innovation in GSI activity. Fund partners feel trusted and one CSO commented that implementation of activity under the Fund compares well with other donor processes.

CSO's identified several management issues have impacted on operational efficiency and their ability to manage change in dynamic settings. Issues significant enough to raise as areas for improvement included timeliness of decision making, reporting requirements that are more detailed than necessary for effective management and limitations on flexibility to manage adaptive responses.

Grant management by the FC allowed DFAT staff to take a more strategic approach in building CSO and RO relationships and allowed space to focus on policy and public diplomacy.

The Fund delivered several learning events between March 2018 and December 2019 including an inception workshop and global and regional learning events. Outside of the learning events this review found the Fund has been slow to develop an effective K&L strategy and actions that contributes to innovation and good practice in implementation. A comprehensive list of knowledge themes agreed at the March 2019 learning event in Bangkok was not acted on for another 6-months. A representative learning group has since been formed and was still working in July 2020 to develop a workplan. No report has been delivered on the December 2019 South Asia Regional Learning event which had a focus on System Strengthening. While COVID-19 has impacted the Fund, the review found both these issues were indicative of a lag in implementation of the K&L agenda.

Recommendation 2: Fund partners should finalise a K&L workplan and budget. This should provide adequate resources to complement FC led K&L activity with support for collaborative learning activity. CSO's and RO's identified as innovative and utilising best practice can share their knowledge and expertise across the Fund. COVID-19 travel restrictions will impact on delivery of a collaborative learning model but with new technology, including video conferencing and webinars, Fund Partners can address gaps in WASH systems strengthening and WASH access (hygiene behaviour change and disability inclusion).

Fund Partnership Group

The Fund design included provision for a Fund Advisory Group, known as the Fund Partnership Group (FPG). On commencement of implementation the FC team and DFAT worked with CSO's to develop a broader partnership model which included RO's and adopted 8 Principles of Partnership. The Partnership Specialist introduced a Partnership Health Check Tool and has worked with the FPG to adopt a model with rotating focal points to assure diversity in the representative group.

Early focus of the FPG has not been on strategic issues. The review found that necessary time was spent by the FPG in working with the FC on developing partnership principles and resolving operational issues including reporting requirements, application of due diligence requirements to ANCP accredited CSO's and resolving other key issues. Taking 1-2 years for a partnership group to become effective is not unusual including to resolve what partners wanted from the FPG.

The FC Partnership Specialist undertook a Partnership Health Check in June 2020 to allow reflection on progress of the FPG as an enabler of a partnership approach. It found that the FPG provided a forum for collective decision making and priority setting and enabled engagement with DFAT and the FC on progress, risk and identified areas for improvement. The Health Check also found that an early focus on operational issues was necessary, but this phase was too long, and work was required to enable the FPG to be more strategic.

The review found while the FPG was developing a more strategic outlook, the COVID-19 pivot accelerated a shift to a Fund wide forum capable of advising on strategic issues. Collaboration by CSO's and RO's within the Fund was enabled by the FPG and allowed development of a quick and responsive strategy for the COVID-19 pivot. The COVID-19 pivot is a good example of the FPG working strategically as intended.

Several issues were identified in this review and the Partnership Health Check as adversely impacting on effectiveness and needed development. Action is required on developing better links with M&E systems, research and knowledge and learning program. Access to better information would enable the FPG to take a fund wide view and allow it to advise on strategy. Two examples illustrate the need for better information flow to the FPG (i) The February 2020 Progress to Outcomes Report was not available to the FPG until early July 2020 and (ii) no report is available on the Systems Strengthening learning event held in South Asia during December 2019. While there are reasons for the time taken to issue the progress report and activity report on the learning event including quality control, staff changes, DFAT review, social distancing and diversion of resources to the COVID-19 pivot it is clear that the FPG requires better access to current information.

The Fund design anticipated sharing GSI and WASH evidence from CSO practice and RO research with other CSO's through the Fund K&L. Shared learning and experience through an operational learning facility has clearly not been effectively operationalised due to budget uncertainty. The Fund Manager advised the review there is more certainty on budget and that collaborative learning between CSO's and RO's, with a focus on systems strengthening and WASH Access, will be actioned by the Fund.

Governance

Fund governance arrangements were generally seen by stakeholders as very satisfactory. Fund reporting at 6-month intervals allows for regular assessment or progress by the FC and regular project level consultation with CSO's and RO's, Fund Manager and Specialist advisors. Where necessary requests are made to CSO's and RO's to respond with performance improvement plans. DFAT and FC involvement in the FPG allow CSO's and RO's opportunity to respond to critical issues and appropriately manage risk.

The effective COVID-19 Pivot by the Fund provides evidence of well-functioning Fund governance. The pivot was developed with the FPG considering DFAT policy advice, DFAT and FC assessment, including specialist advice, and input from CSO and RO pivots. The FPG focal points worked with the FC to develop guidance to CSO's and RO's to enable them to submit appropriate technical and financial responses.

A risk to the effectiveness of the FPG is limited availability of current M&E and Fund wide analysis. As outlined in Recommendation 2 the FC should strengthen its efforts and direct resources to improving the flow of information to the FPG.

Comment made was that the FC must carefully manage situations where Fund stakeholders directly engage with DFAT on policy and country sector issues. WFW is an important

program for those organisations involved but does not limit their independent role in policy advocacy and promotion of technical solutions in the WASH Sector.

Recommendation 3: The FC should strengthen efforts and direct resources to improve the flow of information to the FPG as outlined in the Learning Advisory Group TOR. This will allow the FPG to work more effectively as a strategic advisory mechanism. Actions will require allocation of FC management and specialist resources and facilitating early issue of documents. The FC should explore how The Hub can be used to improve flow of K&L information from learning events and how CSO's and RO's can share stories of transformation and relevant information and learnings from projects.

4.3. Effectiveness

Factors affecting Fund performance

The Fund progress report and CSO and RO interviews for the review found a number of factors affecting Fund performance. Issues identified as areas that require further investigation by the FC Team include:

- Low rates of progress in hygiene promotion and behaviour change,
- M&E data indicates that despite a focus on inclusive WASH activity it is only benefitting very low numbers of people with a disability,
- Increased effectiveness of access to WASH services and strengthened social inclusion.

Low AUD to USD exchange rates has potential to affect project delivery and in the longer term will impact Fund performance. CSO's and RO's will review the impacts of currency exchange losses on their planned activity for review by the FC during the annual budget planning process.

Local operational issues impacted projects in different ways. CSO's and RO's reported that time for Government approvals varied for each project. Each project can only proceed by working within the political economy and conditions of the local WASH Sector. Several CSO's advised that the Fund partnership principles enabled them to take a more collaborative approach in dealing with local government partners. Time was needed for recruitment and training of local staff and to manage subsequent staff changes.

Changes to Fund reporting, M&E and financial formats was a common cause of concern for Fund stakeholders that led to inefficiency through rework and time needed to collect additional information to inform issues.

In several countries CSO's and RO's are working to achieve change in the Last Mile populations. Target communities are in more difficult to reach locations and their work is with harder to influence market segments.

A small number of CSO's required significant FC management resources to resolve design and implementation issues. One project was terminated but only after extensive support was provided by the FC and DFAT to resolve difficulties and consultation with the CSO.

