PROJECT DOCUMENT

[Country name, or Global/Regional Project]

Project Title: *Strengthening Legislatures' Capacity in Pacific Island Countries (SLIP) Project – Phase II*

Project Number: 01000335

Implementing Partner: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Start Date: 01/04/2023 End Date: 31/12/2026 PAC Meeting date: 28/02/2023

Brief Description
UNDP has provided a broad range of institutional support to PIC Legislatures for a number of years. Since 2018 a regional approach through the Strengthening Legislatures in Pacific Islands Countries (SLIP) project has provided technical assistance, capacity development and infrastructure to the Legislatures, their staff, and Legislators. That work has reflected international standards and best practices for a modern parliament. The new phase of the project will continue the focus on improving the effectiveness of law-making, oversight, and representation but will also work to make PIC legislatures more representative as well as more transparent and accountable by connecting the Legislatures to citizens through robust public outreach activities. It will have a string gender component; and it will also build the Legislatures' capacity to conduct oversight of government spending and programmes more effectively. With an emphasis on areas in which PIC Governments have established commitments and policies (e.g., to achieve National Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals) and in areas that have previously lacked scrutiny (subordinate legislation), the standing committees will be supported in conducting oversight through evidence-based inquiries. Capacity development will also be offered through the Legislatures to strengthen the capacity of communities, particularly sectors representing women, youth, and marginalised groups, to engage constructively as advocates and active partners in the work of Legislatures. The project will continue to support the institutionalisation of best practices, including modernising PIC Legislatures through procedural innovation, digital transformation, and improved business continuity. A change management process will also be supported within the institution to ensure the Legislatures continue its positive trajectory and achieves its strategic objectives. The proposed timeframe for the support is 45 months, from April 2023 – December 2026.

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Contributing Outcome (UNDF): Outcome 3: Peace – By 2027, people enjoy and contribute to more accountable, inclusive, resilient and responsive governance systems that promote gender equality, climate security, justice and peace, ensure participation, and protect their human rights.

Indicative Outputs(s) with gender marker:
- **Output 1**: *PIC Legislatures and Legislators have the capacity and capability to effectively undertake their functions* (GEN2)
- **Output 2** *Transformed systems have strengthened and modernised the operations of PIC Legislatures -.* (GEN2)
- **Output 3:** *Public trust in PIC Legislatures is increased through citizen engagement and transparent processes -.* (GEN2)

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<tr><td>Total resources required:</td><td colspan="2">6,000,000 USD</td></tr>
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Agreed by (signature):

Deputy Resident Representative

UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji

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I. Development Challenge

The Legislatures of the Pacific Island Countries participating in the Strengthening Legislatures' Capacity in Pacific Island Countries[1] (SLIP) have achieved significant institutional growth. In line with the overall goal of the project, work has focused on building the effectiveness and efficiency of the six Legislatures through strengthening the legislative and oversight work of their committees, in conjunction with building the capacities of Legislators and professionalism of the staff. In particular, assemblies have made progress with capacity building in legislation, oversight and representation including improved rules of procedure; enhanced committees' oversight role; amplified budget scrutiny; bolstered professional development of Legislators and staff; developed digital solutions to the restrictions posed by pandemic travel bans to enable Legislatures to maintain core functions, and increased outreach to and engagement with citizens.

Still, strengthening political and governance structures and institutions is an ongoing process, a process that takes time and which evolves in response to societal changes, aspirations and expectations of the Pacific people. The **Phase II** project focuses on further strengthening participating Pacific legislatures of Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Kiribati. While each jurisdiction is unique, and each legislature is at a different stage of its development, there are a number of challenges and development opportunities that are common to all six countries. Recognising that a high degree of flexibility and responsiveness to each situation is essential, the regional Pacific Island Countries (PIC) focus responds to that common ground both in terms of the skill development activities and resources it provides, but also importantly, through the opportunities facilitated for shared experience and support between participating PICs.

A number of Speakers and parliamentary leaders have commented on the importance of an ethos of continuous evolution and improvement:

> *"The (COVID-19) pandemic has strengthened the case for democratic institutions to continuously improve and become more effective, responsive, and accountable. Legislatures and Governments must attentively foster their legitimacy in the eyes of the public, so these institutions can appropriately contribute to a national response in times of crisis."*
>
> *Review of Standing Orders 2020 Report of the Standing Orders Committee Fifty-second NZ Parliament (Rt. Hon Trevor Mallard, Chairperson) July 2020*

Key Development Challenge: The key development challenge for this project is supporting the effectiveness and responsiveness of representative and effective parliamentary governance systems, with the flexibility, resilience, and diversity at all levels to serve the social, economic, and environmental welfare of the peoples of participating Pacific nations.

Building on the advances previously referred to, there is certainly more institutional development support work to do. Further revisions of internal rules and procedures are necessary, to bring plenary and committees' business in line with international parliamentary benchmarks. Similarly, human resource capacity building is needed for further boosting the committee systems and other support services. There is, also, a paucity of skilled legislative drafting and research capability region-wide. At a more fundamental level, PICs will require a significant re-set of their parliamentary planning,

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[1] Republic of Fiji, Independent State of Samoa, Republic of Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Republic of Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

operational, and technology systems, especially to confront the evolving challenges of both Climate Change and Covid-19 recovery.

National Development Planning: All six PICs work to some form of National Development Plan (NDP) or Strategy Document which lays out a forward-looking roadmap for building a more secure and shared social and economic future. To varying degrees, they explicitly or implicitly reflect the concept of the Blue Economy and the central importance of the ocean to the future wellbeing of PICs. Encouraging better stewardship of ocean or 'blue' resources to achieve improvements in the human wellbeing and social equity of populations, while significantly reducing the risks of climate change impacts are key to unlocking the benefits of the Blue Economy. The United Nations 2018 report on the world's fisheries provided a detailed data-driven investigation into management of aquatic resources in the Blue Economy. The report highlights major challenges including continued sustainability, an integrated multi-sectoral approach, addressing biosecurity, and accurate statistical reporting.[2]

The Blue Economy concept supports the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG14 'Life Below Water', *"...and recognises that this will require ambitious, coordinated actions to sustainably manage, protect and preserve our ocean now, for the sake of present and future generations"*[3].

Some PICs, notably Fiji, have aligned their NDP[4] with global commitments, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Fiji's NDP is a milestone document, not only in terms of its framework of policies and plans for addressing Fiji's economic and social development, but also in terms of its relevance for long term effective oversight by the Parliament.

While the further growth and development of the traditional major GDP earning industries such as Tourism remains firmly on the long-term agenda for many PICs, there is the growing recognition of the environmental impact of mass tourism and the vulnerability of the tourism industry exposed by the Covid-19 pandemic; including the ongoing possibility of international travel restrictions and travel hesitancy from traditional markets during such times of crisis.

Accordingly, many of these NDP documents also recognise the importance of economic diversification, through existing and traditional industries, but also through new opportunities.

However, the NDP documents could not and did not anticipate the Covid-19 pandemic, which has exposed PICs to unprecedented consequences and future risks and challenges for their economic and social wellbeing. When considered alongside the rapidly accelerating global threat of climate change[5], the potentially catastrophic environmental, economic, and social threats confronting PICs are drawn into stark focus. Inevitably, these issues will, to varying extents, impact the goals and timelines of NDPs and their related SDG targets, necessitating in some if not all, significant review, and revision of NDPs. These growing challenges bring corresponding responsibilities for

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[2] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2018). "The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture: Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals." Rome.

