



PACIFIC WOMEN
SHAPING PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT



Research Strategy

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development

June 2017 – June 2022

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Acronyms

| | |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------|
| ACFID | Australian Council for International Development |
| AGR | Advisory Group on Research |
| DFAT | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade |
| EOI | Expression of Interest |
| KRA | Key Result Area |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| PLGED | Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration |

1 Context

Background

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) was announced by the Australian Government at the Pacific Island Forum Leaders' meeting in August 2012. It commits up to \$320 million over 10 years in 14 Pacific Islands Forum member countries. The program aims to improve opportunities for the political, economic and social advancement of Pacific women. *Pacific Women* will support countries to meet the commitments they made in the *Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration* (PLGED) in 2012. The outcomes sought by *Pacific Women* include:

- Women, and women's interests, are increasingly and effectively represented and visible through leadership at all levels of decision-making.
- Women have expanded economic opportunities to earn an income and accumulate economic assets.
- Violence against women is reduced and survivors of violence have access to support services and to justice.
- Women in the Pacific will have a stronger sense of their own agency, supported by a changing legal and social environment and through increased access to the services they need.

Pacific Women and the key outcomes sit comfortably within DFAT's overall commitment to gender equality as demonstrated by the Gender Equality Strategy¹ and Australian Foreign Aid policy.² Gender equality and women's empowerment is recognised as an essential component to promoting economic growth and poverty reduction.

Pacific Women is implemented through work at the country and regional levels. Country plans have been developed to represent locally-relevant responses and starting points for change towards the key outcomes. Regional and multi-country activities have been designed to address common issues across the region or sub-region and to complement and build on country-specific activities.

To support program management, a *Pacific Women* Support Unit has been established in Fiji, with a national sub-office in Papua New Guinea. The Support Unit's role is to provide technical, administrative and logistical support to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) bilateral and regional *Pacific Women* teams and to *Pacific Women*'s implementing partners.

Regional context

Significant Pacific government reforms over the last 20 years reflect the recognition of gender equality as necessary for economic, social and political development. Most Pacific countries are signatories to global conventions on improving gender equality, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and are committed to the revised Pacific Platform for Action on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality and the Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declarations. However, there continues to be misconceptions of 'gender equality' and a disconnection between global approaches to women's rights and equality and policy implementation in local contexts.

The persistence of such challenges is not easy to address but good quality gender research can contribute to a better understanding of the complex, multi-layered and intersecting nature of these challenges. Building regional capacity in research that addresses gender inequality in the Pacific is

¹ DFAT (2016) Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy.

² DFAT (2014) Australia aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability, pp. 5-6

therefore critical for policy development as well as to support women's advocacy for gender justice.³

In 2015–2016, *Pacific Women* commissioned a Pacific Gender Research Scoping Study to support an initiative comprising a group of gender specialists who represent civil society, development partners, regional organisations, United Nations agencies and academics. The group recognised the need for a better understanding of existing gender research on the Pacific and the extent of its use in policy development. The study's findings⁴ were presented at the *Advancing Gender Research in the Pacific* workshop, hosted by the University of the South Pacific in June 2016. This event brought together more than 50 interested stakeholders from academia, civil society and regional, international and donor organisations involved in supporting, conducting, and using Pacific research to address gender inequality for social change, public engagement and knowledge enhancement. Workshop participants endorsed all study recommendations, which also inform this Research Strategy.

The role of research for *Pacific Women*

Research plays a strategic role in the Australian Government's mission to promote gender equality in the region through *Pacific Women*. Consultations and documentation that informed the *Pacific Women* program design highlighted the importance of research to better understand the 'interconnected nature of women's disempowerment'.⁵ An action research approach to inform continuous improvement of the program was suggested.

A combination of research, evaluation and analysis was identified as necessary to inform the program's investment choices. The program also acknowledges the need for a strategic, iterative, learning approach in the identification, commissioning and application of research.

Pacific Women research will be commissioned to contribute new knowledge and understanding in the areas where *Pacific Women* is seeking to achieve change, i.e. in the areas of women's leadership and decision-making, women's economic empowerment, eliminating violence against women and enhancing women's agency. Research will also contribute to testing the underlying assumptions in the *Pacific Women* Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework.

The definition of research for *Pacific Women*

When identifying opportunities for research, it is important to distinguish between research and monitoring and evaluation. The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework identifies research as essential to a deeper understanding of the 'issue' (gender inequality); while monitoring and evaluation focuses on the relevance and effectiveness of *Pacific Women*-funded activities.

Based on the Department for International Development (UK) 2016⁶, research activities can be categorised as follows:

- Research to develop products, technologies or processes that either have pro-poor impacts or generate income and thus contribute to development through growth.
- Research to understand what works and why, such as whether and why an intervention works.
- Research to understand the world around us, such as achieving a better understanding of the development context.

With this range of possible research activities, good quality social science research is recognisable if it is undertaken using rigorous design and methods, having something important to say, and being

³ Gender Research in the Pacific: 2004-2014: Beginnings, Associate Professor Yvonne Underhill-Sem with Dr Asenati Chan-Tung, Dr Evelyn Marsters and Dr Sera Eftonga Pene, University of Auckland, 2016

⁴ Gender Research in the Pacific: 2004–2014: Beginnings, Associate Professor Yvonne Underhill-Sem with Dr Asenati Chan-Tung, Dr Evelyn Marsters and Dr Sera Eftonga Pene, University of Auckland, 2016

⁵ DFAT (2012) *Pacific Women* Delivery Strategy, p. 2.

⁶ Research Uptake: A guide for DFID-funded research programmes (April 2016)

relevant to the concerns of an identifiable audience, it needs to be communicated repeatedly and it needs to be exposed to feedback from stakeholders.⁷

For the purposes of this Research Strategy, the understanding of research will be framed by the above and is defined as:

Sustainable, high-quality and locally-appropriate research that addresses and informs responses to gender inequality.

2 The Research Strategy (2017–2022)

This Research Strategy covers a five-year period from June 2017–June 2022. It has been developed in a systematic and consultative way, informed by ongoing research at regional and country levels and the scoping study on gender research in the Pacific.⁸ It is guided by a newly formed Advisory Group on Research (AGR).

Members of the AGR include *Pacific Women* implementing partners and research practitioners with strong experience and knowledge of research on gender inequality in the Pacific. They also have an interest to increase the capacity, quality, accessibility and policy relevance of Pacific gender research. For more information about the AGR, refer to Section 5 and Annex 2.

Illustrative of a commitment to knowledge and learning, this strategy is underpinned by several documents and processes that DFAT has invested in to inform program direction. The key findings in these documents assist in identifying priority areas where research is required, with an emphasis on emerging areas of need.

Key documents include:

- *Pacific Women* Delivery Strategy (2012)
- *Pacific Women* Design Document (2014)
- *Pacific Women* Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (2015)
- Six monthly program progress reports (2015 – 2017)
- Pacific Gender Scoping Study, associated symposium and workshop, and summary report (2016)
- *Pacific Women* Roadmap (2017)
- *Pacific Women* Year Three Evaluation (2017)

3 Aim, Objectives and Key Result Areas

Aim

The aim of this Strategy is to support high-quality, locally-appropriate and sustainable research that addresses and informs responses to gender inequality in the Pacific region with two key objectives:

- **Objective 1:** To support gender research that is considered, contextually relevant and informs *Pacific Women* programming; and
- **Objective 2:** To advance the quality, commitment to and resourcing of gender research in the Pacific region.

⁷ Gender Research in the Pacific: 2004-2014: Beginnings, Associate Professor Yvonne Underhill-Sem with Dr Asenati Chantung, Dr Evelyn Marsters and Dr Sera Eftonga Pene, University of Auckland, 2016

⁸ *ibid*

To meet these objectives, the Research Strategy aims to achieve results in four interdependent key result areas (KRA).