The review found most CSO's and RO's considered implementation of Fund wide M&E and K&L has been slow to fully develop. The main cause was seen as key staff changes in the FC Team and subsequent time needed for recruitment and then the COVID-19 pivot.

A challenge for the Fund is to facilitate sharing of Fund wide information to improve stakeholder awareness of overall progress. Learning and adapting is critical for success of the Fund in achieving planned outcomes. CSO's and RO's indicated the main K&L themes were agreed at the Bangkok planning meeting in March 2019 but (because of staff changes) the FC made little progress on enabling critical work for the next 6 months. The FC is now working with a representative learning advisory group and developing a workplan to fit with the budget. COVID-19 travel restrictions will increase the impact of delays to CSO and RO projects. The FC has developed the TOR for a Fund Learning Agenda and implemented The Hub as a Fund intranet platform. However, the Fund is 2 years into implementation and the K&L workplan is still being finalised which is impacting on the Fund. There is a risk that learnings will come too late to benefit CSO's during the life of the Fund. Delays in finalising and implementing the K&L component is a concern as the Fund design aimed to influence CSO's, RO's and WASH Sector actors with new research, innovation and sharing of good practice during implementation.

COVID-19 – Factors affecting performance

COVID-19 has restricted travel of FC, CSO and RO teams impacting on local management, M&E, data collection, household surveys, fieldwork, triggering and community meetings. Country situations vary widely i.e. Vietnam locked down early, while Bhutan was not subject to many restrictions and has managed well, Nepal projects were severely impacted due to return of large numbers of workers from India. While some countries in South-East Asia are starting to wind back their restrictions, other countries are managing a resurgence of cases and many communities are reluctant to accept field visits from outside for fear of them introducing the virus.

System strengthening work has impacted on availability of government partners as their priority is implementation of government COVID-19 activity in line with national policy and local government priorities.

Most international CSO Staff relocated to their countries of origin and are working from home. On a positive note this has allowed local CSO and RO staff to successfully take on more management responsibility. FC and DFAT staff working from home has restricted chances for interaction with Fund management and specialist advisers but the COVID-19 response has seen a significant increase in communication with stakeholders and the frequency of FPG meetings.

Stakeholders have all responded well to the challenges of working remotely. Adopting use of technology including video conferencing, telephone communication and use of online team management tools. FC, CSO and RO staff have been able to prepare reports, undertake annual planning and budget planning processes and the FC is able to communicate regularly with DFAT on management issues.

A major risk to achieving the Fund outcomes are longer-term impacts on household incomes and government budgets and disruption of face to face learning events. Financial risks will have a significant impact on achievement of Fund outcomes and stakeholders will need to further explore use of digital/virtual platforms to progress the K&L agenda.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The overall finding of the review was that the M&E system is working and is helpful for project management and reporting. The FC has done a good job on analysis of information and sharing this with stakeholders. But several CSO's and RO's consider the Fund has been slow to develop a final M&E format and ongoing changes to reporting formats have not been managed efficiently. M&E of GSI issues has been strong but M&E was less effective in capturing key issues affecting Systems Strengthening and WASH access

The review found the WFW Progress to Outcomes Report, February 2020 and Supplementary Report, March 2020 provided systematic reporting on Fund progress. Reports include Fund wide and project reporting of progress against key outcomes, analysis of performance against relevant indicators, financial performance, and risk assessment. The report contains useful analysis by FC specialists with recommendations for further analysis or actions. While good quality, the progress report was not available to stakeholders until July 2020 which reduces its value in providing fund wide information informing the FPG on strategic issues.

Overall view of CSO's was that M&E information is useful but could be more effective if it provided more relevant and recent information to stakeholders and was better linked to K&L. The FC has developed a framework for M&E and K&L working together which proposes to close the loop from evidence to practice, influencing decision making.

Some CSO's and RO's noted that the FC requested further details after M&E reports were submitted which had limited value to fund wide assessments or to capture key management issues.

The progress report has observed that the current M&E is not collecting age disaggregated data to assess key issues relating to Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) approaches and men's roles in household hygiene.

Recommendation 4: The FC should implement actions to better link M&E and K&L within the Fund. This can involve The Hub collecting and sharing transformational stories on projects and research. Sharing experiences closes the loop between evidence and practice, contributes to learning and exchange and supports the strategic advisory role of the FPG.

Sustainability

The FC informed the review that K&L within the Fund takes a strength-based approach to CSO's and RO's by harnessing their experience through sharing knowledge. Learning and adapting is critical for success of the Fund achieving planned outcomes but 2 years into implementation the K&L workplan is still being finalised with a risk that learnings will come too late to benefit CSO's and RO's during the life of the Fund. Innovation and Impact grants,

collaborative learning activity and lessons from the COVID-19 pivot will impact on what the Fund looks like at the end of the program.

CSO's and RO's felt that sustainability is not discussed enough within the Fund. Knowledge sharing on what works is important for WASH sustainability. Sharing stories on market-based approaches, systems strengthening and WASH technical issues is seen as critical for success in strengthening sustainability. The FC advised it is prioritising action on finalising the K&L workplan and support for collaborative learning and will progress innovation and impact grants.

The FC progress report states, "The Fund emphasis on systems strengthening underpins sustainability of outcomes" and recommends that CSO's be encouraged to report more on sustainability risks, particularly related to WASH infrastructure.

The Fund management model provides DFAT with time to focus strategically on K&L, fund wide results, policy and informing Posts on public diplomacy for campaigns on international days including for Health, GSI, Water, Sanitation and links to related issues like nutrition and cities.

There has been slow progress by Fund projects in changing hygiene behaviours. It is uncertain if it is due to implementation methodology or if M&E reports are not collecting the necessary data on achievements. The FC is investigating the issue to determine the effectiveness of CSO approaches on hygiene or if improvements are needed for data collection in the M&E system, including use of improved reporting templates with prompts.

Systems Strengthening

The Progress Report details that CSO's are engaging with rights holder organisations (especially disabled peoples organisations) and recommends further analysis of the different strategies used by CSO's and how they contribute to achievement of Fund outcomes.

Learning events should encourage collaborative learning with CSO's and RO's sharing their knowledge and lessons learned. This should be inclusive of Water and WASH sector organisations not involved in the Fund, including other DFAT partners, and building relationships across at country level with Fund CSO's, RO's, and WASH Clusters.

GSI has been integrated into the SWA building blocks and engagement with rights holder organisations to support interaction with government is central to the approach taken by the Fund. Work is happening on supporting rights holder organisations to be more effective i.e. SNV is working with Rights Holder Organisations to prepare them to work with governments.

Innovation, impact maximisation grants, collaborative learning activity and K&L from the COVID-19 pivot will impact on what the Fund looks like at the end of the program. K&L among Fund stakeholders is central to improving systems strengthening approaches.

Balance in Fund Activity

There are some tensions in getting a balance between GSI, Systems Strengthening and WASH access. The strong GSI focus in the design is appropriate and has successfully challenged accepted approaches in CSO and RO projects.

Significant resources have been provided by the FC to advance the GSI focus in implementation. This approach has delivered on the intermediate outcome of greater integration of GSI inclusive approaches. The review found that CSO's are also looking for strengthened collaborative learning and inputs from FC specialist inputs to shift CSO approaches on WASH access and systems strengthening including defining appropriate standards for safely managed services and progressing CSO delivery of successful hygiene behaviour change programs.