[3] Commonwealth Secretariat 2021 https://thecommonwealth.org/newsroom/news

[4] Government of Fiji, (2017): "5-Year & 20-Year National Development Plan – Transforming Fiji". Ministry of Economy, Suva, Fiji

[5] IPCC, 2021: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S. L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M. I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J. B. R. Matthews, T. K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu and B. Zhou (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press.

parliamentary institutions to provide skilled scrutiny of their respective governments, and transparency, accessibility, and accountability to citizens.

The Strategy Section *(of this document)* sets out the proposed regional interventions to support the further building of this institutional capacity and operational capability.

Recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic: While Covid-19 remains a real health threat for PICs like for the rest of the world, the PICs involved in this proposal have experienced a limited number of cases of Covid-19 during the pandemic itself[6]. Nonetheless, Covid-19 is having a profound impact on the economies of PICs. Fiji, Palau and Vanuatu for example are significantly tourism dependent economies. All have seen serious impacts on their economies, with major disruption to labour force participation because of a virtual shut down in international visitors.[7] IATA reports that the International RPKs (international revenue passenger kilometers) declined by 98.3% year-on-year in May 2020, with this annual fall being broad-based across all regions and key international routes.[8] While the world has seen a progressive recovery taking place since 2021, at the beginning of 2023, the pre-pandemic levels had only been reached by ca. 70%, with a significantly slower recovery in the Pacific region[9].

The Pacific continued to face rising uncertainties as Covid-19 gained a foothold in multiple Pacific countries in 2022, along with overlapping risks such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict and climate change and disaster. PICs faced decline in their economies averaging 1.5% in 2021 (ADB Outlook September 2022 Update), leading to unemployment and an increase in poverty as well as huge strain on public and private finances, and exposing underlying weaknesses in national systems. The high dependency of Fiji, Palau and Vanuatu on tourism, Solomon on timber exports, Tonga on remittances and all the rest of the Pacific on fisheries and licensing equates to greater exposure to changing global conditions.

Compounding this, the closure of schools, government offices and businesses also highlighted the importance of building and maintaining reliable digital infrastructure. With continued disruptions to the development path, there are fading chances that substantive progress on the SDGs will be made. Concerning signs of regression are notable on (Goal 10), (Goal 12) and (Goal 16), while data for many SDG targets remain unavailable. PICs are enhancing efforts to accelerate vaccination drives although low rates of coverage ramins for the Solomon Islands (34% of adult population), Vanuatu (42%), Kiribati (60.2%), Micronesia and RMI (averaging 62%), many of the PICs reached (above 70%), with two doses of vaccinations (Estimate from ADB PEM December 2022).

COVID related social protection response packages have results in many countries experiencing large and ongoing fiscal deficits (IMF Pacific Island Monitor October 2022) which will continue to expand debt levels in the Pacific which increased to 39 percent of GDP in the last 3 years, despite an increase in aid, due to the dual pressure of decreased revenue and increased expenditures. Rising Public debt payments will have adverse implications on public service delivery and the achievement of SDGs.

The signs are that 2023 is not looking very positive for the global economy. The World Bank (Jan 10, 2023) has just issued a revised set of forecasts for the global economy. All countries in the Pacific are expected to continue to recover in 2023 and 2024 but growth expectations are being revised down

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[6] WHO, 2021: WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard, August 11, 2021

[7] WTTC. (2020). "Travel & Tourism: Economic Impact from COVID-19". Word Travel & Tourism Council, April 2020.

[8] IATA (2020). Air Passenger Market Analysis – May 2020, International Air Transport Association, Montreal.

[9] IATA (2022). Air Passenger Market Analysis – December 2022, International Air Transport Association, Montreal.

(although the ADB revised growth up by 0.1% in 2023 ADB Outlook September Update). In the Pacific, GDP growth forecasts (at market prices using US$ at 2010-19 average) are in the following table.

Country	2019	2020	2021	2022e	2023f	2024f
Fiji	-0.4	-17.0	-5.1	15.1	5.4	3.4
Kiribati	-0.5	-0.5	1.5	1.5	2.3	2.1
Marshall Islands	6.6	-2.2	1.1	1.5	2.2	2.5
Micronesia, Fed. States.	1.2	-1.8	-3.2	-0.5	3.0	2.5
Nauru	1.0	0.7	1.5	0.9	1.9	2.8
Samoa	4.5	-3.1	-7.1	-6.0	4.0	3.5
Solomon Islands	1.2	-3.4	-0.2	-4.5	2.6	2.4
Tonga	0.7	0.5	-2.7	-1.6	3.3	3.2
Tuvalu	13.8	-4.9	0.3	3.0	3.5	4.0
Vanuatu	3.2	-5.4	0.5	2.2	3.4	3.5

All the risks all appear to be on the downside with higher-than-expected inflation, abrupt rises in interest rates to contain it, a resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic and escalating geopolitical tensions all playing on 2023 prospects. Growth in China is expected to rebound in 2023 but is now weaker than previously expected and this places a drag on many other economies.

Climate Change: The consequences of Climate Change and Covid-19 are now inextricably linked globally, but in particular for the island nations of the Pacific. As highlighted in a recent Greenpeace report *"The Pacific region, and the Pacific Island communities who depend on it for their livelihoods and culture, are facing some of the most severe climate impacts anywhere on earth"*.[10]

As with the impacts of COVID-19, for PICs with a high economic and employment dependency on tourism *"...climate impacts and related changes in tourism demand may lead to a shrinking tourism sector, with severe implications for sustainable national development and well-being..."* [11] Furthermore, the projected climate change effects of global warming on the oceans include: a continued decline in reef health and habitat loss and decline in abundance of coastal fish and shellfish; sea level rising continuing beyond 2100 and a consequent increase in saltwater contamination of freshwater lenses; flooding; and coastal erosion[12]. Meanwhile a predicted increasing number of extreme weather events potentially threaten the viability of subsistence agriculture and food security for many[13]. As previously noted, these complex and rapidly evolving issues present complex environmental, economic, and social policy challenges for PIC governments, as well as increased oversight and accountability responsibilities for parliamentary institutions.

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[10] Greenpeace 2021: "Te Mana o te Moana: THE STATE OF CLIMATE IN THE PACIFIC 2021"

[11] Sustainability 2021, 13, 4223. p.16 https://doi.org/10.3390/su13084223

[12] IPCC. (2018) "Global Warming of 1.5 _C. An IPCC Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming of 1.5 _C above Pre-Industrial Levels and Related Global Greenhouse Gas Emission Pathways"; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: Geneva, Switzerland, 2018.