KRA 1: *Pacific Women* has strengthened processes to support and promote quality gender research

Under KRA1, *Pacific Women* will focus on strengthening its administrative and management processes to support the identification of quality research. This will include the development of robust and transparent processes for assessing proposed research initiatives, including guidelines for ethics and quality assurance.

Through these improved processes, it is expected that research commissioned by *Pacific Women* will have increased relevance to the region; will meet national, DFAT and research institution requirements; will be culturally and contextually appropriate; and meet agreed standards of ethics and quality assurance at the community, national and regional level.

KRA 2: *Pacific Women* gender research priorities are identified and actioned

In collaboration with Pacific gender researchers⁹, research partners and the AGR, *Pacific Women* will regularly review the program's research priorities to ensure that they address current and emerging issues and remain contextually relevant. Reviews will balance the need for new knowledge with what already exists, as well as with emerging needs for informed decision-making both for the program and the region. Research that measures the impact of funded activities and tests program assumptions will be prioritised.

In addition to research submissions to inform country programs, *Pacific Women* will request open submissions from independent researchers or research institutions.

Under KRA 2, *Pacific Women* will fund a minimum of two research projects a year. This will be in addition to research activities already embedded within *Pacific Women*-funded projects.

With the support of the AGR, *Pacific Women* will identify and prioritise research in areas where the program seeks to achieve change in its three related outcomes (leadership and decision making, economic empowerment, and ending violence against women).

A database of research is being finalised by the *Pacific Women* Support Unit. This will be regularly updated and accessible through the *Pacific Women* website.

KRA 3: The Pacific region has strengthened capacity to carry out gender research

The Pacific Gender Research Scoping Study and follow-on workshop highlighted the need to strengthen gender research capacity in the Pacific and recommended that more efforts should be made to support Pacific gender researchers to carry out and shape Pacific gender research priorities. *Pacific Women* will identify opportunities for collaborative research that will strengthen the capacity of Pacific scholars and researchers in Pacific institutions.

Under KRA 3, research commissioned by *Pacific Women* will be required to identify a Pacific partner (institution, organisation or individual researcher) with associated capacity strengthening activities. This could include, but is not limited to, mentoring, training, scholarship, south-south exchanges or attachments.

⁹ For the purpose of the Research Strategy, a Pacific gender researcher is of Pacific heritage and demonstrates strong commitment to the Pacific regardless of location or who they are employed by.

KRA 4: Gender research informs policy and practice

All research should inform policy and programming decisions and implementation. To increase the likelihood of this, all *Pacific Women* commissioned research will identify and address a significant development question or challenge, fill a gap in current evidence and clearly describe how outcomes of the research can be used, and by whom, to improve policy / programming.¹⁰

Under KRA 4, *Pacific Women* will support the development of a Research Portal. The portal will include a searchable repository of gender research and a directory of gender researchers and institutions. It will store and disseminate research knowledge products, provide good practice guidelines in relation to ethics and quality assurance, and facilitate interactive discussion forums for communities of learning, inquiry and practice.

Pacific Women will identify opportunities at national and regional levels to bring together and strengthen links between research practitioners, policymakers and program stakeholders. This could be through symposiums, dialogues or other forums.

4 Principles, Criteria and Process to Inform Selection of Research Priorities and Activities

Principles

Research will be locally-owned and informed, inclusive, useful and relevant

- Principle 1: Research priorities will be Pacific-driven and Pacific-led, where possible, and contain a balance of expertise from the Pacific as appropriate.
- Principle 2: Research priorities will be directly linked to policy and practice that advances gender equality and improving the situation for women in the Pacific.

Research will be ethical and of a high quality

- Principle 3: Research methodologies will be ethical, abide by country-specific research principles and processes and follow *Pacific Women's* ethical guidelines (see Section 9).
- Principle 4: The knowledge products and reporting generated by research will be of a high quality and made accessible to a wide audience (see Section 9).

Research projects will provide opportunities for collaboration and capacity building of Pacific gender researchers, practitioners, and institutions, including partnerships with civil society organisations

- Principle 5: All research will promote capacity building opportunities at all stages of the research process.
- Principle 6: Research design and implementation will promote opportunities for collaboration with Pacific stakeholders.

Selection criteria

Specific selection criteria will be applied to the selection of *Pacific Women* research priorities. Informed by DFAT's Selection Criteria for Research proposals, these criteria include:

- alignment with the Research Strategy's aim, objectives and principles;

¹⁰ Taken from DFAT Selection Criteria for Research proposals

- alignment with the outcomes of *Pacific Women*;
- consideration of relevant prior and planned research;
- relevance to commitments on gender equality; and
- feasibility to implement.

Process for selecting research priorities

Research priorities for the program are identified through a combination of: reviewing key documents; annual country and regional work planning; research concept note submissions; calls for research proposals; and assessment of specific research gaps by DFAT or *Pacific Women* implementing partners / stakeholders.

These priorities are first mapped against the *Pacific Women* outcomes and then reviewed by the *Pacific Women* Support Unit to create a shortlist based on knowledge of research already taking place, activity that may impact on or support research and areas of research interest.

The shortlist of research priorities will then be reviewed by the *Pacific Women* Advisory Group on Research (AGR)¹¹ and the Support Unit to inform development of an implementation plan. The implementation plan will include a combination of research activities, processes and mechanisms to support and strengthen research capacity.

This review process, first undertaken in April 2017, established a precedent for Pacific-informed, independent and consultative research priority setting.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

DFAT and the Support Unit will be responsible for the implementation of the Research Strategy with guidance and input from the AGR. The Support Unit will provide secretariat support to the AGR and convene meetings.

The role of the AGR is to:

- provide advice to DFAT on the strategic direction of the *Pacific Women* research program;
- assess and evaluate research priorities for *Pacific Women*, informed by knowledge of existing and planned research and knowledge gaps;
- appraise research projects and initiatives funded by *Pacific Women*, including participating in ethics review processes as needed;
- encourage strategic collaboration and partnerships to promote gender research that contributes to effective and sustainable gender responsive policies and programs; and
- promote and support efforts towards better application of gender research in *Pacific Women's* work, as well as in influencing policy decisions and practice at the regional and national level.

The AGR terms of reference and membership are included in Annexes 2 and 3 respectively.

¹¹ At the April 2017 Research Strategy Advisory Group establishment meeting, it was determined that the group would no longer be required as a Research Strategy Advisory Group. The focus of the group changed to provide general advice on research and has been re-established as the Advisory Group on Research. Membership will not change in the short-term but will be reviewed in the next meeting.

6 Partnerships

The Research Strategy seeks to encourage collaborative research partnerships to build the capacity of Pacific-based researchers and institutions. Partnerships may be with individual researchers, research institutions, local Pacific NGOs and international NGOs, civil society, regional organisations, government partners and the private sector. They will be either Pacific-based or Pacific-aligned. Fostering collaborative research partnerships will assist *Pacific Women* to support a range of research programs to achieve better results for gender equality and women's empowerment.

7 Building Research Capacity

Pacific Women is committed to supporting capacity development, working with national, regional and international organisations, through coalitions and networks, and working in cooperation with other Australian Government-funded bilateral and regional aid programs. *Pacific Women's* approach to capacity development is based on the recognition of the need to improve the knowledge, evidence base, and technical capacity to advance gender equality. It also recognises the need to facilitate and inform positive change that is led and influenced by Pacific women and men, as well as the need to support national ownership of gender equality commitments and sustainable change.

The Research Strategy aligns with this commitment by prioritising capacity development, long-term planning and support for strengthening gender research capacity in the Pacific.