Recommendation 5: Action is required by Fund partners to progress implementation of a collaborative learning facility which can provide resources and facilitate knowledge sharing for systems strengthening and WASH access. The Fund has provision for collaborative learning to utilise CSO and RO strengths through cross learning and technical support.

4.4. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

The Review strongly agreed with findings of the progress report that all CSO's are engaging with internal norms as a step towards broader GSI transformation. Relevant examples of change included IRC working with Sexual and Gender Minorities (SGM) in Pakistan and World Vision's engagement of people with a disability in baseline studies in Vanuatu.

Fund partners are implementing activities which promotes women's leadership and empowerment through WASH, including engagement with women's rights holder organisations (RHOs). Utilisation of the Gender Equality Measurement Tool (ISF/UTS) will help the Fund capture key results in integration of GSI approaches in implementation.

Enthusiasm was expressed by CSO's and RO's on efforts in adopting innovative GSI approaches in different country contexts. They reported using the gender self-assessment tool to assess their strengths and weaknesses and found it was useful in guiding their GSI approaches. Shared stories of transformative approaches have reportedly influenced internal change by CSO staff and government partners.

“The Fund has achieved 24% of the planned total beneficiaries for water sanitation and hygiene. Most of the beneficiary numbers reported are in South-East Asia (Cambodia and Indonesia) and shows greater progress in water and sanitation and **low progress of 4% for hygiene**”. The progress report showed a low proportion of people with a disability in the beneficiary numbers (less than 1%) which is lower than expected numbers in comparison to targets and despite the Funds emphasis on disability. FC specialists in GSI, WASH and K&L will work with the FPG and CSO's to analyse issues and identify actions.

Recommendation 6: The Fund should work with CSO's to understand why beneficiary numbers are so low for people with a disability and work with the FPG on strategies to improve results over the remaining life of the Fund.

While it is too early to assess if the Fund is achieving transformational equity the intermediate results and stories from projects are strong. The Fund has pushed CSO and RO boundaries to include innovative GSI approaches in their projects. The FC provides good resources with specialist GSI advice to CSO's and RO's during implementation and delivered learning opportunities which has contributed to highly satisfactory Fund wide performance on GSI.

The FC has identified issues for GSI improvement including collection of age disaggregated gender data to assess MHM approaches, determining men's care roles in households, defining norms and areas for change needs further work to define areas of resistance, assessing women's leadership and empowerment and there is a need to research intra household access to sanitation. Role of RHOs working with government stakeholders is critical to achieving transformational change and would benefit from research.

Actions on K&L in the Fund should harness collaborative learning as an opportunity to leverage best practice and knowledge of CSO and RO specialists. Collaborative learning shared through Fund K&L mechanisms and then considered by the FPG as strategic could make a significant contribution to achieving Fund outcomes on equitable access.

The GSI focus of the Fund has been effective in nudging CSO's and government on gender equality and improved focus on working with SGM. There has been less success in GSI

efforts reaching people living with a disability and the wider lesbian, gay, bisexual and intersex community.

Recommendation 7: This review was undertaken without the inclusion of sector specialists, including gender and social inclusion, in the review Team due to COVID-19 restrictions. A priority for DFAT is to follow up with in depth analysis by GSI specialists (gender, disability and SGM) to further assess how the Fund is progressing on GSI transformation and how M&E systems can better measure fund wide progress.

4.5. Effectiveness of Fund COVID-19 Response

DFAT, the FC and the FPG worked well as a partnership to develop an effective COVID-19 pivot for Fund activity. There is a good Fund wide story on stakeholders reaching quick agreement on Fund principles for the pivot and how it balanced an emergency response with good development practice.

Effective cooperation of Fund partners through the FPG facilitated a participatory approach to the COVID-19 pivot. The review found that the partnership approach disrupted the usual change management process of the Fund in a positive way and enabled quick action to direct resources to meet local COVID-19 challenges.

The higher profile of hygiene in the COVID-19 pivot has been positive in supporting the Fund approach to strengthening GSI. Long held views on the roles of men and women in hygiene are being challenged in the pivot and importance of changing men's role in hygiene promotion and caregiving which is often overlooked is recognised as critical to success.

COVID-19 funding proposals for additional Funds include MHM as central to approaches and included a greater focus on WASH in health facilities and hygiene promotion.

Several CSO's stated that clear direction from DFAT and FC with the speed of the Fund pivot was a standout performance compared to actions by other aid programs. The Fund pivot was seen to be about right, it facilitated local action and allowed for innovation but was not too disruptive to WFW program implementation.

Alignment with Partnership for Recovery

WASH is an effective Health response which contributes to Health Security, Stability and Resilience actions under the Partnership for Recovery strategy. Handwashing campaigns have increased activity through the COVID-19 pivot with hygiene promotion and greater attention given to WASH in health care facilities. WASH systems strengthening benefits health systems and improved governance, preparedness for pandemics, promotes good hygiene behaviours that are essential for infectious disease response and creates local employment opportunities in communities. Increasing WASH access and strengthening WASH sector systems makes a wider contribution to national health outcomes and improving stability through improved sector governance.

Implementation of WASH service delivery through existing CSO partners has the benefit of short lead times to become effective. Australia's efforts in hygiene promotion under the Fund should be highlighted through aid program public diplomacy and can be promoted through local DFAT Posts.

One CSO noted that a WASH response to COVID-19 is a no regrets investment that also contributed to economic recovery by supporting the domestic private sector in building WASH infrastructure. Support for local WASH activity can contribute to economic recovery through local employment creation and support for the viability of local supply chains including retail product outlets for basic hygiene materials, plumbing and other hardware. Implementation of WASH service delivery through existing CSO partners also has the benefit of short lead times to become effective.

Long Term Impacts of COVID-19 on the Fund

The Fund should go back to the Theory of Change to assess if adjustments might be required. The COVID-19 pivot presents an opportunity to use evidence and share knowledge on innovative WASH practices in a pandemic response. This knowledge will be relevant for all WASH programs.

COVID-19 responses over the remaining 2-year period of the Fund will be different to actions supported under the short-term pivot. This could include a long-term shift of activity under WFW to align with the 2030 Agenda with an emphasis on leaving no one behind and reaching the most vulnerable.

The COVID-19 pandemic will increase relevance and visibility of WASH as a health security response. WASH contributes to health security and supports improved community resilience. WASH programs in the pandemic response need to emphasise good hygiene behaviours. Australia's efforts in hygiene promotion should be highlighted through aid program public diplomacy and promoted through local DFAT Posts and events including Water and WASH Futures Conference, Stockholm Water Week and other events.

Fund K&L activity and public diplomacy should use the COVID-19 response to highlight the value of WASH as critical to success of hygiene promotion during pandemics which also prevents the spread of other water borne infectious diseases.

It is expected there will be a long-term impact on livelihoods and household incomes which will impact on implementation and sustainability of community managed and institutional WASH systems. The impact of COVID-19 will be made worse in some countries by drought and long-term decline in agricultural productivity.

The Fund aligns well with DFAT policy on COVID-19 and further responses by Fund partners would not require a major shift in types of activity or the Theory of Change.

