



PACIFIC WOMEN
SHAPING PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT



Research Strategy

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development

June 2017 – June 2022

Contents

1	Context	1
2	The Research Strategy (2017–2022)	3
3	Aim, Objectives and Key Result Areas	3
4	Principles, Criteria and Process to Inform Selection of Research Priorities and Activities	5
5	Roles and Responsibilities	6
6	Partnerships	6
7	Building Research Capacity	7
8	Communicating and Disseminating Research	7
9	Research Ethics	8
10	Monitoring and Evaluation of the Research Strategy	8
11	Risk Management	8
Annex 1	Research Strategy Implementation Plan (June 2017–May 2018)	9
Annex 2	Advisory Group on Research (AGR) Terms of Reference	10
Annex 3	Advisory Group on Research Members	14
Annex 4	Research Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Plan	15
Annex 5	Research Strategy Risk Management Plan	17
Annex 6	Advisory Group on Research Conflict of Interest	19
Annex 7	Research Quality Assurance and Ethical Review Process	24

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 intended 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 intended 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 intended 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 better understanding of the complex, multi-layered, and intersecting nature of these

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

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

challenges. Building regional capacity in research that addresses gender inequality in the Pacific is 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 of a group of gender specialists representing 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 fifty 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. Acknowledgement was also made to 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 understandings 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. It will also go towards 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, 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 merit, worth or significance of *Pacific Women*-funded activities.

Based on 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.

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 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/514977/Research_uptake_guidance.pdf

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 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 Pacific⁸, and 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 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 – draft* (2017)

3 Aim, Objectives and Key Result Areas

Aim

The aim of this study is to support high-quality, locally-appropriate and sustainable research that addresses and informs responses to gender inequality in the Pacific region.

- **Objective 1:** To support gender research that is considered, contextually relevant and informs *Pacific Women* programing.

⁷ 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

⁸ *ibid*

- **Objective 2:** To advance the quality, commitment to and resourcing of gender research in the Pacific region.

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

KRA1: 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 through policies, programs and legislative changes.

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 KRA2, *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 outcome areas (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 researchers⁹ 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 KRA3, 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 KRA4, *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 and abide by country-specific research principles and processes as well as follow DFAT's ethical guidelines (see Section 9).

Principle 4: The knowledge products and reporting generated by research will be of a high quality and made available and accessible to a wide audience (see Section 9).

Research projects will provide opportunities for collaboration and capacity building of Pacific gender researchers⁹, 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

The following criteria will be applied to the selection of research priorities. Informed by DFAT's Selection Criteria for Research proposals, the criteria includes:

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

¹⁰ Taken from DFAT Selection Criteria for Research proposals

- alignment with the *Pacific Women* program outcomes;
- 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 submission; call 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* intended 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* AGR 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 AGR¹¹. 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*;
- 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 regional and national level.

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

6 Partnerships

The Research Strategy seeks to encourage collaborative research partnerships to build capacity of Pacific-based researchers⁹ and institutions. Partnerships may be with individual researchers,

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.

research institutions, local Pacific NGOs and international NGOs, civil society, regional organisations, government 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 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 and the need to support national ownership of gender equality commitments and sustainable change.

This aligns with the Research Strategy prioritising capacity development and commitment to 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 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 *Pacific Women* commissioned research to be influential, research findings need to be tailored to meet the needs of partners and stakeholders and to be disseminated in a timely manner and as widely as possible.

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 Research Ethics

DFAT subscribes to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) *Guidelines for Ethical Research and Evaluation in Development*. All *Pacific Women*-funded research activities will be required to meet the ACFID guidelines and national research ethics requirements where relevant and applicable. *Pacific Women* may require research submissions to complete its own ethics and quality assurance process. At a minimum, *Pacific Women* commissioned research should:

- meet local country or institutional research requirements, including obtaining research permits if required;
- be sensitive to and show respect for communities and individuals involved in the research;
- demonstrate contextual and cultural relevance and appropriateness;
- include feedback loops to researched groups and communities in culturally appropriate ways; and
- identify risks that may arise through the conduct or release of research findings and ways to mitigate them.