Pacific Women will:

- build the capacity of Pacific gender researchers and Pacific partner institutions to carry out gender research and shape Pacific gender research priorities through collaborative research partnerships;
- require research funded by Pacific Women to include a Pacific-based partner with associated capacity strengthening activities;
- foster partnerships between Pacific gender researchers and Pacific partner institutions with gender researchers and institutions based elsewhere;
- support Pacific universities to strengthen the gender research capacity of Pacific research scholars and other stakeholders through skills training, policy analysis, and program monitoring; and
- resource long-term commitments to teaching, training, and research collaboration between gender researchers based in Pacific institutions and those based elsewhere.

8 Communicating and Disseminating Research

Research on its own will not create impact or change. For research commissioned by *Pacific Women* to be influential, research findings must be widely disseminated in a timely manner and, where possible, tailored to meet the needs of partners and stakeholders.

The *Pacific Women* Support Unit will work with the AGR, DFAT and wider research networks to:

- ensure that all commissioned research has a resourced communications plan, which identifies the target audience, research milestones, communication points, knowledge products and means for sharing research, including through internet and media platforms;
- create high-quality knowledge products that are timely, accessible and useable by a wide range of stakeholders and policy-makers;
- support capacity development for research communication and dissemination;
- utilise and leverage the AGR and other research partnerships to communicate research activities and outcomes; and

- support the development of a gender research portal.

9 Ethical Research Practice

Pacific Women is committed to ethical research practice which considers women's lived experiences and is attentive to how power is gendered and impacts individuals and communities. *Pacific Women* is also interested in interrogating the multiple power dynamics of research relationships. DFAT, as the funder of *Pacific Women* activities, subscribes to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and the Research for Development Impact Network [Principles and Guidelines for Ethical Research and Evaluation in Development](#). All research activities funded by *Pacific Women* will be required to meet the *Pacific Women Ethical Practice Guidelines and Review Process* (Annex 7), and the ACFID guidelines and national research ethics requirements where relevant and applicable. At a minimum, *Pacific Women* commissioned research should:

- meet local country and institutional research requirements (where appropriate), and obtain research permits if required;
- be grounded in the commitment to do no harm;
- demonstrate sensitivity, appreciation and care for communities and individuals involved in and impacted by the research process;
- strive to develop nuanced contextual awareness and genuine engagement that is attentive to diversity and the needs, interests and impacts on vulnerable groups and individuals;
- include contextually appropriate feedback loops to groups and communities involved in the research;
- strive to ensure that research findings are accessible to a broader public, and make research to action/policy links wherever possible; and
- seek a transformative impact on the causes of gender inequality.

10 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Research Strategy

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan for this Research Strategy (Annex 4) aligns with the *Pacific Women* Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework. The M&E Plan has identified indicators and evaluation questions against this Strategy's KRAs to enable assessment of progress over time.

The Support Unit will manage and implement the M&E Plan and report back to DFAT through the *Pacific Women* six monthly progress reports, and to the AGR on an annual basis.

11 Risk Management

The Risk Management Plan (Annex 5) outlines potential risks and mitigation strategies for this Research Strategy. All research projects will be reviewed to ensure that ethical and quality research standards are upheld. Funding and / or support for research may be withdrawn if the project does not meet agreed ethical and quality standards.

The Support Unit will monitor risk for all research commissioned through the program and report back to DFAT through the *Pacific Women* six monthly progress reports, and to the AGR on an annual basis.

Annex 1 Implementation Plan July 2018 – June 2019

| Activity | Responsibility | | Due date |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Lead | Support | |
| KRA 1 Pacific Women has strengthened processes to support and promote quality gender research | | | |
| 1.1 Ongoing revisions to the AGR TOR including composition and tenure | Pacific Women Support Unit | AGR | February 2019 |
| 1.2 Ongoing revisions and updates to the Pacific Women Research Strategy | Pacific Women Support Unit | AGR | June 2019 |
| 1.3 Convene AGR meetings twice a year | Pacific Women Support Unit | AGR | June 2019 |
| 1.4 Ongoing development and documentation of Pacific Women processes to support identification and assessment of research projects, including revised guidelines for ethics and quality assurance as part of the Research Strategy | Pacific Women Support Unit | AGR | June 2019 |
| KRA 2 Pacific Women gender research priorities are identified and actioned | | | |
| 2.1 Revise and document a process for identifying and prioritizing research projects as part of the Research Strategy | Pacific Women Support Unit | AGR | June 2019 |
| 2.2 Update inventory of all Pacific Women funded research | Pacific Women Support Unit | - | June 2019 |
| 2.3 Commission a minimum of two research projects a year: 2.3a SRHR Phase 2 2.3b Workplace sexual harassment in the public sector and the tourism sector 2.3c What does an economically empowered woman look like in the Pacific? | Pacific Women Support Unit | AGR | June 2019 • 31 August 2018 • 30 Nov 2018 • 31 March 2019 |
| KRA 3 The Pacific region has strengthened capacity to carry out gender research | | | |
| 3.1 Develop a Pacific Women template for research proposals that requires all Pacific Women funded research identify a Pacific partner institution; and requires that the partnership includes capacity building of Pacific gender researchers in all stages of the research project from proposal development to dissemination of research findings and research products. | Pacific Women Support Unit | AGR, research partner institution | June 2019 |
| 3.2 Develop a concept note for the Innovation Lab to provide capacity building for Early Career Researchers | Pacific Women Support Unit | AGR, research partner institution | 31 October 2018 |
| 3.3 Stock take of current research capacity building initiatives in the Pacific, including gender research scholarships funded by DFAT. | Pacific Women Support Unit | AGR | 30 November 2018 |
| KRA 4 Gender research informs policy and practice | | | |
| 4.1 Produce gender research knowledge and communication products that provide program and policy recommendations | Pacific Women Support Unit | AGR, partner research institution, PW Support Unit | June 2019 |
| 4.2 Disseminate gender research knowledge and communication products through communication mediums e.g. Pacific Women website, newsletter, policy dialogues, networks, social media etc. | Pacific Women Support Unit | PW Support Unit, AGR | June 2019 |
| 4.3 Support annual research policy dialogues via partnership with the Pacific Update conference or through the Pacific Islands University Research Network (PIUN) with specific focus on gender research | Pacific Women Support Unit | AGR, research partner institution, PW Support Unit | June 2019 |
| 4.4 Provide support to partners to convene 'research to policy' events. | Pacific Women Support Unit | AGR, research partner institution | June 2019 |
| 4.5 Establish Pacific gender research portal | Pacific Women Support Unit | AGR, PW Support Unit | June 2019 |

Annex 2 Advisory Group on Research (AGR) Terms of Reference

Background

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) was announced by the Australian Government at the Pacific Island Forum Leaders' meeting in August 2012. It commits up to \$320 million over 10 years in 14 Pacific Islands Forum member countries. The program aims to improve opportunities for the political, economic and social advancement of Pacific women. *Pacific Women* will support countries to meet the commitments they made in the Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration in 2012. The outcomes sought by *Pacific Women* are:

- Women, and women's interests, are increasingly and effectively represented and visible through leadership at all levels of decision making.
- Women have expanded economic opportunities to earn an income and accumulate economic assets.
- Violence against women is reduced and survivors of violence have access to support services and to justice.
- Women in the Pacific will have a stronger sense of their own agency, supported by a changing legal and social environment and through increased access to the services they need.

Research plays a strategic role in the Australian Government's mission to promote gender equality in the region. Consultations and documentation informing the *Pacific Women* program design highlighted the importance of research to better understand the 'interconnected nature of women's disempowerment'¹² and suggested an action research approach to inform continuous improvement of the program. A combination of research, evaluation and analysis was identified as necessary to inform the program's investment choices, with acknowledgement of the need for a strategic, iterative, learning approach to the identification, commissioning and application of research.