Recommendation 8: DFAT should consider managing the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 through a 2-3 year extension of the Water for Women Fund with a strengthened alignment to the Partnerships for Recovery strategy. Delivery of a new WASH program will take several years to progress from concept to implementation and in a post COVID-19 period new project commencement will be higher risk, due to travel and distancing restrictions and possible new waves of infection. DFAT support for the WASH sector over the next 3-5 years would be an effective development response in support of Partnerships for Recovery. This approach would harness existing partnerships, utilise proven and effective management and grant arrangements, harness knowledge and learning and research findings from the Fund and deliver early results compared to a new investment program. Any project extension will require a review and necessary adjustment of the designs Theory of Change and be subject to satisfactory performance of the FC, CSO and RO's and continued alignment with DFAT policy and budget limitations.

REFERENCES

- GHD The Water for Women Fund - Progress to Outcomes Report 2019, February 2020
- GHD Water for Women Fund -Supplementary Fund Coordinator Progress Report, March 2020
- DFAT Partnerships for Recovery -Australia's COVID-19 Development Response
- DFAT Water for Women Investment Design Document, July 2017
- GHD Water for Women website : <https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/index.aspx>

Appendix A – Fund Organisations

Civil Society Organisation	Locations
Centre For Advocacy and Research	India
Habitat For Humanity	Fiji
International Development Enterprises (iDE)	Cambodia
International Rescue Committee	Pakistan
Plan International Australia	Indonesia, Solomon Islands
SNV Netherlands Development Organisation	Laos PDR, Bhutan, Nepal
Thrive Networks	Cambodia, Vietnam
WaterAid	Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste
World Vision Australia	Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu
Research Organisation	Locations
Type 1 Research	
The International Water Centre and Griffith University	Solomon Islands, Indonesia, Fiji
The Institute For Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney.	Indonesia, Vanuatu
The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Cambodia, Bangladesh
Monash University	Indonesia, Fiji
Type 2 Research	
The Institute For Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney.	Bangladesh, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Nepal
The International Water Centre and Griffith University	Solomon Islands, Fiji,
The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Cambodia
International Water Management Institute	Nepal

Appendix B: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

Independent Review of Progress of Water for Women Fund and COVID-19 Response

Background

The Water for Women Fund (the 'Fund') is the Australian Government's flagship \$110.6 million (2018-2022) water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) program. It was announced by the Prime Minister of Australia in September 2016 at the High Level Panel on Water (HLPW). The announcement recognised the critical role that improvements to WASH plays to address poverty and contribute to economic and human development. The Fund responds to increasing evidence that gendered approaches to WASH programming contribute to more effective and sustainable WASH outcomes, as well as offer an entry point to improve gender equality and women's well-being, voice, leadership and economic empowerment. The use of explicit gender and socially inclusive approaches in the Australian Government's commitment to this Fund is regarded globally and in the WASH sector as progressive, innovative and an important contribution to economic and social development in the region.

The Fund is managed by DFAT as part of the aid program and GHD Pty Ltd is contracted to run Fund coordination. It will improve access to safe and affordable water and improve sanitation and hygiene practices for an estimated 2.9 million people in the Indo-Pacific region. Gender equality and social inclusion are a core focus. Under the Fund, 9 civil society organisations are delivering 18 projects across 15 countries in the Indo-Pacific. The Fund includes \$10 million for WASH research through a competitive grants process and is supporting 5 research organisations to deliver 11 research projects (see [Water for Women Fund CSO Projects](#) and [Water for Women Fund Research Projects](#)).

Since April 2020, the Fund has largely pivoted its CSO projects towards COVID19 with approval to utilise up to \$100,000 of existing funding for each project. Subsequently on 18 May 2020, the Minister for Foreign Affairs approved additional COVID19 funding of about \$3 million. These additional funds are to be disbursed by the end of the 2019-20 financial year. Fund management is now negotiating with CSOs, the work to be done over the next 6 months, using these additional funds.

Intermediate and End of program outcomes

The **goal** of the Fund is '**Improved health, gender equality and well-being of Asian and Pacific communities through inclusive, sustainable WASH**'. Contributions will be made to the goal through four **end of program outcomes**:

5. Strengthened national and subnational WASH sector systems with greater emphasis on gender, social inclusion, safely managed WASH and water security
6. Increased equitable, universal access to and use of sustainable WASH services, particularly for marginalised communities and community members
7. Strengthened gender equality and social inclusion in households, communities and institutions

8. Strengthened use of new evidence, innovation and practice in sustainable gender and inclusive WASH by other CSOs, national and international WASH sector actors

Intermediate outcomes, which are expected to contribute to the above Fund outcomes are:

1. Increased capacity and agency of governments, private sector, community-based organisations and communities, in planning, investing and delivering sustainable, inclusive WASH services
2. Greater integration of gender and socially inclusive approaches by governments, private sector, community-based organisations and communities
3. Documentation and sharing of gender and socially inclusive evidence and effective practices with other CSOs, national and international sector actors

More details on the Fund

A key delivery approach is the promotion of reflective, collaborative and learning-oriented effort, through partnerships and other alliances, both among Fund-supported CSOs and between CSOs, private sector and government agencies as well as Australian and international research teams. This will be largely achieved through the Knowledge and Learning (K&L) component to promote cross-CSO learning and exchange knowledge. CSOs will also be encouraged to provide peer support to each other, including during the design process (peer appraisals) and implementation.

The Fund K&L component will contribute quality of CSO implementation and evidence-based practice as well as external profile and public diplomacy opportunities, and will be led by a dedicated team member: the FC Knowledge and Learning Manager (KALM). The component includes regional learning events, Innovation and Impact grants (I&I grants) to promote innovation in CSO implementation, a website and associated communications. This K&L component will include both an internal focus (to facilitate uptake and learning by Fund CSOs), as well as an external focus, to share Fund-generated evidence, practice and knowledge to a wider audience of CSOs and national and international WASH stakeholders.

The Research Component comprises grants (WASH Research Awards) to research organisations. These grants include two types, both of which would use gender and inclusive processes: (i) broader, longer-term WASH research addressing key knowledge gaps in Asian and Pacific regions; and (ii) research closely linked to CSO implementation in the Fund. Grants are managed by the FC with strategic oversight through a Research Steering Group, and contribute to the wider K&L activities of the Fund.

Fund Coordinator

Grant management and overall Fund Management and administration of the Fund is undertaken by GHD Australia Pty Ltd. The contracted specialist program management team, is described as the 'Fund Coordinator'. The FC is responsible for developing and coordinating Fund-wide processes and systems to maximise quality, support knowledge and learning across the Fund (on WASH, gender and inclusive approaches in WASH and on gender transformative and social inclusion impacts of the Fund beyond WASH), support public diplomacy efforts and to ensure accountability and compliance with DFAT requirements.

To do this, the FC provides various functions. These include: monitoring and evaluation (M&E) services to synthesise information generated by CSOs for overall Fund-level reporting and learning; technical skills in GESI and WASH; secretariat support for the FSG; leadership of a K&L component; public diplomacy and external communications; and grant management for CSOs and research organisations

Fund Governance and Partnership

The Fund is governed through a Fund Partnership Group (FPG) that meets at least twice a year with one of those being a face-to-face meeting. In practice, FPG meetings have been more often in particular due to the COVID19 response. This partnership approach is a key aspect of the Fund and is likely to continue to evolve throughout the Fund timeline.