[13] Barnett, J. (2020) "Climate Change and Food Security in the Pacific Islands. In Food Security in Small Island States"; Connell, J., Lowitt, K., Eds.; Springer: Singapore, 2020.
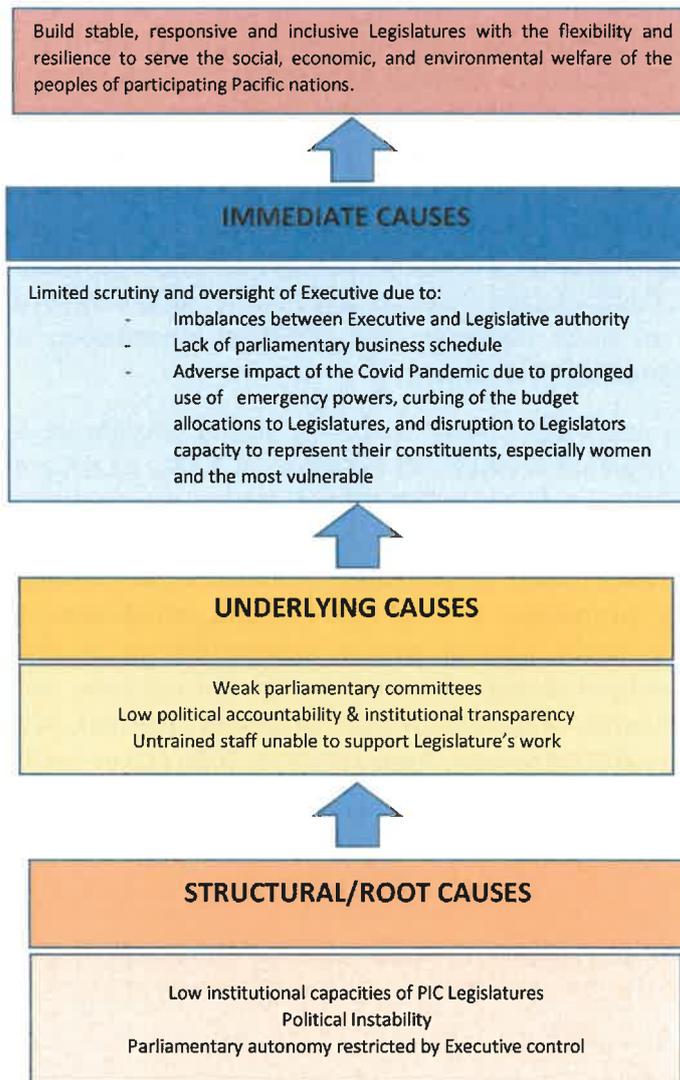
The systemic under-representation of women in the Pacific: In 2023, the Pacific region (Pacific Islands States without Australia and New Zealand) remains the region of the world with the lowest percentage of women MPs elected to national assemblies[14]. Addressing this challenge requires concerted efforts to address the cultural, social and sometimes legal norms that perpetuate gender inequality, as well as the lack of support and opportunities available to women. For example, discriminatory laws, processes and practices result in greater barriers to educational and economic opportunities for women and girls. Consequently, women are less likely than men to have access to the education, contacts and resources needed to become effective leaders. By promoting greater gender equality in politics, Pacific Island states can unlock the full potential of women as leaders and decision-makers, leading to more inclusive and effective governance, and ultimately, greater economic growth and sustainable development.

The average ratio of women parliamentarians in the six focus Legislatures included in this proposal is 6.9% - aligned with the regional average, for all PICs, of 7.1%. At the national level, figures are as follows: In Fiji 9% of MPs are women; in FSM 7.1% of MPs are women; in Kiribati 8.7% of MPs are women; in Palau 6.9% of MPs are women; in the Solomon Islands 8% of MPs are women; and in and Vanuatu 2% of MPs are women. While there has been a slight improvement in some countries over the past 2 years years, for instance in FSM and Vanuatu, which were still in 2020 the last two remaining countries in the world without women representatives in their national parliament, progresses are also often subject to later drawbacks. Fiji, for instance, which was long the most advanced pacific country in terms of number of women parliamentarians, saw an important decrease in women elected during the 2022 elections, from 19.6% in 2020 (10 out of 51 members) to only 9% percent in 2023 (5 out of 55 members).

PROBLEM TREE

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

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[14] "Global and regional averages of women in national parliaments", Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Parline (Global data on national parliaments), December 2022. https://data.ipu.org/women-averages?month=12&year=2022&op=Show+averages&form_build_id=form-xyXrvc5Y_bF0tLFZCDzLOymMkfKcOF5SPwUTRvxaOw8&form_id=ipu__women_averages_filter_form

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│ Build stable, responsive and inclusive Legislatures with  │
│ the flexibility and resilience to serve the social,        │
│ economic, and environmental welfare of the peoples of      │
│ participating Pacific nations.                             │
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┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                    IMMEDIATE CAUSES                       │
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┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Limited scrutiny and oversight of Executive due to:       │
│   -  Imbalances between Executive and Legislative          │
│      authority                                             │
│   -  Lack of parliamentary business schedule               │
│   -  Adverse impact of the Covid Pandemic due to           │
│      prolonged use of emergency powers, curbing of the     │
│      budget allocations to Legislatures, and disruption    │
│      to Legislators capacity to represent their            │
│      constituents, especially women and the most          │
│      vulnerable                                            │
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│                   UNDERLYING CAUSES                       │
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│           Weak parliamentary committees                   │
│   Low political accountability & institutional transparency│
│    Untrained staff unable to support Legislature's work   │
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│                STRUCTURAL/ROOT CAUSES                     │
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│         Low institutional capacities of PIC Legislatures  │
│                   Political Instability                   │
│   Parliamentary autonomy restricted by Executive control  │
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Strengthening Legislatures' Capacity in Pacific Island Countries - Phase 1 – Lessons Learned:

Strengthening Legislatures' Capacity in Pacific Island Countries (SLIP) was designed as a three-year project focusing on strengthening the legislatures of six Pacific Island Countries[15] to become more effective, efficient, inclusive, and transparent. The project started in 2018 and because of the Covid-19 disruptions, has been extended until September 2022. It included the Solomon Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Independent State of Samoa, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Vanuatu. The project focused upon building institutional and human resource capacity of legislatures so that legislatures could better perform their three core functions of legislation, oversight, and representation.

With the SLIP ending in September 2022, there has been discussion between project partners around the need for continuing the support from 2023 onwards.

The outbreak of the pandemic in 2020 proved challenging, both for the Pacific legislatures and the project. Several countries in the Pacific, like their global counterparts, invoked states of emergencies, imposing travel restriction and safety measures such as social distancing and reduced/alternative

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[15] In agreement with the government of Japan, the assistance to Fiji has been merged into the Fiji Parliament Support project (FPSP-II) and is therefore subject to a separate reporting.

work arrangements for state officials. Such travel restrictions and safety measures impeded the ability of several legislatures to perform their normal functions. Similarly, the SLIP project team could not travel to Pacific countries to provide its usual support to the Legislatures. The extra ordinary circumstance required that both legislatures and project team adapt their ways of operation to stay relevant and operational.

A number of useful lessons have emerged:

- There is clearly considerable scope to advance and strengthen the progress already made in legislative, oversight, accountability, and citizen engagement. Recent self-reflection and strategic planning exercises in Fiji, Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands provided useful insight in that regard.

- In agreement with the government of Japan, at the beginning of SLIP in 2018, the assistance to Fiji has been merged into the Fiji Parliament Support project (FPSP-II); it is now proposed that SLIP Phase II similarly contributes to the funding of the new phase of FPSP (FPSP-III) which started in February 2022.

- Involving the parliamentary leadership, Legislators and the administration, the exercise in Fiji assessed the strengths, weaknesses and needs for institutional development and priorities for institutional strengthening. It found universal support for further parliamentary strengthening to build on and entrench successes of the work done so far, while also identifying new opportunities to address ongoing systemic weaknesses.

- A new range of challenges have been highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic, which require long-term capacity building of the Pacific legislatures in order that they are better prepared to face any future crises.

- The project supported the strengthening of the legislatures' ability to adapt quickly to the aftermath of the pandemic, and therefore to remain operational and relevant during the crisis. For example, through the project's hardware and software solutions provided by SLIP, the Congress of FSM became the first Pacific Legislature to organise virtual sessions amid travel restrictions which impeded its ability to organise 'in person' sessions. Similarly, the Samoan Legislative Assembly received hardware and software which enabled its five Permanent Committees and two Special Committees to continue operating virtually despite government's travel, social distance, and safety measures. And in Fiji, resources were rapidly and effectively shifted to areas of urgent need such as ICT and digital solutions that ensured that the Parliament was able to maintain its core functions of lawmaking, oversight, representation and engaging with the public. It will be important to build on and broaden these interventions, to foster more sustainable and resilient Pacific Legislatures.