Pacific Women Research Strategy (2017–2022)

The main purpose of the *Pacific Women* Research Strategy (Research Strategy) is to guide the *Pacific Women* program's research agenda while contributing to sustainable, high-quality and locally-appropriate research that addresses and informs responses to gender inequality in the Pacific island region.¹³

It will do this by:

- identifying priorities for gender research to inform *Pacific Women* programming choices and implementation;
- strengthening capacity and systems to support gender research that helps us to understand and address gender inequality; and
- promoting the application of gender research to inform policy and practice.

¹² DFAT (2012) *Pacific Women* Delivery Strategy, p. 2.

¹³ For the purposes of this Terms of Reference, the *Pacific Women* Research Strategy, and related documents, the term 'gender research' will refer to sustainable, high-quality and locally-appropriate research that addresses and informs responses to gender inequality.

It is intended that the Research Strategy will enable identification of a quality research agenda for *Pacific Women* that informs program development and implementation while contributing to a legacy of Pacific gender research work, capacity, systems and partnerships that is sustained beyond the life of the program. The Research Strategy seeks to encourage collaborative research partnerships to build capacity of Pacific-based researchers⁹ and institutions and support research programs to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment across all sectors.

Role of *Pacific Women* Advisory Group on Research

The formation of an advisory group on research was identified as an important step to guide the development and implementation of the Research Strategy at a meeting of *Pacific Women* partner organisations, research institutions and interested Pacific research academics and practitioners held at the University of the South Pacific in June 2016. The group held its first meeting in Suva in April 2017.

Guided by the Research Strategy, the *Pacific Women* Advisory Group on Research (AGR) will:

- provide advice to DFAT on the strategic direction of the *Pacific Women* research program;
- assess and evaluate research priorities for *Pacific Women*, informed by knowledge of existing and planned research and knowledge gaps;
- appraise research projects and initiatives funded by *Pacific Women*;
- encourage strategic collaboration and partnerships to promote gender research that contributes to effective and sustainable gender responsive policies and programs; and
- promote and support efforts towards the better application of gender research in *Pacific Women's* work as well as in influencing policy decisions and practice at regional and national levels.

At a minimum, AGR members are expected to make themselves available to participate in face-to-face or virtual meetings; respond to requests; and support and promote the *Pacific Women* research agenda and issues identified by the group. They may also be requested to participate in other activities, such as advocacy, communication and dissemination initiatives.

AGR Structure and Operations

The *Pacific Women* Support Unit will act as the AGR Secretariat and coordinate the operations and working arrangements of the group, in consultation with DFAT.

Composition

The AGR will be comprised of people with specialist gender research expertise and interest in the Pacific region. They may include representatives of research institutions, development partners, civil society organisations, regional organisations, governments that are engaging in gender research, as well as individual research practitioners. There should be an appropriate balance of institutions and Pacific representation, as well as a recognition of the skills and expertise of members.

Should individual members change roles, their continuation as members will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the AGR and DFAT.

Collectively, the AGR should demonstrate strong commitment to promote and support active participation of Pacific-based institutions and Pacific island researchers as part of efforts to build gender research capacity in the Pacific island region. Additional individuals and representatives of relevant organisations may be invited to contribute to AGR Group meetings and initiatives on a needs basis.

Leadership

The AGR will be led by co-chairs, one of which will be nominated by the full membership for a period of two years. Co-chairs will be appointed to maintain transparency and integrity of the group and be responsible for working with the *Pacific Women* Support Unit to develop meeting agendas, review the *Pacific Women* Research Strategy Implementation Plan, review the terms of reference (after 18 months or earlier if deemed necessary by the AGR); and to support coordination of tasks undertaken by the AGR.

The co-chairs will be required to understand the principles of good quality research; understand the *Pacific Women* program principles and implementation approach; contribute in a full, constructive and objective manner in the review of research proposal and initiatives; take ownership of decisions made by the AGR; maintain confidentiality; self-assess and identify potential conflicts of interest and raise with the co-chair prior to the conflict affecting assessments.

Accountability

The AGR has identified the need to be accountable to women in the Pacific. This can be demonstrated through identifying, shaping and participating in activities that provide the opportunity to share research that has been guided by the AGR with Pacific women at various fora and through dissemination of research on the *Pacific Women* website and through other means. The AGR will be guided by the Research Strategy Implementation Plan which will be reflected in the *Pacific Women* Support Unit Annual Work Plan. Progress on the Annual Work Plan is reported six monthly. Participation in the AGR is an active role with individuals requested to participate in or respond to at least 50% of meetings and tasks undertaken by the AGR. Should a member be unresponsive or unable to meet this expectation, the *Pacific Women* Support Unit will discuss availability or limitation directly with the member, and recommend a course of action to be shared with the AGR and DFAT. If a replacement is required, this will be discussed, nominated and agreed by the Group with approval from DFAT.

Tenure

Membership of the AGR is voluntary and for a period of two years. In the first term, to ensure continuity, fifty per cent of the membership may be asked to remain for an additional year. Members may need to seek endorsement for participation from their organisation or employer. *Pacific Women* may invite members to attend up to four meetings over a two-year period. Members can delegate meeting attendance and/or work on AGR business to suitable alternate persons from their organisation, except in the case of members who do not represent an organisation. Members carry no responsibilities in the governance, stewardship or management of the *Pacific Women* program. These responsibilities rest with DFAT.

Conflict of interest

An Assessment Tool (Annex 6) to identify actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest has been developed jointly by the AGR and the *Pacific Women* Support Unit in line with current DFAT research guidance.¹⁴ Consideration of conflict of interest situations should be a standing agenda item at AGR meetings.

Working arrangements

The following will guide the way in which the AGR conducts its work and provides advice to DFAT, coordinated and facilitated by the *Pacific Women* Support Unit as the Secretariat. The co-chairs will support the leadership of the group, with the *Pacific Women* Support Unit providing secretarial

¹⁴ DFAT Research Guidance Note December 2016

support to the co-chairs and the whole group, and ensuring that they have the information required to inform their work in a timely manner.

AGR members will be requested to provide advice and carry out associated tasks in the context of the Research Strategy Annual Implementation Plan. This plan will be discussed and agreed to by the AGR in consultation with the co-chairs and progress monitored and reviewed at AGR meetings.

The work of AGR members may vary in terms of inputs and availability to respond to requests. For example, *Pacific Women* may request time-bound inputs of all or some members, such as review of research proposals, Terms of Reference, research reports and knowledge / information products.

Other requests that are not part of the Research Strategy Implementation Plan might be targeted to the expertise of certain members and may involve development or review of research projects. Such requests should be recorded at the next AGR meeting as a standing agenda item. Membership of the informal Pacific Gender Research Network - formed in the June 2016 meeting - remains open and active members may also be approached to contribute to AGR work.

Meetings

The AGR will meet up to four times over a two-year period. Where possible, meetings will be organised to coincide with other opportunities to bring researchers together, such as at international conferences, or take place via electronic meeting platforms.

Each member will be sent advice of meetings, venue and travel arrangements four weeks prior to the meeting. An agenda of proposed business and other relevant documentation will be sent to all members approximately 10 days prior to the meeting.

A summary record of meetings will be distributed to members within 14 days of the meeting.

Meetings to discuss ongoing business may need to be convened at shorter notice on occasion.

Expenses

DFAT will meet all costs associated with AGR meetings, including travel, accommodation and per diems. No sitting fees will be paid and therefore it will be up to the members to negotiate participation with their organisation.