FPG members initially comprised DFAT, FC and CSO representatives. In late 2019, research organisations receiving WASH Research Awards were invited and provided 2 representatives to the FPG.

A partnership broker is currently conducting a health check of the partnership arrangements and this model is likely to continue to be refined.

The FPG is not a key decision-making forum for the Fund, rather, it creates a space for consultation and consensus that helps set strategic direction.

Purpose and Objectives of the review

The primary audience of the review is DFAT. A secondary audience includes the FC and implementing partners. This review is an opportunity to make modifications to ensure the achievement of Fund objectives, to improve the communication of its work and results and to better understand the Fund's COVID19 responses.

A mid-term review involving in-country visits and an independent review team was originally planned for the third quarter of 2020, however, is not possible due to COVID19. Instead this will be conducted as a desk-based review with a narrower scope and by one consultant expert.

The purpose and objectives of this review are twofold as follow:

Purpose	Objectives
1. Review overall progress of the Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review implementation of the current Water for Women Fund program against the End of Program Outcomes as stated in the Water for Women Fund Design Document. • Identify critical issues in the program's implementation that could be addressed in the final 2 years (to December 2022) of the program. • Make recommendations on possible actions to improve Fund implementation.
2. Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a framework to assess Fund COVID19 responses, focusing on their effectiveness and

<p>COVID19 responses by the Fund</p>	<p>efficiency. This assessment will be largely qualitative but where possible, draw on quantitative data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply the assessment framework to draw conclusions on the effectiveness and efficiency of Fund COVID19 responses. Make recommendations for future preparedness including how to embed flexibility in future WASH programming.
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Proposed Review Questions

These proposed review questions will be refined and agreed with DFAT as preparation for the review.

Program Governance and Efficiency - Structures, processes and personnel

- Are the Water for Women governance, management and implementation arrangements fit for purpose / appropriate and appropriately resourced? What changes might increase the program’s effectiveness against objectives / outcomes?
- Are the transaction costs associated with the current implementation arrangements appropriate? How could management of the program be more effective and efficient?
- Is the Water for Women budget adequate to deliver the current outcomes of the program?
- Is the scope of the program too broad?
- Are processes of activity planning, priority setting and approval considered appropriate, clear and transparent by all stakeholders? Do they allow sufficient flexibility to support innovation and address emerging needs of DFAT, sector, partners etc?
- How effective has the FPG been to date in setting the strategic direction of the Fund? What improvements could be made to make the FPG more effective?
- Are program governance processes appropriate for overseeing the program, responding to lessons learned and managing risks?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Water for Women planning, management, implementation, monitoring, risk management and reporting processes? How could they be improved?

Effectiveness: Review of progress against end of program outcomes. Are we making the progress we expected at this point in time? To what extent is the Water for Women Fund on track to achieve its end of program outcomes by December 2022?

Taking into consideration the following questions:

- To what extent are outputs and intermediate outcomes being achieved as expected at this time? What is the current progress towards each of the four end of program outcomes?
- What are the factors (recent Covid19 factors considered separately) affecting performance?

- How have supply chain, travel and social distancing restrictions due to the Covid19 pandemic impacted on effective effectiveness?
- Is the M&E system being used to effectively measure in a timely manner, implementation progress, and progress towards meeting expected outcomes? What improvements are needed?
- Are monitoring and evaluation activities, processes and structures appropriate for a partnership of this type and size?
- What is the extent of the approach to delivering sustainable results? How can the approach to systems strengthening be improved?
- How well is the Fund achieving an appropriate balance between the different components of the program?

Gender Equity and Social Inclusion

- To date, how has the Fund furthered gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) including transformative equity?
- How can the approaches to GESI be improved? Identify the key areas of inquiry for a follow-up in-depth evaluation on GESI.
- To date, how has the Fund contributed to increased equitable access to, and use of, WASH services? How can this be improved?

Assessment of COVID19 Responses

- How well has the Fund pivoted to COVID19 in terms of timeliness and quality of agreed responses? What are the key factors that influenced this performance?
- Stability, Resilience and Prosperity are key development objectives in DFAT's post-COVID19 aid policy. To what extent are the Fund's COVID19 responses aligned to these objectives?
- What are the long term implications for the Fund due to the COVID19 pivot? What are the key adjustments needed to both remain true to the program design and continue to play a meaningful role in the post-COVID19 context?

Methodology for the Review:

The review is expected to commence in May 2020 and be completed by June 2020. **The allocated time is ten days in total.**

The review will be conducted by a WASH specialist who will conduct a desk review supplemented by consultations with DFAT, the FC and implementing partners.

Gerard Cheong, Assistant Director, Water Section) and Renee Paxton (Senior Policy Officer, Water Section) will lead engagement with the Review on DFAT's part.

The review questions will be addressed through a combination of program documentation review, key informant interviews. The review will proceed as per the following phases:

1. Inception

- **Inception briefing:** provided by DFAT WSH to the WASH Specialist to highlight the key priorities and expectations of the review and provide relevant documentation.

2. Planning

- Develop and finalise a **Review Plan**, articulating key evaluation questions, methodologies to collect data, a timeline and identification of key evaluation informants. The Review Plan should include a framework to assess Fund Covid19 responses with a focus on effectiveness and efficiency.

3. Data Collection

Document Review

A systematic document review of information and documentation related to the Fund will enable an assessment of country contexts, reported progress against planned activities, and reported constraints and achievements. Documents to be reviewed include:

Key Documents

- Water for Women Design Document
- Water for Women M&E Framework and related infographics
- Water for Women Knowledge and Learning Strategy and Learning Agenda
- Water for Women Towards Transformation Strategy (GSI strategy)
- Gender and Social Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool and Reports
- 6 monthly and annual Water for Women Progress Reports
- Field Monitoring Visit Reports
- DFAT Aid Quality Checks and Partner Performance Assessments
- COVID19 approved proposals for initial pivot and for new funding
- COVID19 response updates and initial reporting
- DFAT COVID19 policies and guidelines

Additional Documents as required

- Civil Society Organisation Partner Project Design Documents (PDDs)
- Research Project Designs / Plans
- CSO and Research organisation progress reports
- Knowledge products
- Knowledge and Learning Event Reports
- Outcomes of management meetings
- Outcomes of Fund Partnership Group Meetings
- Fund Partnership Group documents

The evaluation team may identify documents additional to those provided by DFAT for inclusion in the desktop review.

Interviews with key stakeholders

The Review team will undertake face-to-face and phone interviews with relevant stakeholders. These might include DFAT staff (both in Canberra and at Post), Water for Women FC team (GHD), relevant Water for Women consultants, and relevant CSO and Research Organisation partners etc. DFAT WSH will provide the evaluation team with the names, positions and contact details of all key stakeholders.

4. Analysis and Writing

Draft Report

Draft Review Report to be presented to DFAT for discussion and feedback. DFAT may elect to also share the draft report with the FC and the FPG for feedback.

Final Report

Final report to incorporate feedback received and a presentation of the main findings and recommendations to be given to DFAT Water Section. It should be around 30 pages plus annexes (A4, equivalent Times New Roman 12 point font). The report should have regard to the relevant quality requirements set out in the DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards.