- The pandemic has revealed a common area of weakness across Pacific legislatures in planning, accumulating, and consolidating lessons from similar previous disasters including epidemiological disasters, and applying them in current or future disaster response. The Pacific is one of the most disaster-prone regions globally in terms of cyclones, floods, and tsunamis. However, when looking at the recent impacts of COVID-19, it was highlighted that legislatures generally did not have protocols or plans in place to deal with the impacts of disaster on their core business processes.

- It will be crucial for legislatures to learn from each other and regional partners how they addressed the COVID-19 crisis and other disasters and put together lessons learned for future planning. For example, work has been advanced since 2020 by Japan's, Disaster Management

Bureau of the Cabinet Office, and the Ministry of the Environment, to enhance Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and climate actions, and to identify what kind of DRR measures adaptive to climate change should be put in place. This could provide valuable collaborative opportunities for relevant PIC parliamentary committee.

SLIP Phase II interventions logic

SLIP Phase II will aim at supporting PIC Legislatures to become more effective, responsive, and representative in undertaking their legislative, oversight, and representational functions through efficient, inclusive, transparent, accountable, and accessible processes.

Public institutions, and in particular institutions of governance, will have to be robust, flexible, inclusive and resilient enough to successfully confront a multiplicity of ever more complex global, regional, and domestic challenges ahead. This will require a significant re-set of their planning, operational, and technology systems. While PICs have diverse experience and each has unique social, economic political needs, governance framework and aspirations and interests, all will inevitably face economic cuts across government requiring policy tradeoffs, revision of economic targets and budget allocations. In such an environment, accountability and transparency of government is even more crucial. Accordingly, this requires space for Legislatures (both National and Sub-National) and other Constitutional oversight bodies to do their work and support better people-focused outcomes and value for money from the more limited public resources. In such an environment support from the international community and regional donor support has become even more crucial.

Legislatures will need to be better engaged and informed about the range of support that is being provided. Opportunities exist for Committees and Legislators to be more strategically engaged and knowledgeable about official development assistance, particularly in terms of its goals and returns to PIC citizens. The Japan – PICS Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM), for example, could provide follow-up engagement with relevant PIC Parliamentary committees such as the Foreign Relations Committees of each Legislature to deepen understanding of the agreed results and commitments arising out of the meetings as well as the expected outcomes for the region and individual participating countries.

All of this will require forward looking 'anticipatory governance'.[16] Institutions of governance and oversight will need assistance to ensure that they are more flexible and agile, able to move and respond quickly to rapidly changing and evolving circumstances, while maintaining effective engagement with, and facilitating participation by, a diversity of their citizens.

This project will support such development by delivering flexible regional programmes that are responsive to each particular jurisdiction, through three broad Outputs:

- *PIC Legislatures and Legislators have the capacity and capability to effectively undertake their functions* - The capacity of PIC Legislatures and the capability of Legislators and the administration strengthened to undertake their respective functions, including scrutiny of the budget and the implementation and achievement of national development goals and SDGs, and planning for and managing change. Particular emphasis will be given to the improved participation of women and the promotion of social, economic, and environmental security of women and the most vulnerable;

- *Transformed systems have strengthened and modernised the operations of PIC Legislatures* - The operations of PIC Legislatures strengthened and modernised by bringing a regional

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[16] Boston, J. (2016): "Anticipatory Governance - how well is New Zealand safeguarding the future?", Policy Quarterly – Volume 12, Issue 3 – August 2016, pp. 11-24

approach to addressing common challenges. This will include improved governance frameworks and procedural effectiveness and innovation; transformed technology and digital capability, and better and more integrated service delivery;

- *Public trust in PIC Legislatures is increased through citizen engagement and transparent processes* - Public trust in PIC Legislatures strengthened through increased transparency, accessibility and accountability to citizens, and improved engagement with communities and civil society groups, with a specific focus on women;

Geographic scope of the intervention for SLIP Phase II

The phase II of the project will focus on further strengthening four of the SLIP Phase 1 Pacific legislatures: Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM); and will extend the support to two additional countries, Palau and Kiribati.

Besides the written requests for parliamentary development assistance formally expressed by the legislatures in all six focus countries, a number of arguments are supporting the proposed geographic scope of the intervention:

- With the renewal of the COMPACT agreement between the three independent Northern Pacific Countries (FSM, RMI and Palau) and the United States of America, the authority of the legislature to endorse any decision moving forward will be crucial. It is imperative that any decision and contribution to the process will be made through evidence-based, transparent, inclusive and accountable processes, with the interests of the larger population considered;
- The northern Pacific States, FSM, RMI, Palau and Kiribati do share common development challenges, especially from an institutional point of view; they would equally benefit from synergies achieved by the South-South exchanges developed by the SLIP project, as sub-national and broader regional level;
- The two chambers composing the Congress of Palau (the House of Delegates and the Senate) have developed a sound and well elaborated request of assistance to UNDP in September 2021. This request is directly connected to the work already undertaken by UNDP at the local level through the Palau Local Governance Project (PLGP), as it would allow to support States legislatures ;
- The Parliament of Kiribati, previously only covered with limited regional funding, has actively engaged with the UNDP Parliamentary development team at the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji over 2021 and 2022 and is pro-actively requesting to broaden its engagement with other legislatures.
- While RMI and Samoa have not expressed interest to participate to SLIP Phase II as a focus country yet, and considering the relevance to extend the project to all North Pacific Legislatures and continue the assistance with focus countries of phase 1, it is proposed to keep open the possibility for the two legislatures, the RMI Nitijela and the Legislative Assembly of Samoa, to request t join the project at a later stage, in agreement with all partners.

Common Institutional Challenges among the six focus Legislatures

Each PIC Legislature has its own level of development and each a unique cultural, political, and historical context including for some, the function of Sub-National Legislatures. However, there are also several key challenges that are common to them in supporting the growth and responsiveness of

effective and representative parliamentary governance systems, with the flexibility and resilience, to serve the social, economic, and environmental welfare of the people.

UNDP places gender (SDG 5) equality, sensitivity and analysis, and the mainstreaming of gender issues as a central plank of all its work.

In a recent self-reflection exercise in the Fiji Parliament, one MP, in promoting the concept of creating a parliamentary gender analysis unit noted: *"Parliamentarians lack the capacity to undertake gender analysis. We don't have the technical expertise in the Secretariat to support and advise Parliamentarians… Bills must have a proper and adequate gender analysis."*

The lack of gender analysis expertise, within PIC Legislatures, which has the capacity to review Bills and investigate what ministries have done and are doing limits the capacity of Legislators and committees to understand where gender inequalities lie and what structural inequalities exist in each portfolio area and especially in government service delivery. This capacity is critical to improved gender outcomes across governments. While current budgetary constraints across governments and legislatures suggest that creating a dedicated unit in any individual Parliament is improbable, and ultimately in most cases, unsustainable, it is an area that is ripe for regional capacity building support from UNDP.

In line with this approach, where possible, strengthening and modernising the operations of PIC Legislatures is best advanced by bringing a regional approach to addressing common challenges. Not only does this make effective use of resources, but as well illustrated with the flagship SLIP Phase 1 initiative, the *Floating Budget Office*, can help bridge human resource and capacity gaps across the Pacific legislatures while promoting South to South and regional cooperation. This is consistent with UNDP's global efforts to promote cooperation as an accelerator and multiplier of sustainable development.