Annex 3 Advisory Group on Research (AGR) Members

Members

Dr. Margaret Mishra, University of the South Pacific, Fiji

Dr Betty Lovai, University of Papua New Guinea, Papua New Guinea

Susana Taua'a, National University of Samoa, Samoa

Dr Nicole Haley, Australian National University, Australia

Dr Yvonne Underhill-Sem, University of Auckland, New Zealand

Megan Chisholm, CARE International, Vanuatu

Dr Milika Sobey, Independent Consultant, Fiji

Heidi Tyedmers, Independent Consultant Vanuatu

Kim Robertson, Pacific Community, Vanuatu / Fiji

Linda Petersen, *Pacific Women* Support Unit

Alternate members

Dr Iwona Kolodziejczyk, Divine Word University, Papua New Guinea

Sarah Whitfield, CARE International, Fiji

Veena Singh, Pacific Community, Fiji

Annex 4 Research Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

| Area of Inquiry | Focus of Monitoring | Monitoring Data Sources | Focus of Evaluation | Evaluation of Data Sources |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| KRA 1: Pacific Women has strengthened processes to support and promote quality gender research | | | | |
| To what extent does <i>Pacific Women</i> have strengthened systems to support quality gender research? | 1.1: Establish <i>Pacific Women</i> Advisory Group on Research (AGR) 1.2: Finalise <i>Pacific Women</i> Research Strategy 1.3: Convene Research Advisory Group meeting twice a year 1.4: Develop and document <i>Pacific Women</i> processes to support identification and assessment of research projects, including guidelines for ethics and quality assurance as part of the Research Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advisory Group established - Strategy finalised - Number of Advisory Group meetings convened - Advisory Group meeting minutes - Research processes finalised | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perspectives of Advisory Group members on the quality of <i>Pacific Women</i> research processes - Perspectives of partners on <i>Pacific Women</i> research processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews / feedback from Advisory Group members - Interviews with partners who submitted research proposals (both successful and unsuccessful) |
| KRA 2: Pacific Women gender research priorities are identified and actioned | | | | |
| To what extent were research priorities that address gender identified? | 2.1: Outline and document a process for identifying and prioritising research projects as part of the research strategy 2.2: Develop and inventory of all <i>Pacific Women</i> -funded research 2.3: Establish a centralised research database, which is accessible through the <i>Pacific Women</i> website 2.4: Promote research database through various communication mediums (social media, newsletter, partner events) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Process outlined and documented in the Research Strategy - Inventory developed, updated and accessible through the <i>Pacific Women</i> website - Database website / social media analytics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perspectives of program stakeholders that the right research priorities have been identified - Stakeholder satisfaction and self-identified use of the research database | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key informant interviews with a selection of program stakeholders - Stakeholders could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFAT • Pacific University representatives • Australia/NZ University representatives • <i>Pacific Women</i> AGR • Selection of program partners |
| To what extent were identified research priorities actioned? | 2.5: Commission a minimum of two research projects a year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of research projects commissioned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perspectives of program stakeholders that the right research priorities have been commissioned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholder interviews and / or - Online survey |

| Area of Inquiry | Focus of Monitoring | Monitoring Data Sources | Focus of Evaluation | Evaluation of Data Sources |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| KRA 3: The Pacific region has strengthened capacity to carry out gender research | | | | |
| To what extent does the Pacific region have strengthened capacity to support quality gender research? | <p>3.1: Establish research selection criteria that ensures all <i>Pacific Women</i>-funded research identifies a Pacific partner institution</p> <p>3.2: <i>Pacific Women</i>-funded research provides capacity developments to Pacific gender researchers (mentoring, training, scholarships, etc.)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of research proposals received - Number of research proposals that identify a Pacific partner institution - Number of capacity development and mentoring activities provided to Pacific researchers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perspectives of program stakeholders that there is strengthened capacity to carry out gender research in the Pacific region - Perspectives of Pacific researchers who received capacity development activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholder interviews - Focus group or interviews with Pacific researchers who received capacity development activities - Research evaluation that looks at increased capacity in the region |
| KRA 4: Gender research informs policy and practice | | | | |
| To what extent are research findings being disseminated and used? | <p>4.1: Produce gender research knowledge and communication products that provide program and policy recommendations</p> <p>4.2: Disseminate gender research knowledge and communication products through communication mediums, e.g. Pacific Women website, newsletter, policy dialogues, networks, social media etc.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of knowledge products produced and disseminated - Number of mediums through which research is disseminated - Website analytics for online research products - Number of research dialogues convened | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence that program stakeholders have seen and used research learning products - Perspectives from program partners that the <i>Pacific Women</i> research learning product were useful and informed programming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholder interviews - Online survey - Case studies |
| To what extent are there strengthened links between gender research and policy and practice? | <p>4.3: Convene annual research policy dialogue</p> <p>4.4: Provide support to partners to convene 'research to policy' events</p> <p>4.5: Establish Pacific gender research portal</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of research to policy dialogues convened - Number of events supported - Research portal scoped and established | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perspectives of program stakeholders regarding the usefulness of the portal - Perspectives of dialogue participants on the usefulness of policy dialogues - Evidence of research informing programming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews with stakeholders who utilise the portal - Interviews with stakeholders who do not utilise the portal - Online survey - Documented examples of how research informed programming choices and practice (case studies/partner interviews etc.) |

Annex 5 Research Strategy Risk Management Plan

The Risk Management Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to monitor and update known risks, incorporate any emerging risks and ensure compliance with changes to DFAT's risk management approaches. DFAT's Aid Investment Risk Rating Matrix (below) is used as the basis for the risk assessment in this Plan.

| Likelihood | Likelihood | | Consequences | | |
|----------------|------------|----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Negligible | Minor | Moderate | Major | Severe |
| Almost Certain | Moderate | Moderate | High | Very High | Very High |
| Likely | Moderate | Moderate | High | High | Very High |
| Possible | Low | Moderate | High | High | High |
| Unlikely | Low | Low | Moderate | Moderate | High |
| Rare | Low | Low | Moderate | Moderate | High |

Resources

Key to abbreviations: SU = *Pacific Women* Support Unit; DFAT = Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; AGR = Advisory Group on Research.

| Risk Event | L | C | R | Risk Treatment | Responsibility |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Programmatic Risk | | | | | |
| <i>Pacific Women</i> commissioned research is not high quality and does not meet agreed ethical and quality assurance processes and standards | Possible | Major | High | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes for selecting and reviewing <i>Pacific Women</i> commissioned research will include review of ethics and quality standards (refer to Annex 7) Researchers and research partners will establish monitoring processes to ensure quality research standards are upheld (refer to Annex 7) Funding and/or support for research may be withdrawn if the project does not meet agreed ethical and quality standards | SU, AGR, DFAT |
| <i>Pacific Women</i> research does not deliver on commitment to build the capacity of Pacific gender researchers and Pacific research institutions and partners | Possible | Major | High | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All <i>Pacific Women</i> commissioned research must identify a Pacific partner and outline capacity development activities and timelines as part of the proposal development stage Research partnerships will be closely monitored by the Support Unit to ensure that research partners deliver on capacity development activities (refer to Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for KRA3 in Annex 4) Funding and/or support for research may be withdrawn if capacity building is not delivered | SU, AGR, DFAT |

| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners will include reports on capacity building activities that focus on building gender research capacity of Pacific researchers and Pacific research institutions in their annual review (refer to Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for KRA3 in Annex 4) | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Risk Event | L | C | R | Risk Treatment | Responsibility |
| Programmatic Risk | | | | | |
| <i>Pacific Women</i> commissioned research is not used to inform program or policy decision-making | Possible | Major | High | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All research funding proposals must identify policy outputs and recommendations and a research dissemination plan at the proposal development stage Policy briefs are developed and widely disseminated to organisations developing and/or influencing policy Recognition that not all research will be immediately actionable to inform policy or decision-making | SU, AGR, DFAT |
| Institutional Risks | | | | | |
| <i>Pacific Women</i> commissioned research duplicates research already completed or underway | Possible | Moderate | High | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of research priorities and proposals by members of the AGR All research proposals must provide evidence of research need, including reference to existing or planned research or identification gaps All research must provide a communications strategy to ensure knowledge is shared | SU, AGR, DFAT |

Annex 6 Advisory Group on Research (AGR) Conflict of Interest

Introduction

Members of the *Pacific Women* Advisory Group on Research (AGR) take the issue of conflict of interest very seriously. A rigorous position must be taken in order to maintain the credibility of the AGR and the *Pacific Women* program, and to ensure that matters before the advisory group are subjected to fair and reasonable appraisal.