The report will include a two page executive summary that provides highlights of findings and lists recommendations.

The report should satisfy the purpose and objectives of the review as explained in these Terms of Reference as well as provide analysis and recommendations consistent with the agreed review questions.

An annex should provide details of all consultations conducted during the review process and a list of all documents used to inform findings.

Key Selection Criteria:

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Specialist

<i>Required Experience</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experienced adviser with 10+ years' experience of review and evaluation of development assistance for water, sanitation and hygiene (for DFAT or other bilateral or multilateral aid organisations). 2. Extensive experience of 10+ years in designing and implementing water, sanitation and hygiene aid projects, preferably in Asia and / or the Pacific, as well as DFAT processes and aid program requirements.
<i>Required Skills and Qualifications</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Post graduate qualifications in water / water, sanitation and hygiene or equivalent area. 4. Strong people skills as demonstrated by successfully managing diverse teams to produce a timely and quality product that reflects the inputs from all members 5. Excellent interpersonal, cross-cultural, facilitation, representation, negotiation and written skills.

<p><i>Cultural/Language Requirements</i></p>	<p>6. Fluency in English and demonstrated ability to express verbally and in writing complex ideas in clear and simple language.</p> <p>7. A strong record in effectively consulting with diverse stakeholders, ideally in East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific, including senior government officials, NGO and community representatives, and DFAT (or equivalent) officers.</p>
<p><i>Desirable Experience</i></p>	<p>8. An understanding and relevant experience of assessing gender equality and social inclusion and equity in water, sanitation and hygiene policies and programs.</p>

Appendix C: Stakeholder engagement

DFAT	Contact	Position	Date of Interview
DFAT	Gerard Cheong	Assistant Director Water Section	1 July 2020
	Renee Paxton	Water Section	30 June 2020
Fund Coordinator	Contact	Position	Date of Interview
GHD	Alison Baker	Fund Manager	16 June 2020
	Stuart Raetz	M&E Manager	6 July 2020
	Matt Bond	WASH Specialist	19 June 2020
	Jose Mott Heather Brown	GESI Advisor	17 June 2020
	Phoebe Mack	Acting Knowledge and Learning Manager,	6 July 2020
	Kate Orr	Knowledge and Learning Manager	No interview
	Mia Cusack	Communications Lead	No interview
	Donna Leigh Holden	Partnership Specialist	25 June 2020
CSO	Contact	Position	Date of Interview
Centre for Advocacy and Research	Akhila Sivadas	Executive Director	15 June 2020
Centre for Advocacy and Research/RTI	Nutan Zarapkar Juhi Jain K Rajesh Anirban Chatterjee	Project Staff	15 June 2020
Habitat for Humanity	Christopher Govers	Head of International Programs	No interview
iDE	Greg Lestikow	iDE Global WASH Director	30 June 2020
IRC	David Clatworthy	Program Manager / Technical lead	16 June 2020
Plan	John Kelleher	WASH Senior Program Manager	18 June 2020
RTI	Nutan Zarapkar	Head - Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene	15 June 2020
SNV	Gabrielle Halcrow	Regional Programme Coordinator, Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All Asia	18 June 2020
Thrive	Lynn Foden	CD Vietnam and Regional Programme Director	25 June 2020
WaterAid	Tom Muller	Director of Policy and Programs, WaterAid Australia	26 June 2020
World Vision	Shiv Nair	Water for Women Program Manager	24 June 2020
World Vision	Chloe Morrison Relvie Poilapa Godfrey Bongomin Emmanuel Opoki Nancy Wobo Proshanto Roy	Project Staff	24 June 2020

	Muhammed Rahman Hasina Ferdows		
RO	Contact	Position	Date of Interview
ISF/UTS	Juliet Willetts	Research Director and Professor	18 June 2020
ISF/UTS	Melita Grant		18 June 2020
IWC	Regina Souter	WASH and IWM Specialist	29 June 2020
IWC	Bronwyn Powell		
Monash University	Becky Batagol	Associate Professor, Monash Sustainable Development Institute & Faculty of Law	No interview
IWMI	Manita Raut	Research Officer, International Water Management Institute (IWMI),	7 July 2020
IWMI	Alok Rajouria Manohara Khadka	Nepal Research Staff	7 July 2020

Appendix D: Review Plan

Purpose

This document outlines the plan for a review of Progress of Water For Women Fund and COVID19 Response by the Fund.

Consultations with stakeholders will occur in June 2020, they will be conducted by email, video communications or telephone. Face to face interviews and site visits are not possible due to COVID-19 social distancing restrictions.

Background

The Water for Women Fund (the 'Fund') is the Australian Government's flagship \$110.6 million (2018-2022) water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) program. The Fund recognises the critical role that improvements to WASH plays to address poverty and contribute to economic and human development. The Fund responds to increasing evidence that gendered approaches to WASH programming contribute to more effective and sustainable WASH outcomes, as well as offer an entry point to improve gender equality and women's well-being, voice, leadership and economic empowerment. The use of explicit gender and socially inclusive approaches in the Australian Government's commitment to this Fund is regarded globally and in the WASH sector as progressive, innovative and an important contribution to economic and social development in the region.

The Water For Women Fund

The Fund is managed by DFAT as part of the aid program and GHD Pty Ltd is contracted to provide Fund coordination. It will improve access to safe and affordable water and improve sanitation and hygiene practices for an estimated 2.9 million people in the Indo-Pacific region. Gender equality and social inclusion are a core focus. Under the Fund, 9 civil society organisations are delivering 18 projects across 15 countries in the Indo-Pacific. The Fund includes \$10 million for WASH research through a competitive grants process and is supporting 5 research organisations to deliver 11 research projects (see [Water for Women Fund CSO Projects](#) and [Water for Women Fund Research Projects](#)).

Since April 2020, the Fund has pivoted its CSO projects towards COVID19 with approval to utilise up to \$100,000 of existing funding for each project. Subsequently on 18 May 2020, the Minister for Foreign Affairs approved additional COVID19 funding of about \$3 million. These additional funds are to be disbursed by the end of the 2019-20 financial year. Fund management is now negotiating with CSOs, the work to be done over the next 6 months, using these additional funds.

The **goal** of the Fund is '**Improved health, gender equality and well-being of Asian and Pacific communities through inclusive, sustainable WASH**'. Contributions will be made to the goal through four **end of program outcomes**:

9. Strengthened national and subnational WASH sector systems with greater emphasis on gender, social inclusion, safely managed WASH and water security

10. Increased equitable, universal access to and use of sustainable WASH services, particularly for marginalised communities and community members
11. Strengthened gender equality and social inclusion in households, communities and institutions
12. Strengthened use of new evidence, innovation and practice in sustainable gender and inclusive WASH by other CSOs, national and international WASH sector actors

A key delivery approach is the promotion of reflective, collaborative and learning-oriented effort, through partnerships and other alliances, both among Fund-supported CSOs and between CSOs, private sector and government agencies as well as Australian and international research teams.

The Fund K&L component contributes to quality of CSO implementation and evidence-based practice as well as external profile and public diplomacy opportunities and led by the FC Knowledge and Learning Manager (KALM). The component includes regional learning events, Innovation and Impact grants (I&I grants) to promote innovation in CSO implementation, a website and associated communications. This K&L component will include both an internal focus (to facilitate uptake and learning by Fund CSOs), as well as an external focus, to share Fund-generated evidence, practice and knowledge to a wider audience of CSOs and national and international WASH stakeholders.