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 this 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 appropriate risk monitoring processes are in place to ensure ethical and quality research standards are upheld (Annex 7). 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 Research Strategy Implementation Plan (June 2017–May 2018)

Activity	Responsibility		Due date
	Lead	Support	
KRA1 Pacific Women has strengthened processes to support and promote quality gender research			
1.1 Establish <i>Pacific Women</i> Advisory Group on Research (AGR)	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	AGR	May 2017
1.2 Finalise <i>Pacific Women</i> Research Strategy	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	AGR	June 2017
1.3 Convene AGR meetings twice a year	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	AGR	May 2018
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	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	AGR	May 2018
KRA2 Pacific Women gender research priorities are identified and actioned			
2.1 Outline and document a process for identifying and prioritising research projects as part of the Research Strategy	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	AGR	June 2017
2.2 Develop an inventory of all <i>Pacific Women</i> funded research	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	-	June 2017
2.3 A database of research will be established and accessible through the <i>Pacific Women</i> website	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	-	September 2017
2.4 Promote the research database through various communications mediums	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	-	September 2017
2.5 Commission a minimum of two research projects a year	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	AGR	May 2018
KRA3 The Pacific region has strengthened capacity to carry out gender research			
3.1 Establish research selection criteria that ensures all <i>Pacific Women</i> funded research identifies a Pacific partner institution as part of the Research Strategy	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	AGR, research partner institution	June 2017
3.2 <i>Pacific Women</i> funded research provides capacity development to Pacific gender researchers (mentoring, training, scholarships etc.)	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	AGR, research partner institution	May 2018
KRA4 Gender research informs policy and practice			
4.1 Produce gender research knowledge and communication products that provide program and policy recommendations	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	-	May 2018
4.2 Disseminate gender research knowledge and communication products through communication mediums, e.g. <i>Pacific Women</i> website, newsletter, policy dialogues, networks, social media etc.	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	-	May 2018
4.3 Convene annual research policy dialogue	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	AGR, research partner institution	May 2018
4.4 Provide support to partners to convene 'research to policy' events	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	AGR, research partner institution	May 2018
4.4 Establish Pacific gender research portal	<i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit	AGR	May 2018

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* (PLGED) in 2012. The intended 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.

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* programing 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.

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

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.

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 Research Group (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. DFAT will also be a co-chair. 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 to identify actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest will be 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 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.

¹⁴ DFAT Research Guidance Note December 2016

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 tabled 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 Members

Members

Dr Claire Slatter, University of the South Pacific, Fiji
Dr Betty Lovai, University of Papua New Guinea, Papua New Guinea
Helen Tiaoalii Tanielu, National University of Samoa, Samoa
Dr Nicole Haley, Australian National University, Australia
Dr Yvonne Underhill-Sem, University of Auckland, New Zealand
Megan Chisolm, CARE International, Vanuatu
Meghan Cooper, International Women's Development Agency, Australia
Dr Milika Sobey, Fiji
Dr Heidi Tyedmers, Vanuatu
Kim Robertson, Pacific Community, Vanuatu / Suva
Suzanne Bent, DFAT, Fiji

Alternate members

Dr Andreea Torre, University of the South Pacific
Dr Iwona Kolodziejczyk, Divine Word University, Papua New Guinea
Sarah Whitfield, CARE International, Fiji
Morgane Landel, Pacific Community, Fiji

Annex 4 Research Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Area of Inquiry	Focus of Monitoring	Monitoring Data Sources	Focus of Evaluation	Evaluation Data Sources
KRA1: 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 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 Board meeting minutes – Research processes finalised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Perspectives of Advisory Group members of 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 Board members – Interviews with partners who submitted research proposals (both successful and unsuccessful)
KRA2: 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 an 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 were 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 Data Sources
KRA3: 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 development to Pacific gender researchers (mentoring, training, scholarships etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Number of research proposal 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
KRA4: 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. <i>Pacific Women</i> 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 products were useful and informed programing 	<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 stakeholders regarding the usefulness of the portal – Perspectives of dialogue participants on the usefulness of policy dialogues. – Evidence of research informing programing 	<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 programing 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 risk assessment in this plan.