In keeping with the proposed SLIP Phase 11 interventions, common institutional challenges facing PICs can be considered in three broad and inter-related categories: *PIC Legislatures and Legislators having the capacity and capability to effectively legislate and conduct oversight, transformed systems having strengthened and modernised the operations of PIC Legislatures* and *Public trust in PIC Legislatures being increased through citizen engagement and transparent processes.*

> a) *PIC Legislatures and Legislators have the capacity and capability to effectively legislate and conduct oversight:*

The pandemic and other crises have highlighted the need for resilient and robust governance systems. This means not only the development of appropriate business continuity plans (as noted previously), but more generally building the skills and knowledge of Legislators and the administration, to effectively undertake their respective responsibilities, meet strategic goals and to plan for and manage change. While these capabilities are certainly critical at times of crisis, they are equally an essential foundation for sound and effective parliamentary governance systems.

Similarly, the capacity of PIC Legislatures to effectively legislate and conduct oversight, including scrutiny of the budget, is more critical than ever. There remains much to do in reviews and modernisation of Standing Orders and parliamentary rules; and further strengthening of, respect for, and adherence to, parliamentary oversight mechanisms. Key among these continues to be building the strength and capacity of committees as the key vehicles for in-depth review and investigation of the operations of government and the expenditure of public funds. This applies to both National and State or Provincial Legislatures where they exist.

It is fair to say that in most PIC jurisdictions, governmental support for the concept of vigorous oversight and scrutiny by the Legislature is tentative. Oversight is an inherent part of almost all the work of a Legislature. In the plenary this is most obvious in Question Time, during Second Reading

and Committee of the Whole debates on Bills and the Budget, and the motions considered by the House particularly during the time allocated for Private Members motions and Bills. However, other procedures such as the tabling of reports and papers particularly from other oversight bodies, petitions, end of week statements, and questions on notice, for example, are all example of the parliamentary procedures that support oversight.

The implementation and achievement of national development goals and SDGs has been variable, and more recently, severely challenged by the Covid-19 pandemic and the intensifying environmental, economic, and social risks and potential consequences of climate change. For some, progress has effectively been reversed, pushing more people into poverty, and increasing vulnerability of marginalized groups including women, youth, and minorities. This will inevitably necessitate significant revision of NDP assumptions and goals, requiring specialized advice and targeted support interventions. Further, renewed, and increased focus on allocating scarce resources is, and will continue to be essential; again, requiring strong application of the legislatures' oversight and legislative mandates.

Accordingly, ongoing professional development and capacity building will continue to be a key common institutional challenge for PIC legislatures, and one for which collaborative regional initiatives such as the Floating Budget Office project can perform an important function.

b) *Transformed systems have strengthened and modernized the operations of PIC Legislatures:*

PIC legislatures generally face ongoing challenges with limited human resource availability. Digital transformation – the automation of key information systems and support services, committees, and plenary, can help legislatures undertake much of their core business more efficiently and effectively. The value of ICT and digital solutions was well illustrated during the pandemic when many legislatures could not meet physically to perform their constitutional mandate. Cyclones compounded the difficulties of many PICs during the pandemic. As highlighted above, technology has already helped some of the Pacific legislatures partially overcome these barriers.

Addressing access to such technical resources and capability and related technical advisory services, advice, and training, is a critical institutional challenge for PICs going forward. This is one of many areas in which opportunity can be taken to advance diversity in candidates for specialised technical training.

It is the case that as with many organizations, the Covid-19 pandemic exposed inadequate business continuity preparedness among a number of PIC legislatures. Through SLIP Phase 1, some legislatures have been supported to develop standard operating procedures and business continuity plans. Furthering this support and extending it to help other legislatures develop business continuity plans and to conduct Legislators and staff training on their activation and use, will be critical going forward.

c) *Public trust in PIC Legislatures is increased through citizen engagement and transparent processes:*

Building Public trust in PIC legislatures requires increased transparency, accessibility, and opportunity for meaningful participation to be genuinely accountable to citizens. While in some jurisdictions, the notion of direct citizen engagement in parliamentary processes is new – and not altogether welcome; some progress was made through SLIP Phase 1 in supporting a range of initiatives to increase citizen engagement and the participation of vulnerable groups with Pacific legislatures. However, during the pandemic, while legislatures generally continued limited operations, there has been a prolonged use of executive emergency powers and concurrently, a significant curtailment of traditional forms of parliamentary procedures and outreach to citizens.

This has highlighted the vulnerability of citizen accessibility to Legislatures and resulted in some erosion of citizens' trust in state institutions, while oversight of governments by legislatures has generally been adversely impacted.

Further initiatives are needed to maintain and develop inclusive political processes which could include engagement with political parties and training of Legislators, legislature staff, and community and civil society organisations. There is also potential for the further use of proven initiatives such as public hearings, roadshows/island visits, and open days; and promoting youth parliaments, women practice parliaments and model parliaments. Technology may provide a part of the answer. Just as ICT and digital solutions have a proven efficacy in supporting the continuation of parliamentary business, it has the same potential for facilitating and maintaining citizen engagement and participation, particularly during times of crisis such as during a pandemic or extreme weather events.

Effective and diverse citizen engagement at all levels, remains a significant challenge of fundamental importance for PICs continuing development of effective, participatory, and representative legislatures and governance systems.

Specific development challenges in all six focus Legislatures (Fiji, Solomon Islands, FSM, Vanuatu, Palau and Kiribati)

1) Fiji

Fiji Parliament's capacity to fulfil its mandate has well progressed since 2014. However, it is still facing a number of institutional and technical challenges impeding the comprehensive fulfilment of its constitutional duties.

In Fiji, MPs represent the whole country rather than defined constituencies; this creates challenges in terms of the size and geographic spread of a single nation constituency, the high level of expectations by constituents for MPs to provide improved services to their communities (and individually) and resource constraints faced by MPs which limits their capacity to move to where need is and to deal adequately, fairly and sensitively with the complexity of issues faced by multiple ethnicities operating under differing cultural protocols. Further, the already serious practical challenges of distance, travel and communications are compounded in times of civil disruption and emergency whether dealing with the aftermath of major weather events such as the most recent cyclones, or the ongoing restrictions and escalating community needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

A self-reflection exercise was conducted (wit support through SLIP) in 2020, involving the parliamentary leadership, 35 MPs and the parliamentary administration, which assessed the strengths, challenges and opportunities for institutional development and the priorities for institutional strengthening.

The self-reflection exercise found broad support for further parliamentary strengthening to build on and entrench successes achieved so far, while identifying new opportunities to address systemic challenges. when reflecting on whether the Fiji Parliament was meeting established international benchmarks of parliaments (including institutional independence, procedural fairness, democratic and institutional legitimacy, organizational effectiveness, and core legislative and oversight functions), it was recognised by stakeholders that the Fiji Parliament still has progress to make before it can confidently say that it has achieved its Strategic Objectives.

The self-reflection exercise identified a number of opportunities for the further development of the institution, based on international benchmarks on the functioning of democratic parliaments. These opportunities include:

- The public perception of the role and functions of parliament, MPs, and its committees versus the role of the Government could benefit from clarification;

- The plenary is often perceived as a place of personal and partisan point scoring; as a result, its role as a forum for debate on national issues based on research and data that addresses public needs can sometimes be overlooked by the public;

- The process of reviewing the Standing Orders is ad hoc and limits the capacity of the Parliament to evolve and remain current to public need;

- The interconnection of parliamentary oversight and public trust of state institutions requires greater public engagement, but also better government uptake of recommendations resulting from that engagement. Complex and controversial public issues could be referred more often to the relevant standing committee for consideration to facilitate consultation with civil society and citizens. The reports from such inquiries would provide policy makers with proposals based on stakeholder feedback prior to tabling legislative solutions that otherwise can sometimes result in negative public reaction.