The Research Component comprises grants (WASH Research Awards) to research organisations. These grants include two types, both of which would use gender and inclusive processes: (i) broader, longer-term WASH research addressing key knowledge gaps in Asian and Pacific regions; and (ii) research closely linked to CSO implementation in the Fund. Grants are managed by the FC with strategic oversight through a Research Steering Group, and contribute to the wider K&L activities of the Fund.

Fund Coordinator

Grant management and overall Fund management and administration of the Fund is undertaken by GHD Australia Pty Ltd. The contracted specialist program management team, is described as the ‘Fund Coordinator’. The FC is responsible for developing and coordinating Fund-wide processes and systems to maximise quality, support knowledge and learning across the Fund (on WASH, gender and inclusive approaches in WASH and on gender transformative and social inclusion impacts of the Fund beyond WASH), support public diplomacy efforts and to ensure accountability and compliance with DFAT requirements.

The FC provides various functions. These include: monitoring and evaluation (M&E) services to synthesise information generated by CSOs for overall Fund-level reporting and learning; technical skills in GESI and WASH; secretariat support for the FPG; leadership of a K&L component; public diplomacy and external communications; and grant management for CSOs and research organisations

Fund Governance and Partnership

The Fund is governed through a Fund Partnership Group (FPG) that meets at least twice a year with one of those being a face-to-face meeting. In practice, FPG meetings have been

more often in particular due to the COVID19 response. This partnership approach is a key aspect of the Fund and is likely to continue to evolve throughout the Fund timeline.

The FPG is not a key decision making forum for the Fund, rather, it creates a space for consultation and consensus that helps set strategic direction.

Scope of the Review

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the review defined the key purposes and objectives for this evaluation:

Purpose	Objectives
Review overall progress of the Fund	<p>Review implementation of the current Water for Women Fund program against the End of Program Outcomes as stated in the Water for Women Fund Design Document.</p> <p>Identify critical issues in the program’s implementation that could be addressed in the final 2 years (to December 2022) of the program.</p> <p>Make recommendations on possible actions to improve Fund implementation.</p>
Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the COVID19 responses by the Fund	<p>Develop a framework to assess Fund COVID19 responses, focusing on their effectiveness and efficiency. This assessment will be largely qualitative but where possible, draw on quantitative data.</p> <p>Apply the assessment framework to draw conclusions on the effectiveness and efficiency of Fund COVID19 responses. Make recommendations for future preparedness including how to embed flexibility in future WASH programming.</p>

Priorities for the review include:

- Program Governance and Efficiency -Structures processes and personnel
- Effectiveness : Review of progress against end of program outcomes. Are we making the progress we expected at this point in time? To what extent is the Water For Women Fund on track to achieve its end of program outcomes by December 2022?
- Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
- Assessment of COVID 19 Responses.

Assessment Framework for COVID19 responses

The assessment framework for Fund COVID19 responses detailed below will assess policy alignment, technical merit, benefits, adverse impacts, viability in implementation and broader economic and social considerations.

- d) **Technical:** Have response options been technically assessed for their alignment with DFAT COVID19 policy and core action areas of Health Security, Stability and Economic Recovery? Have responses been technically assessed for effectiveness using the best available evidence and analysis and expected outputs and outcomes? Analysis could include political economy analysis, ease of implementation under COVID19, limitations due to restrictions to movements of counterpart staff and communities.
- e) **Efficiency:** Have responses been assessed for efficiency in implementation including taking into account how easy will it be to make program changes. What are the impacts on Fund Coordination and CSO staff and overall Fund outcomes? What is the likelihood of success in the time left for implementation?
- f) To what extent will the COVID19 responses make a difference to **gender equality and social inclusion?**

Question Guides for these priorities are attached in Appendix B

Key Review Questions

There are four key review questions:

- e) To what extent is the Fund on track to achieve its expected outputs and outcomes against end of program outcomes. In particular is it making progress to achieve outcomes to strengthen Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
- f) What are the critical issues in program implementation, including for the COVID19 pandemic, that could be addressed in the final two years (to December 2020) of the program.
- g) What changes are recommended to improve Fund implementation.
- h) How effective and efficient are Fund COVID19 responses and what has been learned for future program preparedness.

Review Audience

The primary audience of the review is DFAT. A secondary audience includes the FC, FPG and implementing partners.

This review is an opportunity to consider progress made to date and assess changes in context and to make modifications to ensure the achievement of Fund objectives, to improve the communication of its work and results and to better understand the responsiveness and effectiveness of the Fund's COVID19 responses.

At the conclusion of the desk review the draft review document will be circulated among key stakeholders for comment.

Reviewers

The review will be conducted by Marcus Howard a WASH specialist who will undertake a desk review supplemented by consultations with DFAT, the FC, FPG and implementing partners.

The reviewer will engage with Gerard Cheong, (Assistant Director, Water Section) and Renee Paxton (Senior Policy Officer, Water Section) who will lead engagement with the Review on DFAT's part and Alison Baker, Fund Manager of Water For Women Fund Coordinator Team.

A mid-term review involving in-country visits and an independent review team including a wider range of specialists was originally planned for the third quarter of 2020, however, this is not possible due to COVID19 restrictions. Instead this review will be conducted as a desk-based review with a narrower scope and by one consultant expert.

The review is expected to commence in May 2020 and be completed by June 2020. **The allocated time is ten days in total.**

Methodology

The Reviewer will review documentation, plan and conduct interviews to inform the review findings. The methodology for data collection will be qualitative and based on responses to stakeholder review questions.

The approach to addressing review priorities	Approach
Review overall progress of the Fund to assess if it is on track to achieve planned outcomes	Key informant interviews with DFAT, Fund Coordination and a representative sample of implementing NGO's. Review of documentation, progress to outcomes reports and other outputs.
Identify critical issues in program implementation (leading up to the time of the COVID19 pandemic) and recommendations on possible actions to improve implementation.	A running list of issues will be documented during the review and raised for discussion and consideration with DFAT and FC at the end of the review process.
Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the COVID19 responses by the Fund.	Key informant interviews with DFAT, Fund Coordination Team and a representative sample of implementing CSO's. Review of documentation including FC reports and CSO project pivot proposals.

Methods

The review will involve a range of qualitative research methods:

- **Document Review:** a comprehensive review of key documents produced for the Fund by DFAT, FC and implementing CSO's and RO's. Relevant sector literature and published research will help to identify key issues for further investigation and will form the basis for any quantitative data analysis presented in the report.
- **Key Informant Interviews:** with selected groups and individuals will provide the majority of the fieldwork inputs. These interviews and a synthesis of stakeholder views and perspectives concerning the Fund will inform the findings.
- **Observation:** general observations, including video interviews and video observations of sites, will confirm or challenge conclusions arising from other methods; for example the interactions/relationships between stakeholders, the degree of professionalism of implementation as observed in the field, the quality and appropriateness of outputs, and the general view of stakeholders. These observations will only be possible if CSO staff are able to provide video interviews and visual records from site locations.
-

Interviews

The Reviewer will discuss with DFAT and GHD to identify relevant stakeholders for interviews. The aim will be to provide the Reviewer with a representative sample of stakeholders who are impacted by Fund program interventions that are applicable.