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 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 	SU, AGR, DFAT

Risk event	L	C	R	Risk Treatment	Responsibility
				review (refer to Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for KRA3 in Annex 4)	
<i>Pacific Women</i> commissioned research is not used to inform program or policy decision-making	Possible	Moderate	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 of gaps – All research must provide a communications strategy to ensure knowledge is shared 	SU, AGR, DFAT

Annex 6 Advisory Group on Research 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 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 Research Quality Assurance and Ethical Review Process

Pacific Women represents a significant commitment from the Government of Australia to support gender equality and 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, guided by ethical processes prior to commencement, and monitored throughout the life of the program. 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, as defined in the AGR terms of reference (Section 5).

Quality assurance

Before research is undertaken or commissioned as part of *Pacific Women*, 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 quality review will consider whether: (i) the researchers have expertise in a discipline relevant to the project; (ii) there is a link between the research question and the *Pacific Women* program; (iii) the methodology is informed by local knowledge and prior research in the area; (iv) the project include Pacific partners; (v) the researchers have obtained the appropriate permissions and local permits; (vi) the researchers and the proposed research site have the capacity to conduct the research; (vii) there is the appropriate reference group in place to monitor the research; and (viii) 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.

Ethical review

All research undertaken or commissioned as part of the program will be reviewed to ensure it is guided by ethical processes and procedures (Section 9). The ACFID *Guidelines for Ethical Research and Evaluation in Development* provides the minimum requirements for DFAT and *Pacific Women* supported research.¹⁵

Researchers will be expected to participate in an ethical review process by a reputable institution, such as a university, which has a formal process and is registered for reviewing research involving human subjects. Evidence of ethical review will be requested before research commences.

If a review process has not been undertaken prior to seeking *Pacific Women* support, researchers will be requested to complete the *Pacific Women* Ethical Research Project Summary¹⁶ (Section 3).

Evidence of an ethical review process or the *Pacific Women* Ethical Research Project Summary must be provided to the *Pacific Women* Support Unit to be reviewed by the Knowledge Management and Research Specialist. Other Support Unit members and/or the *Pacific Women* AGR will be involved in the review process as required.

¹⁵ In addition to the ACFID Guidelines, all research must meet local country or institutional research requirements, including obtaining research permits if required and/or local community ethical guidelines.

¹⁶ Research considered of negligible risk, where any foreseeable risk is no more than inconvenience, may be eligible for an internal assessment of ethical issues rather than a formal ethical review and approval. Such cases might apply to evaluation or post-training research addressing non-sensitive issues or topics, not involving vulnerable groups and using minimal participant time. Assessment of risk will be directed by the ACFID Guidelines.

If the review team identifies 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.

Once the ethical review is complete and approved the researchers will receive notification and research can proceed.

Assessing, minimising and managing ethical risk

Reviewing the ethical acceptability of risks in a research project will be guided by the Research Strategy Risk Management plan (Annex 6) and 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.

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 or causing harm to participants, 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.

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.

Ethical Research Project Summary

Ethical Research consideration	Researcher comments	Reviewer comments
Research overview		
In which country(ies) or region is this research being conducted?		
What are the aims and justification of the research?		
Is this a student research project?	Yes / No If yes, how will the student be supervised and monitored?	
Will independent contractors be used?	Yes / No If yes, how will the independent contractors be monitored?	
Does this research require any local permission (e.g. national, provisional, local leaders or community group)?	Yes / No If yes, how will this permission be secured?	
Does this research meet the requirements of the country in which it is being conducted (e.g. country permissions / permits & ethics)?	Yes / No If yes, what requirements have been met / permits obtained? If no, please explain why not.	
Participation		
Does this research require active participation of subjects (i.e. will people be interviewed, surveyed, participate in focus groups, have data tracked)?	Yes/No If Yes, briefly explain.	
Number of participants		
Please describe the participant groups (e.g. ethnicity or cultural group, gender, women from an area or attending an activity etc.)		
Age range of participants		
How will participants be recruited to participate?		
Will any potential participants be excluded?	Yes / No If yes, please explain why.	
Will participants be provided the opportunity to participate anonymously?	Yes / No If no, please explain the risks to participants if not anonymous and how you will mitigate those risks.	
Will participants receive any compensation? Explain.	Yes / No If no, please explain why not. If yes, please explain how.	
Do any potential conflicts of interest exist between researcher and participant/s?	Yes / No If yes, please explain.	
Is there any reasonable expectation that participants may discuss politically-sensitive information?	Yes / No If yes, please explain the risks to participants if and how you will mitigate those risks.	