- Parliamentary committees are often recognized as the key vehicles for in-depth review and investigation of the operations of government and the expenditure of public funds. As noted above, improving and broadening effective oversight by the parliament could further strengthen public trust in the accountability of state institutions while also promoting inclusion of people's concerns and priorities. The building blocks of active committees supported by skilled staff are in place; their role and functions could be further activated by empowering the committees' to address:

  o Limited legislative oversight due to the use of urgency provisions;

  o The general lack of parliamentary scrutiny of subordinate legislation;

  o The absence of committees initiating their own inquiries or the government referring complex or contentious issues to committees for independent inquiry, consultation, and report;

  o The mandate that Parliament must facilitate public participation in the legislative and other processes of Parliament and its committees according to the Constitution.

2) *Solomon Islands*

The Solomon Islands is a unicameral parliamentary democracy based on party politics. The country's governance is characterized by its fragility and relative political instability, with weak political coalitions in Parliament and regular motions of no-confidence resulting in high cabinet turn-over. Government has however shown relative stability since the latest general elections in 2019.

The functioning of political parties is regulated by the Political Parties Integrity Act of 2014 (PPIA), which established the Political Parties Commission and the Office the Registrar of the Political Parties responsible for the registration and promotion of integrity in their functioning. The combination of a significant number of elected MPs who are independent (42%) with a fragmented political party scene where only 8 political parties (out of the 13 that fielded candidates in 2019) are represented, has contributed to challenges in forming and holding governing coalitions. Out of the 333 nominated candidates in 2019, 26 (7.8%) were women, 17 of them were affiliated to political parties and 9 ran as independents. At present there are 4 women members of parliament (2 elected through the 2019 national general election and 2 as a result of parliamentary by-elections held in 2019 and 2020) representing 8% of the membership. Out of the 333 official candidates in 2019, 26 (7.8%) were women, including 8 who ran as independents.

By some accounts, the PPIA only deals partially with the financial dimension of political parties' regulations according to international standards. Clientelism is pervasive, which can at least partly be connected to cultural traditions and chiefly customs.

Oversight of the Executive by Parliament is limited, although recent years have seen an impetus within Parliament to strengthen its institutional means of action, especially through the strengthening of the parliamentary committee system (with active support of SLIP Phase 1).

A comprehensive reform of parliamentary structures and procedure (the Standing Orders) is currently underway and will be further supported by SLIP-II, aiming at further restructuring the committee system and giving Parliament "teeth" to summon ministers and officials alike, while tightening committee membership and improving MPs' access to relevant information and witnesses. In the same vein, during COVID-19, the Solomon Islands Parliament has been the first in the Pacific to follow the New Zealand model (acknowledged worldwide) of establishing a specialized "COVID-19 parliamentary oversight committee" that can meet even during parliamentary recess, thus allowing to continue specialized oversight of the Executive during the State of Emergency. This trend will be pursued.

A new "Health Bill", still in discussion within Parliament, intends to maintain robust means for the Executive to deal with health disasters including the pandemic, without requiring to the much-criticized constitutional State of Emergency. The bill raised constitutional issues in its early form, especially as it provided large powers to limit constitutional rights to low-level, decentralized administrations. These competences are constitutionally reserved to the central government under scrutiny of Parliament.

Since 2022, health bill has been undergoing a process of parliamentary public consultation – supported by SLIP. It has created a renewed willingness to engage with citizens and CSO during legislative processes, a trend that will be further supported by SLIP-II.

3) Federated States of Micronesia

The FSM political system is largely inspired by the USA: a strong and powerful Congress has large prerogatives to initiate legislation, scrutinize the Executive, vote and amend the budget. However, the FSM Congress' limited internal capacity and the geographic context (with a challenging inter-island travel which usually requires transit through US territories, Hawaii, or Guam) restricts in practice the congress' ability to perform its constitutional duties, especially regarding oversight.

COVID-19 has increased the phenomenon and temporarily strengthened the Presidency in its recent inter-institutional competition with other constitutional powers. The Congress partially addressed the matter through technology, with SLIP support – the FSM was among the first nations worldwide where the Legislature sat remotely from the early months of the pandemic and exerted oversight of the emergency measures and budget presented by the Executive. SLIP will further support the Congress staff and Senators to fully use the opportunities presented by ICT for democratic legislatures, and share its experience with other SLIP focus legislatures.

Like in other Pacific Islands countries, the national political representation is mono-cameral but with two distinct types of representatives: 10 senators elected in single-seats constituencies for a two-years term, and 4 senators "at large" elected in each one of the four States for a term of four years. The President is elected by the congress among the senators at-large for a term of four years. All elections are held on a non-party basis. The FSM has been long one of the only countries in the world without

women representation at the national level; in 2021, the first women senator was elected to Congress; she will benefit from a focused capacity strengthening assistance through SLIP-II.

The FSM governance differs from the contemporary USA in that it is in fact more a confederation than a genuine federation: most policy areas are not national, but States' competencies; and even budget requests from different governance levels are mostly "compiled" (not amended nor edited) at the national level. Legislation – especially budgeting – is a therefore often a delicate exercise of negotiations between States, which often explains the sometimes-perceived institutional inertia. Public Finance oversight is equally fractured. The central Supreme Audit Institution has been reluctant to take the lead in advocating for full constitutional and financial independence of the State auditors who have been pushing for legislative changes individually with limited success.

Isolation during the pandemic has given ground to old grudges from States against the national level to thrive – such as the decades-long historical independence movement in Chuuk. Institutional capacity at State's level is limited, and there have been repeated calls (esp. by international community) for institutional strengthening to be more systematically undertaken at sub-national level, especially on matters such as transparency, anti-corruption, and public financial management, as well as support to be given to improve the coordination between national and State levels of governance. SLIP-II will therefore expand its assistance to the 4 State legislatures to ensure in-depth and harmonized legislative reforms are undertaken.

According to article 14 of the FSM Constitution, every 10 years Congress shall ask the FSM public by referendum whether the Constitution must be amended. In case of a majority of positive ballots, a Constitutional Convention, elected by universal suffrage, proposes constitutional amendments to be adopted by referendum. The 4th Constitutional Convention composed of 24 delegates met at the beginning of 2020 and was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic in March. Before its recess, it approved 2 proposed amendments, including one to be applied immediately to its own work, aiming at easing the adoption of future constitutional amendments. The Constitutional Convention will resume its work once the epidemic environment allows; and before its recess was considering proposing "amendments on revenue sharing, popular election of the President, a clean environment and climate change, the determination of land ownership under state law, and reserved seats in Congress for women". Should the process resume (especially on the latter point), SLIP-II will provide technical assistance though its support to Congress.

Civil society is still nascent, and several actors fluctuate between the civil society and political sphere. However, there are some (CSO-led) initiatives for coordination at national level despite the geographic challenge. There is no comprehensive national engagement strategy by the national Executive at national level. SLIP-II will ensure that Congress develops a citizen engagement plan for the legislature.

4) Vanuatu

In a context of a dual legacy from the Western colonial era (French/British), overlaid by a strong adherence to a vibrant *"kastom"* (traditional culture) and cultural governance environment, the strengthening of a unified national, functional governance system in Vanuatu is challenging. Geographic tensions exist between central government agencies and peripheral provincial institutions, exacerbated by limited public services delivery in outer islands and the impact of regular natural disasters, as Vanuatu is ranked globally as the nation most prone to natural disasters – cyclonic, volcanic and seismic activity.

National political representation in Parliament is characterized by fragmentation and high instability – 48 political parties competed during the 2020 General Elections, with political reforms stagnating. Politics appears to be mainly driven by individual and local interests, lacking national strategy and citizen engagement. Corruption and nepotism are rampant, though both have a cultural context through the chiefly traditions of "reciprocal obligations". Vanuatu is one of the only three countries in the world without a female member of Parliament.