Members of the AGR include active researchers with outstanding backgrounds in research, or policy-makers engaged in research informed policy-making, or members of civil society engaged in research informed activity. As such, members will invariably have connections with some applicants and conflicts of interest will arise. In some cases, members of the AGR will be participants / potential participants in matters under review of the AGR. The simple approach is that if there is any doubt, the individual AGR member will declare a conflict of interest.

Definition of conflict of interest

In the AGR review process, individuals are appointed as peer reviewers in their own right, for their specific skills and expertise in both research and the assessment of research.

In this context, a conflict of interest is any situation where an AGR member has an interest that conflicts, might conflict, or might be perceived to conflict with the interests of *Pacific Women* running a fair, impartial and effective peer review process.

While the conflict of interest itself is unlikely to be improper, it could lead to improper conduct or allegations of such conduct if not declared and managed appropriately.

Principles

The AGR policy on conflict of interest is guided by the following principles:

- all conflicts of interest must be declared and recorded;
- a conflict of interest can be declared at any time during the process but must be done as soon as practical;
- the action required depends on the nature of the conflict (see Section 2);
- all actions on declared conflicts will be recorded; and
- individual members can exclude themselves from discussions on a particular project even if this is not required by the policy.

Management of a conflict of interest

When performing AGR member duties, if a sitting member believes she or he is likely to have a conflict of interest with regard to any issue, s/he should complete the checklist for identification of conflict (Section 4) to determine whether the conflict is real. If determined that there is a conflict of interest, or a *perceived* conflict of interest, as stated in the AGR terms of reference, the member should declare the potential conflict of interest to the co-chairs as soon as it is known or at the commencement of the relevant meeting when the AGR is considering the agenda, whichever comes first. Conflict of interest should be a regular item on the meeting agenda.

An AGR member should:

- disclose the existence and the nature of the interest;
- provide details of the interest as requested by other AGR members to determine the nature and extent of the interest; and
- in the case of a material personal interest (defined in Section 3), leave the meeting while other members discuss the appropriate level of participation by that member in the consideration of the matter.

The specific actions required will depend on the nature of the conflict, which will be considered by the co-chairs and other AGR members within the parameters of DFAT policy on conflict of interest as explained below.

If a material personal interest is established in a matter for consideration, the AGR member must not be present during the AGR consideration or decision. However, prior to their departure from the meeting, the AGR may invite them to provide input based on their expertise and answer questions on the issues from other AGR members.

A member who discloses a non-material interest may participate fully in the consideration of the relevant item. The member may choose to be absent or not participate in the consideration or decision on the item.

A member may make a declaration at any time if a matter comes to his or her attention and the member has not already made an appropriate declaration. A member may also give a standing notice of an interest. This will remain current until a new member joins the AGR or the nature of the interest changes in any material way.

Co-chairs, in consultation with the other AGR members, are responsible for determining whether a declared interest is material or not. Where a chair has declared a *material* or *non-material* interest, the AGR members are together responsible for determining whether the interest is material or not. Co-chairs are responsible for ensuring the appropriate participation of AGR members during board meetings.

Types of interest

A **material personal interest** is an interest or duty that is significant enough to divide the AGR member's loyalties. This would include an interest in, or duty to, another entity that interferes with the AGR member's ability to bring independent judgement to bear, or where there would be reasonable perception of such a conflicting interest. Material personal interest includes direct pecuniary interests where the AGR member or their immediate family, family trust or business partner's business interests are affected. It also includes material non-pecuniary interests, for example when an AGR member is an office-holder or employee of an organisation or association representing members whose interests are directly affected by AGR matters.

A **non-material interest** is an interest where a person, company or organisation with which the AGR member has an affiliation is affected by an item, either non-financially or financially. AGR members may classify such interests as non-material. In so classifying, the AGR will satisfy itself that the point of benefit is far removed from a matter and does not disqualify the AGR member from participation in the consideration of that matter.

All declarations of interest and actions taken should be recorded in the AGR meeting minutes.

When all conflicts of interest are considered, the AGR co-chairs may decide that the remaining expertise is not sufficient for assessment of a particular matter. In this case, an additional opinion from an external independent person may be sought by the co-chairs.

Checklist for conflict identification

The purpose of this tool is to provide a checklist that you can work through when you are faced with a situation in which you think you might have an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest.

This form is for your own personal use, but if you have concerns about whether or not you have a conflict of interest after completing the form, you should complete the *Pacific Women* conflict of interest declaration form (at the end of this document).

First steps

1. Think about or describe the matter being considered and the specific situation in which you are involved.
2. Think about your professional duty and responsibility to the Advisory Group on Research (AGR).

Making an assessment

In assessing whether you have an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest, it may be helpful to ask yourself the following questions. The test when assessing these situations is to ask yourself, 'could this conflict with my professional duties and/or my responsibility to the AGR?'

Questions to ask yourself about the situation

| YES | No | |
|-----|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | Would I or anyone associated with me benefit from or be detrimentally affected by my action for the AGR? |
| | | Could there be benefits for me in the future that could cast doubt on my objectivity? |
| | | Do I have a current or previous personal, professional or financial relationship or association of any significance with an interested party? |
| | | Would my reputation, that of the AGR, <i>Pacific Women</i> program, Government of Australia or the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade a relative, friend or associate stand to be enhanced or damaged because of my input on a decision or action for the AGR? |
| | | Do I or a relative, friend or associate of theirs stand to gain or lose financially in some covert or unexpected way in relation to this action for the AGR? |
| | | Do I hold any personal or professional views or biases that may lead others to reasonably conclude that I am not an appropriate person to deal with the matter? |
| | | Have I contributed in a private capacity in any way to the matter my agency is dealing with? |
| | | Have I made any promises or commitments in relation to the matter? |
| | | Have I received a benefit or hospitality from someone who stands to gain or lose from my proposed decision or action? |
| | | Am I a member of an association, club or professional organisation or do I have particular ties and affiliations with organisations or individuals who stand to gain or lose by my proposed decision or action? |
| | | Could this situation have an influence on any future employment opportunities outside my current official duties? |
| | | Could there be any other benefits or factors that could cast doubts on my objectivity? |
| | | Would a reasonable member of the community be confident of my ability to act impartially and in the interests of my profession? |
| | | Do I still have any doubts about my proposed decision or action? |

Questions to ask yourself about the perception others might have about the circumstances

| Yes | No | |
|-----|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | Would a fair-minded member of the public perceive the circumstances to be a conflict of interest? |
| | | Could my involvement in this matter cast doubt on my integrity or on my agency's integrity? |
| | | If I saw someone else doing this, would I suspect that they might have a conflict of interest? |
| | | If I did participate in this action or decision, would I be happy if my colleagues and the public became aware of my involvement and any association or connection? |
| | | Could there be interest in my actions by the media as a conflict of interest? |
| | | Is the matter or issue one of great public interest or controversy where my proposed decision or action could attract greater scrutiny by others? |

Can I now make a decision about whether there is a conflict of interest?

These questions are designed to help you think about whether or not you have a conflict of interest. There is no specific cut-off to the number of answers that qualify you as having a conflict. If after completing the exercise you feel that you do have an actual, perceived, or potential conflict, your next step should be to complete the conflict of interest disclosure form.