Interviews will be conducted

Interviews for the Review will include :

- **Implementation Team**
 - DFAT Project Staff
 - FC Staff
- **Partners/Counterparts**
 - Partner CSO and RO Management Staff
 - Relevant Staff from counterparts in country where program is being implemented (if safe and technically possible under local Covid19 pandemic restrictions)
 - FPG
 - RO's
 - Partnership Consultant

Consultations with stakeholders occur in June 2020. Interviews will be conducted by email, video communications or telephone. Face to face interviews are not possible due to COVID-19 social distancing restrictions.

Interviews will, where possible, select a range of performance levels to provide the reviewer with a broader view of progress as well as an assessment of successes and failures.

Key Ethical Considerations

Key ethical considerations relate to (i) consent, (ii) cultural appropriateness and (iii) feedback of findings.

- i. The review will seek verbal consent and ensure key informants and local partners consulted are adequately informed of the purpose of the review, its potential outcomes and consequences, and type of information sought from them.
- ii. Engagement at local level will be undertaken in a gender responsive, culturally sensitive manner, ensuring opportunity and enquiring on women's participation (and facilitating informal groups or meetings).

Analysis

The Reviewer will maintain notes of interviews and discussions and then synthesise the key observations and learnings from the Fund.

In the absence of a broad range of skills in the Review Team, due to COVID 19 restrictions, the reviewer will discuss issues where there are a range of views (from CSO partners) with the Fund Manager and DFAT Project staff and note these in the report.

Limitations

The following limitations are expected and will be mitigated through pragmatic design and including them transparently in the review report

- **Time and resources:** the rigour of the data gathering and analysis processes for this review will be constrained by the time available (ten days).
- **Access:** since the Fund covers a wide geographic area in the Indo-Pacific the evaluation will only be exposed to perspectives from a limited range of stakeholders/locations. Access is further restricted due by communications, travel and physical distancing limitations implemented during COVID19 restrictions in Australia and country locations.
- **Measurement** of sector system changes are difficult to describe and assure. Systematic analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, including direct quotes from informants, will be used to make the most value of the information collected.
- COVID 19 limitations on team structure, travel and meeting formats as well as disruptions to workplaces and communities add additional limitations to this review.
- **Attribution:** initiatives such as the Fund are implemented through CSO and Research partners such that multiple factors contribute to and/or detract from the achievement of outcomes and outputs. The attribution of outcomes to particular Fund interventions will be difficult to determine.

Report

Reporting of evaluation findings will involve:

- Aide Memoire: at the completion of the interview and review phase, the reviewer will present preliminary findings to DFAT, FPG and FC for the purposes of validation and refinement.
- Draft Report: following the fieldwork phase, the Reviewer will prepare a draft report to be submitted to DFAT for review and comment.
- Final Report: feedback on the draft report will be reviewed and assimilated or addressed before preparing a final version of the report.

Following is an indicative outline of the report:

Aid Activity Summary

Acknowledgements

Authors Details

Executive Summary

Recommendations

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

List of Acronyms

1. Introduction

1.1. Document Purpose

1.2. Background

1.3. Design Overview

2. Methodology

2.1. Evaluation Purpose

2.2. Evaluation Scope and Methods

2.3. Limitations

3. Findings

3.1. Summary of key findings

3.2. Lessons for DFAT

3.3. Achievements, contributions and challenges

Appendix A: Strategic issues

Appendix B : Terms of Reference

Appendix C : Stakeholder engagement

Appendix D : Review Plan

Appendices

Appendix A : Review Schedule

Appendix B : Question Guide

Appendix A – Schedule

27-31 May	Review Terms of Reference and Fund Progress Report. Draft a review workplan and Assessment Framework for Covid 19 responses.
2 June	DFAT Inception Briefing -2 pm. Fund Manager discussion
3-5 June	Identify key informants with DFAT and Fund Manager, review key documents and refine questionnaires
8-19 June	Conduct interviews, record responses and synthesise data.
17-19 June	Draft Aide Memoire and Report for discussion with DFAT and Fund Manager
22 June	Submit Draft Report
24-26 June	DFAT and Fund Manager review and comment.
29-30 June	Revise Draft Report and Submit Final Report to DFAT.

Appendix B: Question Guide

The questions below were prepared for the Review to ensure a consistent approach to questioning for the review. Questions are arranged by organisational responsibility:

DFAT – Water Section

Fund Coordinator

Fund Partnership Group

CSO Implementing Partners

Research Organisations

Consultants: Partnership Broker, Technical Consultants

Proposed Review Questions

These proposed review questions agreed with DFAT as preparation for the review are:

Program Governance and Efficiency - Structures, processes and personnel

Are the Water for Women governance, management and implementation arrangements fit for purpose / appropriate and appropriately resourced? What changes might increase the program's effectiveness against objectives / outcomes?

Are the transaction costs associated with the current implementation arrangements appropriate? How could management of the program be more effective and efficient?

Is the Water for Women budget adequate to deliver the current outcomes of the program?

Is the scope of the program too broad?

Are processes of activity planning, priority setting and approval considered appropriate, clear and transparent by all stakeholders? Do they allow sufficient flexibility to support innovation and address emerging needs of DFAT, sector, partners etc?

How effective has the FPG been to date in setting the strategic direction of the Fund? What improvements could be made to make the FPG more effective?

Are program governance processes appropriate for overseeing the program, responding to lessons learned and managing risks?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Water for Women planning, management, implementation, monitoring, risk management and reporting processes? How could they be improved?

Effectiveness: Review of progress against end of program outcomes. Are we making the progress we expected at this point in time? To what extent is the Water for Women Fund on track to achieve its end of program outcomes by December 2022?

Taking into consideration the following questions:

To what extent are outputs and intermediate outcomes being achieved as expected at this time? What is the current progress towards each of the four end of program outcomes?

What are the factors (recent Covid19 factors considered separately) affecting performance?

How have supply chain, travel and social distancing restrictions due to the Covid19 pandemic impacted on efficiency and effectiveness?

Is the M&E system being used to effectively measure in a timely manner, implementation progress, and progress towards meeting expected outcomes? What improvements are needed?

Are monitoring and evaluation activities, processes and structures appropriate for a partnership of this type and size?

What is the extent of the approach to delivering sustainable results? How can the approach to systems strengthening be improved?

How well is the Fund achieving an appropriate balance between the different components of the program?

Gender Equity and Social Inclusion

To date, how has the Fund furthered gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) including transformative equity?

How can the approaches to GESI be improved? Identify the key areas of inquiry for a follow-up in-depth evaluation on GESI.

To date, how has the Fund contributed to increased equitable access to, and use of, WASH services? How can this be improved?

Assessment of COVID19 Responses

How well has the Fund pivoted to COVID19 in terms of timeliness and quality of agreed responses? What are the key factors that influenced this performance?

Stability, Resilience and Prosperity are key development objectives in DFAT's post-COVID19 aid policy. To what extent are the Fund's COVID19 responses aligned to these objectives?

What are the long term implications for the Fund due to the COVID19 pivot? What are the key adjustments needed to both remain true to the program design and continue to play a meaningful role in the post-COVID19 context?