Vanuatu remains one of the few countries without registration and regulation of political parties; multiple motions of no confidence or removal of high-level officials are regularly tabled in Parliament; "grasshoppers" jump between parties in unstable Coalition Governments, regularly leading to by-elections and hindering the normal operations, functions and planning of public and private sector institutions as well as development partners. The dissolution of Parliament in August 2022, as Parliament was about to pass a motion of no-confidence against the government, is yet another example of this high instability. SLIP-II will be actively involved in initial and continuous induction for MPs, in order to strengthen their understanding of their mandate and role, as well as about parliamentary procedure – the Standing Orders adopted in 2020 with SLIP support are contributing to strengthening the institutional framework, but need to be fully implemented.

There is broad acceptance of the principle of independent oversight institutions. A number do exist but are under-resourced and/or legislatively toothless even in comparison to general standards in the Pacific; i.e. the Ombudsman or the Auditor General have limited budgets and staffing impacting negatively on their ability to perform, especially on public financial matters. "Constituency Development Funds" (CDF) accessible by members of Parliament, ostensibly for local development purposes, are often politically guided to garner voting support and rarely submitted to transparent oversight processes. The work strengthening the Public Accounts Committee within Parliament will be continued under SLIP Phase II; and localization of the analytical work undertaken at the regional level on CDF will be further explored with MPs in Vanuatu.

Fiscal balance in Vanuatu remains dependent on the passport sale scheme, providing for a percentage of the national revenue which continues to increase and has constituted a lifeline during the covid-19 pandemic. This scheme is under increased scrutiny and might threaten the country's public finance strategy and efforts to reform tax governance if put in question.

Civil society is fragmented and while some groups can be vocal examples of coordinated and impactful advocacy campaigns remain limited. There is limited, albeit increasing engagement with non-state actors, especially traditional ones such as Chiefs and Churches as "grass roots" delivery partners of both national and local development initiatives. SLIP-II will continue assisting Parliament's endeavors to develop robust engagement strategies, through actions such as public consultations and the organization of open parliament initiatives.

5) *Palau*

Palau governance system is based on a presidential political system, where the President, who is head of State and head of the government, and their Vice President are elected for a term of four years in universal suffrage. The legislature is bicameral; the House of Delegates has 16 members elected in single-seat constituencies in the 16 States through a first-past-the-post ballot, and the Senate has 13 members elected in multi-seats constituencies. The senators' number is subject to change every 8 years following Congress' recommendation to review the district map. Both chambers are elected for a term of four years. There are no political parties.

There are two female members of the Legislature (6.7%) and Palau Vice President is also a woman. Palau still follows a very strict matrilineal system, especially for the transmission of land tenure and traditional titles.

Like in the FSM, Palau is a federation and numerous competences, especially regarding legislative powers, belong to the State level – there are 16 States with their own constitutional / institutional framework and their own Legislature. Capacities at State level are however very limited, although some important matters require full involvement of State legislators, such as matters pertaining to natural and financial resources.

A main element of the request for assistance submitted by the National Congress of Palau to UNDP is therefore to assist the States' legislatures through a comprehensive technical assistance from SLIP to the national Congress, encompassing all dimension of parliamentary development (support to strengthening of capacities of MPs and staff, support to parliamentary reform; support to digitization; support to public engagement and civic education, etc.).

6) Kiribati

Kiribati's institutional system is a hybrid, multiparty parliamentary democracy, in which both the unicameral House of Assembly and the President, who is at the same time the head of State and the head of the government, are elected in universal suffrage for a term of four years. Presidential candidates are nominated by the newly elected Parliament. Political parties, although some in existence since the 60's, are not well structured and often compose loose groupings based on individual personalities or group of interests.

Out of the 45 members of Parliament, one is appointed – the member representing the Fiji-based Benaban community on Rabi island. There are currently three women MPs (6.7%); the Speaker, who is not a member, is the only remaining women holding this position in an independent Pacific State since the Speaker of the Cook Island Parliament resigned in 2021.

The country is dispersed over 3.5 million sq km; and is composed of three distinct archipelagos and one isolated island, presenting major challenges in terms of governance and relations between the capital Tarawa and the periphery. The COVID-19 pandemic, which massively affected air transport (as travel between groups requires transit through neighboring countries), has exacerbated the issue, and the central government is keen to strengthen the capacity of the local administrations to deliver services to the citizens.

While the democratic environment is changing, youth, women and the geographically isolated are largely marginalized and play a limited role in decision-making. There is limited space for civic participation and rights awareness, and empowering communities to shape the decisions that affect them. In Kiribati, decision-making is influenced by both the formal modern system and traditional leaders.

The Kiribati Parliament is the most recent addition to the SLIP-II project framework, at the request of the Speaker. It is arguably the less-capacitated national legislature among the 6 focus countries – as well as the smallest in terms of resources, although the willingness and drive to strengthen the institution is clear; explaining why technical assistance to Kiribati Parliament has gained momentum over the past year.

II. Strategy

Project Strategy:

SLIP II will build on the achievements of the previous project in supporting PIC Legislatures to become more effective, efficient, robust, and resilient. A coherent regional strategy will be brought to the task of strengthening the institutional capacity of PIC Legislatures (and where relevant State/Regional legislatures) to undertake their respective constitutional duties of lawmaking, representation, oversight of Executive action and expenditure of public funds and in so doing actively involve citizens and build public trust in the work of Parliament. While Executive control will continue to remain a key issue in the process of advancing parliamentary oversight, the project will continue and deepen engagement with the various Speakers and Committee Chairs in relation to developing an ongoing review of the Standing Orders, as was achieved for instance with the Vanuatu Parliament during Phase I.

The project will also support PIC Legislatures to broaden the work of committees, and through initiatives that deepen the engagement with key stakeholders including women and vulnerable groups. Increased legislative review, budgetary oversight and investigation of social, economic, legal, and environmental issues and outcomes that support the achievement of NDPs and SDGs, by Committees, will improve governance outcomes and provide greater space for civil society and public participation.

While the previous section identifies the considerable challenges facing PIC Legislatures, and the systems of governance more generally, in addressing ever more complex global, regional, and domestic issues; the challenges ahead do not diminish the impressive achievements made by PIC Legislatures with the support of UNDP so far.

It is recognised however, that institutional strengthening takes time and is an ongoing process, continually evolving and responding to societal changes, expectations, and aspirations. The process of transforming Legislatures into increasingly representative, transparent, accessible, accountable, and effective institutions is not a linear process. Rather it is one that faces multi-dimensional challenges which may limit or stall progress for a myriad of reasons including, global and national crises, the cut and thrust of national politics, push back by the Executive on improving legislature oversight, or actions by Legislators which impact adversely on public trust, to name a few.

A second phase of the project will provide the sustained support necessary to entrench the progress made in the first phase by bringing a strategic regional approach to building capacity, transforming systems, and modernizing operations, growing public trust, and strengthening the capabilities of Legislators and staff while managing the risks identified above.

UNDP's extensive community of practice in Parliamentary Strengthening and the experience and lessons learnt from supporting programmes across the Pacific will underpin the support of the new project.

Support will continue to be aligned to PIC Legislatures' Strategic Plans and objectives. When these plans do not exist, they will be developed. Encompassing this work will be a greater focus on how change is managed effectively and how Legislators and staff can become agents of change both institutionally and personally.

Active partnerships with key support bodies such as the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the United States National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the National Diet in Japan, and other Legislatures from the broader Pacific region including New Zealand, Australia, and twinned Australian State Parliaments, will be continued, and extended to provide comparative knowledge and experience in addressing common challenges. The wide range of knowledge products and assessments undertaken with PICs since 2018 provide the essential tools and data for the new project to use for design and baseline purposes. The Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals Guidance Note for the Standing Committees

of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji provides a template for broadening the work of committees in the review of NDP/SDG achievement and engaging with the public and civil society more effectively in that review process.