If you are unsure of whether or not you have a conflict, it is recommended that you do complete a conflict of interest disclosure form on the next page.

Declaration

This form is to be completed at relevant stages of an activity where it becomes apparent that there is a potential conflict of interest and submitted to the *Pacific Women* Support Unit Knowledge Management and Research Officer.

Complete Section 1 if there may be a *perceived* conflict of interest and the member wishes to affirm that there a conflict of interest does NOT exist.

Complete Section 2 if there *is* a conflict of interest.

Section 1: DECLARATION THAT A CONFLICT OF INTEREST DOES NOT EXIST

EOI / Tender / Matter or Issue:

.....

The following people:

| Name | Organisation | Signature |
|------|--------------|-----------|
| | | |
| | | |

Declare that to the best of their knowledge they *do not have* (if a conflict exists record name at Section 2):

Any financial interest in the EOI / Tender / Matter or Issue: [insert description]

.....

Declare that to the best of their knowledge they do not have:

| | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Please tick | |
| | Any immediate relatives or close friends with a financial interest in the EOI / Tender / Matter or Issue. |
| | Any personal bias or inclination which would in any way affect decisions in relation to EOI / Tender / Matter or Issue. |
| | Any personal obligation, allegiance or loyalty which would in any way affect decisions in relation to EOI / Tender / Matter or Issue. |

They have not:

| | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Please tick | |
| | Received or are aware of any offered inducements in the form of gifts, favours or payment of any kind. |
| | Had any dealings of a private or personal nature with representatives of the EOI / Tender / Matter or Issue. |

The people listed above undertake to make a further declaration detailing any conflict, potential conflict or apparent conflict, which may arise during the contract period, and agree to abstain from any decision where such a conflict arises.

Section 2. DETAILS OF A CONFLICT OF INTEREST – If a conflict exists provide the name of the person.

Name.....

Organisation.....

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Authorised by (name) | Signature | Date | _/_/_ |
| SU SECRETARY USE ONLY | Received |/...../..... | Actioned _/_/_ |

Annex 7 Ethical Practice Guidelines and Research Proposal Review Process

Background

Pacific Women is committed to ethical research practice which considers women's lived experiences and is attentive to how power is gendered and impacts individuals and communities. *Pacific Women* is also interested in interrogating the multiple power dynamics of research relationships. At a minimum, *Pacific Women* commissioned research should:

- meet local country and institutional research requirements (where appropriate), and obtain research permits if required;
- be grounded in the commitment to do no harm;
- demonstrate sensitivity to, appreciation and care for communities and individuals involved in and impacted by the research process;
- strive to develop nuanced contextual awareness and genuine engagement that is attentive to diversity and the needs, interests and impacts on vulnerable groups and individuals;
- include contextually appropriate feedback loops to groups and communities involved in the research;
- strive to ensure that research findings are accessible to a broader public, and make research to action/policy links wherever possible; and
- seek a transformative impact on the causes of gender inequality.

DFAT, as the funder of *Pacific Women* activities, subscribes to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and the Research for Development Impact Network *Principles and Guidelines for Ethical Research and Evaluation in Development (Updated July 2017)*, available [here](#). The ACFID principles and guidelines for ethical research include the following principles:

- Respect for human beings – recognition for each human being's intrinsic value and a commitment to participant welfare over and above research goals.
- Beneficence – action done is for the benefit of others and is committed to doing no harm and ensuring that benefits outweigh potential harms, and risks are identified and mitigated.
- Research merit and integrity – well-justified, meets relevant quality criteria and is conducted by those with sufficient experience and competence.
- Justice – engaging in fair processes, fair distribution of burdens and benefits, and ensuring that research findings are accessible

Beyond these ethical principles and guidelines, *Pacific Women* is also committed to the practice of research which captures the diversity of women's experience, explores the gendered manifestations of power, and interrogates the operation of gender norms¹⁵, ultimately seeking a transformative impact on the causes of gender inequality. Guidance on what an approach to ethical feminist research should consider is outlined in the International Women's Development Agency's *Feminist Research Framework (November 2017)* available [here](#).

Research Proposal Review Process

Pacific Women, with support from the Government of Australia, has a deep commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women in the Pacific region. All research undertaken or commissioned as part of the program will be reviewed to ensure it is of high quality, is guided by ethical processes prior to commencement, and monitored throughout the life of the program. The research proposal review process will be undertaken by the *Pacific Women* Support Unit. The *Pacific Women* AGR will be requested to participate in reviews at significant points, as defined in the AGR Terms of Reference (Annex 2).

[1. Quality Assurance](#)

¹⁵ Based on the principles of feminist research outlined on page 13 of IWDA's Feminist Research Framework.

Before research is undertaken or commissioned as part of the *Pacific Women* program, it will be reviewed to ensure it is appropriate for the program, of quality design, and guided by integrity. Research integrity means that the research uses sound methods appropriate for the research context and is honestly and accurately described.

A research quality review will consider whether:

- The researchers have expertise in a discipline relevant to the project;
- There is a link between the research question and the Pacific Women program;
- The methodology is informed by local knowledge and prior research in the area;
- The project includes Pacific partners;
- The researchers and the proposed research site have the capacity to conduct the research;
- There is the appropriate reference group in place to monitor the research; and
- There is a process in place for regular progress and status updates to *Pacific Women* and the local community where the research is taking place.

Quality will be reviewed by the Knowledge Management and Research Specialist. Other Support Unit members and/or the *Pacific Women* AGR will be included as required.

If the review team identify any limitations, the researcher will be asked to revise noted sections and provide a response detailing how suggestions have been incorporated, including where changes have not been made and justification for this.

2. Assessing, Minimising and Managing Risk

Reviewing the risks in a research project is an integral part of the research and ethical review process.

Risk assessment in *Pacific Women* funded research projects will be guided generally by the *Research Strategy Risk Management Plan* (Annex 5) and will include consideration of the following elements:

- identifying the risks and kinds of harm that may occur throughout the research and assessing likelihood and severity;
- identifying who (participants and/or others) the risks or harm may affect, and how they might be affected;
- establishing approaches for minimising, managing and monitoring the risks;
- identifying potential benefits and who is likely to receive them;
- consider and discuss whether the benefits of the research exceed the potential harm.

Each of these elements are included in the *Research Proposal and Ethics Review Form* (Annex 8) that will be completed by all researchers before undertaking a Pacific Women funded research project.

3. Research Proposal and Ethics Review Process

Pacific Women in its commitment to ethical, power sensitive and transformational research practice takes the research review process seriously. The *Pacific Women Research Proposal and Ethics Review Form* (Annex 8) should be treated less as a checklist and more as a bridge to ethical research practice.

It is envisioned that the following steps will comprise the Pacific Women research review process:

- (i) Review of relevant documents, including but not limited to:
 - a. ACFID *Principles and Guidelines for Ethical Research and Evaluation in Development* (Updated July 2017), available [here](#)
 - b. IWDA's *Feminist Research Framework* (November 2017) available [here](#)
- (ii) Apply for institutional research ethics approval (if applicable).
- (iii) Identify and apply for local, country level research and/or ethics approval (where appropriate). Guidance on who to contact may be available from the RDI Network's *Ethics Approval Processes Pacific* (July 2017) available [here](#).
- (iv) Complete the *Pacific Women Research Proposal and Ethics Review Form* (Annex 8)

The review process will be undertaken by the *Pacific Women* Support Unit. The *Pacific Women* AGR will be requested to participate in reviews at significant points. Once the ethical review is complete and approval has been granted the researchers will receive notification that research can proceed.