Ethical Research consideration	Researcher comments	Reviewer comments
Is there any reasonable expectation that participation in this research will involve any physical, psychological, social, legal, financial or professional risk to individual participants or associated organisations?	Yes / No If yes, please explain the risks to participants if and how you will mitigate those risks.	
Is there any reasonable expectation that any other sensitive information may be discussed?	Yes / No If yes, please explain what that might be, the risks to participants if and how you will mitigate those risks.	
Consent		
Will consent to participate be required from all participants?	Yes / No If no, please explain why not.	
How will consent to participate be collected?	(Please attach a copy of consent forms or verbal script)	
Will all participants be provided full consent information (including where results may be published, how participants can access data / findings, limitations of confidentiality and how consent may be withdrawn)?	Yes / No If no, please explain why not.	
Will participants have the option to have their participation remain confidential?	Yes / No If no, please explain why not and any risks associated with participant data being identifiable.	
Will participants be able to remove consent and withdraw from the research?	Yes / No If no, please explain why not.	
How will competence to provide consent be determined?		
Are there any conditions which may limit the full agency of participants in providing consent and/or participating (e.g. age, impairment)?	Yes / No If yes, how will full consent be acquired?	
Are there any limitations on the consent (i.e. time or following public use)?	Yes / No If yes, please explain.	
Are there any limitations to researcher control of confidentiality (i.e. third party usage, participation in group forums)?	Yes / No If yes, please explain.	
Will any photographs, videos and/or audio be used?	Yes / No If yes, is this included in the consent form?	
Is external institutional consent or approval required (i.e. ethics approval or institutional consent)?	Yes / No If yes, who will provide this consent and in what form?	
Managing adverse outcomes and risks		
What are the risks to the participants (is there any risk to personal safety or emotional well-being)?		

Ethical Research consideration	Researcher comments	Reviewer comments
How will you monitor and respond to the risks to participants?		
What are the risks to the researchers (is there any risk to personal safety or emotional wellbeing)?		
How will you monitor and respond to the risks to researchers?		
What are the processes in place to monitor the research in the field while collecting data to ensure that appropriate processes and procedures are followed consistently?		
Will there be the need to debrief participants?	Yes / No If yes, how will you debrief the participants?	
Will there be the need to debrief researchers?	Yes / No If yes, how will you debrief the researchers?	
Data Collection and Storage		
What data collection techniques (methodology) will be used?		
How will data be recorded?		
How will data be analysed?		
How will data be securely stored?		
Will any sensitive data be collected (including attributed aliases)?	Yes / No If yes, what is it and how will it be stored?	
How long will data be stored for and how will it be securely disposed of at the end of the time stored?		
Publications		
Who is the intended audience for the research and how will the research be made available?		
Will data / findings be made public?	Yes / No If no, why not? If yes, in which forums (i.e. websites, publications, conferences)?	
How will results of the research be provided to the research participants?		
Will there be a process of knowledge translation?	Yes / No If no, why not? If yes, who will be the audience (e.g. local / national government, community sector, public etc.)?	
Other comments		

Please attach copies of:

- consent forms or verbal consent script
- data collection forms, including questions / questionnaires or guided discussion themes to be included in interviews, surveys, focus groups etc.

OFFICE USE ONLY

Reviewer(s)	
Date reviewed	
Result of initial review:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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
Result of second review (if required):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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
Other comments:	