4. Breaches to Ethical Research Processes

Pacific Women takes the issue of ethical research very seriously. If there are transgressions from or breaches of ethical processes, the researchers will be requested to rectify the problem. If the issue cannot be rectified without risk of causing harm to participants, the project and/or participating organisations, support for the project may be withdrawn. Withdrawal of support could include withdrawing or halting funds, refusing to publish, refusing to endorse, or publishing a statement of dis-endorsement or other measure as appropriate to the project.

5. Publications and Knowledge Products

Research is most valuable when results can be used by the intended audience. To facilitate efficient and effective knowledge translation of research results, *Pacific Women* will negotiate appropriate knowledge products for each research project prior to commencement. These will be guided by Section 8 of the Research Strategy (Communicating and Disseminating Research) and may include, but are not limited to, reports, briefing notes, case studies and discussion papers. Knowledge products are to be developed in accordance with templates provided by *Pacific Women*, where available.

Publications and knowledge products will be reviewed by the *Pacific Women* Knowledge Management and Research Specialist. Other Support Unit members and/or the *Pacific Women* AGR will be involved as required.

Reviews will be used to locate inconsistencies and evidence gaps in draft knowledge products. Reviewers may provide feedback in relation to stylistic inconsistencies, areas of emphasis within draft documents, methodological queries, contextual issues and the application of notions of thinking and working politically to achieve positive developmental change.

Suggested amendments will be provided to the researchers. Researchers will be asked to revise knowledge products and respond detailing how suggestions have been incorporated, including where changes have not been made and justification for this.

Annex 8 Pacific Women Research Proposal and Ethics Review Form

| Ethical Research Considerations | Researcher comments | Reviewer comments |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <p>Please Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sections A, B and G are to be completed for ALL Pacific Women-funded research projects. Sections C, D, E and F do not need to be completed IF another ethics approval process has or will be completed AND the other ethics process addresses each point. Where a point is not covered in the other ethics process, please address it in the appropriate section below. No response should exceed 200 words (except where specified). Any ethics applications that exceed this word limit will be returned to the researcher/s for revision prior to review. | | |
| A. Research Team | | |
| A1. Who is on the research team? Please identify all research team members, and indicate who will act as the research team leader/coordinator. | | |
| A2. Briefly detail the relevant research experience of the team (you can also attach CVs of research team members where available). | | |
| A3. Is there a Research Partnership Agreement in place? If so, with whom? Are there any issues to flag in this partnership? | | |
| B. Research Overview and Purpose | | |
| B1. Research Project Title | | |
| B2. What question(s) is the research seeking to answer? | | |
| B3. What does existing literature and related research tell us about why this research is important? Please attach a summary literature review of not more than one page. | | |
| B4. In brief, how does the proposed research align with the Pacific Women Research Strategy and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework ? | | |
| B5. What are the project timelines? | | |
| B6. Where will the research be conducted? (please identify country, island, region, town and/or village as appropriate). | | |
| B7. Is this a student research project? If so, how will the student be supervised or monitored (please identify who will provide the supervision/monitoring and attach a letter of support/commitment from the supervisor)? | | |
| B8. Has this research also been subject to ethics review in another institution (or will it)? (If no, please proceed to Section C. If yes, please attach a final copy of the relevant ethics application and approval and proceed to Section G) | No Yes Institution Name: Date Approved: | |
| C. Research Methodology | | |
| C1. What research methodology/ies will you use? Please also attach any proposed data collection tools that have been developed (Please note that rolling approvals are available for iterative research design, such as for tools that are yet to be developed.) | | |

| Ethical Research Considerations | Researcher comments | Reviewer comments |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| C2. Does this research require active participation of subjects (i.e. will people be interviewed, surveyed, participate in focus groups, have data tracked)? If yes, please describe the data collection process/es. | . | |
| C3. Please provide the anticipated number and general profile of proposed participants including any relevant details (e.g. ethnicity, gender, age range). | | |
| C4. Will any potential participant groups or individuals (who should or could be included) be excluded in this research? If yes, please explain why. | | |
| C5. Will participants be reimbursed or compensated in any way for their participation in this research? If yes, please provide details and explain how this will be transacted. (Please note that it is unethical to provide compensation that is significant enough that it becomes difficult for people to say no, even if they do not want to participate). | | |
| C6. Do any conflicts of interest exist between the researcher(s) and any of the participants? If yes, please briefly outline what they are and how you will seek to mitigate or manage this. | | |
| D. Potential Risks and Benefits | | |
| D1. What are the potential risks associated with the research and research methodology and how will they be mitigated? Please consider physical, emotional, psychological, social, legal, financial, political or professional risks in your assessment <i>and</i> potential risks to researchers and research teams. (1-page maximum) A Risk Assessment Matrix can be provided as well. | . | |
| D2. What are the potential benefits of the research? (1 page maximum) | | |
| D3. Do the research benefits outweigh the managed research risks? Please explain. | | |
| D4. How does your research plan include consideration of safety and security (including the safety and security of the research team)? Please refer to your institutional policies (where appropriate). | | |
| D5. Is your research dealing with topics or information that could be considered sensitive? If yes, please describe in detail the particular measures you will take to 'do no harm' and any extra protocols that will be in place (for example, if the research includes the potential for disclosures of gender-based violence, or requests for assistance or referrals, what measures do you have in place to manage this)? | | |
| E. Approvals, Consent and Confidentiality | | |
| E1. Does this research meet the requirements of the country in which it is being conducted (i.e. country permissions, permits, ethics approval process)? If yes, what requirements have been met and approvals/permits obtained? If not, explain why not. | | |

| Ethical Research Considerations | Researcher comments | Reviewer comments |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| E2. Does this research require any local permission (i.e. provincial authorities, local leaders or community groups)? If yes, please explain how this permission will be secured. | | |
| E3. Consent to participate is required for all participants. Please explain how this will be achieved (i.e. verbal or written consent). Please submit a copy of the written plain language consent form or verbal consent script. Please note participants should be provided with information on: how results will be used, where they can access the findings, limitations of confidentiality, anticipated risks and benefits, and how consent can be withdrawn. | | |
| E4. How will competence to provide consent be determined? If there are any conditions which may limit participants from providing consent, how will this be managed? | | |
| E5. Will any photographs, videos and/or audio be used? If yes, is this included in the consent form? | | |
| F. Management of Data | | |
| F1. How will data be recorded and who will have access to the data? | | |
| F2. How will the data be securely stored (including in the field)? Please describe how any sensitive data will be stored and managed in particular, the length of time data will be stored, and how data will be securely disposed of at the end of the storage period. | | |
| G. Research to Action | | |
| G1. Who is the intended audience for the research and how will the research be made available? | | |
| G2. Will data/findings be made public? If no, why not? If yes, in which forums such as websites, publications, conferences etc. will the research findings be made public? | | |
| G3. How, when, and in what format will results of the research be provided to the research participants? | | |
| G4. What are the proposed policy and advocacy strategies attached to the research findings? How will these be actioned? | | |
| G5. What are the proposed communication strategies attached to the research findings? Please consider the development of at least one summary, plain language, translated or other more accessible communications output. | | |
| G6. Please describe how your proposed research seeks to have a transformative impact on the causes of gender equality. | | |
| H. Any other comments or relevant information | | |
| | | |

Please attach copies of:

- Consent forms or verbal script
- Data collection forms, including questions/questionnaires or guided discussion themes to be included in interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc.
- Institutional ethics application form (in full) and proof of ethics approval (where appropriate).

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|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reviewer(s) | |
| Date reviewed | |
| Result of initial review: | <p>Approved – no amendments required Approved – subject to minor amendments Resubmit to Support Unit in response to the listed concerns Rejected – not supported by Support Unit</p> |
| Result of second review (if required): | <p>Approved – no amendments required Approved – subject to minor amendments Resubmit to Support Unit in response to the listed concerns Rejected – not supported by Support Unit</p> |
| Other comments: | |