Lastly, but most importantly the PIC Legislature and UNDP have a long and deep relationship built on trust and mutual respect. The important results achieved so far reflect that robust relationship. This will continue to be the basis of support in SLIP II.

Relationship to UNDP Strategic Plan, United Nations Development Framework 2023-2027 and Multi-Country Programme Document 2023-2027

The project falls directly under the **UNDP Strategic Plan (SP) 2022-2025** and responds to Signature Solution 2 to Strengthen effective, inclusive, and accountable governance; and Signature Solution 6 to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It also participate to the Direction of Change *to leave no one behind*, and contributes to strengthen the Enabler on Digitalization.

The project also falls directly under the **United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) 2023-2027** and responds to Outcome 3: *Peace – By 2027, people enjoy and contribute to more accountable, inclusive, resilient and responsive governance systems that promote gender equality, climate security, justice and peace, ensure participation, and protect their human rights.*

The project does, finally, contribute to the achievement of the **Multi-Country Programme Document (MCPD) 2023-2027 for the Pacific,** and in particular to *Output 3 – Countries are able to uphold human rights and nurture a governance environment that ensures an expanded civic space, women's leadership, harnessing the demographic dividends, empowerment of young people, and people's participation in decision-making.*

Theory of Change

To respond to the development challenges that have been described in the earlier section, the project will apply a theory of change process to define how and why change will take place through the application of the project strategy based on the assumptions underlying the development challenge[17]. The theory of change promotes effectiveness through predicting change pathways to inform planning with evidence of what has worked before and elsewhere based on available knowledge and helps to think about longer-term changes to embed sustainability of project results.

The theory of change underpinning the project is that **if** institutional capacity of Pacific Legislatures is further built, their systems and processes are transformed and made more efficient; **if** the capabilities of Legislators and the administration, especially women, to create more open, participative, and inclusive processes that strengthen institutions and fosters legitimacy in the eyes of the public is being strengthened; **then** PIC Legislatures will be able to fulfil their constitutional role of law-making, oversight and representation, and contribute directly to upholding human rights and nurturing a governance environment that ensures an expanded civic space, women's leadership, harnessing the demographic dividends, empowerment of young people, and people's participation in decision-making (MCPD Output 3).

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[17] See: "A Guide to the Application of Theories of Change to UNDP Programmes and Projects." UNDP 2016

This will be achieved by regional interventions that continue the institutional strengthening processes established in SLIP I, and by working with the Legislatures to engage communities, particularly sectors representing women, youth, and marginalised groups to engage constructively with Legislatures, while also working to create more political space for regular, broader, and effective oversight of government action and expenditure.

The following Theory of Change diagram elucidates the proposed processes:

Outcome/Goal

PIC Legislatures* are more effective, responsive and representative in undertaking their legislative, oversight, and representational functions through efficient, inclusive, transparent, accountable, and accessible processes.

Outcome/Goal TOC Statement

If (1) the institutional strengthening processes established in SLIP 1 are enhanced with new Regional and Legislature-specific programming, (2) PIC Legislatures' procedures, operations, technology, and digital capabilities are modernised and transformed, and (3) public trust in PIC Legislatures is increased through greater transparency, accessibility, and accountability, then (4) PIC Legislatures will become more efficient, responsive and representative in undertaking their legislative, oversight, and representational functions because (5) Parliament is the only institution vested with the democratic power to legislate, oversee government action and expenditure, and represent the citizens of PICs.

Outputs

1	2	3
1. PIC Legislatures and Legislators have the capacity and capability to effectively legislate and conduct oversight. Key indicators: # of oversight inquiries held by Standing Committees per Legislature, # of legislatures/Committees undertaking gender impact analysis. % of legislators and staff implementing leadership and change management plans. etc.	2. Transformed systems have strengthened and modernised the operations of PIC Legislatures. Key indicators: # of Legislatures undertaking a review of their rules and procedures , % of Bills tracked online. % of recommendations from Strategic and Business Continuity Plans implemented . # of digital transformation recommendations implemented, etc.	3. Public trust in PIC Legislatures is increased through citizen engagement and transparent processes. Key indicators: # of strategic planning actions for improved transparency and openness implemented. # of citizen engagement programmes. %e of inputs and submissions received by Standing Committees from civil society per country, etc.

Output TOC Statement

1	2	3
If (1) the legislation and oversight capacity of PIC Legislatures is strengthened and (2) skills and knowledge of legislators and staff are enhanced, then (3) PIC Legislatures will be able to better fulfill their duties because (4) Legislators have greater access to information, resources, and knowledge as well as to improved procedures.	If (1) PIC Legislatures' systems are modernised, then (2) Legislatures will be able to raise their efficiency and better support the work of legislators and (3) connect with citizens, because (4) digitalisation greatly enhances and facilitates operations and has proven to allow business continuity during disasters related to climate change and pandemics.	If (1) citizen engagement projects are implemented and PIC Legislatures become more open and accessible to citizens, then (2) public trust in the legislative institutions will increase among PIC citizens because (3) interactions with the work and activities of Legislatures engage citizens with democratic decision making.

Inputs

1	2	3
1.1 Build capacity of Legislatures and key actors including civil society to engage with Legislatures and particularly their committees to improve legislation and scrutiny of government spending and programmes.	2.1 Support procedural innovation.	3.1 PIC Legislatures become more open and transparent.
1.2 Strengthen standing committees' capacity to undertake oversight and monitor government through inquiries and carry out evidence-based gender impact analyses.	2.2 Implement digital transformation strategies including a focus on connecting citizens and communities with Legislatures.	3.2 Enhance programmes of proven citizen engagement.
1.3 Establish effective support mentoring and capacity building programmes for Legislators.	2.3 Support improvements to strategic and business continuity planning processes.	3.3 Strengthen capacity of communities, particularly tsectors representing women, youth and marginalised groups to egage constructively with Legislatures. programme.
1.4 Build institutional capability through the provision of innovative programme of regional Speaker to Speaker retreats and meetings.		

Key Assumptions

1	3	
-Legislators have demonstrated their desire to improve their skills and competences, and to understand more fully what it means to be a legislator -Legislatures remain committed to strengthening their performance and undertaking their full constitutional roles and responsibilities over recent years	-PICs wish to demonstrate locally and to the global community their commitment to an open society and a set of democratic norms.	-Legislatures enjoy the respect and trust of most, if not all citizens -There is an enthusiasm among PIC citizens to engage with Parliament /Congress and Legislators

Risks & Barriers

1	3	
-Executive reduces space and resources for Legislatures to conduct their work -Lack of political consensus on role of Legislatures in political system and oversight specifically	-Legislatures lack the technical knowledge to effectively conduct oversight	-Civil society lacks capacity to actively engage in government oversight -Election results disputed or challenged, resulting in contraction of political space

*including Sub-National Legislatures in relevant jurisdictions.

Using international and regional best practice and benchmarks of effective legislatures, this theory of change and change pathway have been developed using multiple integrated approaches.

The current SLIP I project strategy applies four parliamentary development approaches: an institutional strengthening approach, a capacity and professional development approach, an open budget oversight approach and lastly an approach which recognises the role of women in legislatures. While the institutional strengthening and the capacity development approaches will continue to be a key focus of this project the latter two approaches which are narrowly focused will be incorporated into the following approaches which align with current challenges.

Firstly, an outcome-driven approach which allows for a greater degree of flexibility in the design and delivery of the project, and which also facilitates co-ordinated interventions in different parts of the operations of legislatures designed to achieve the same outcome. (See diagram).

A human rights approach, which pays particular attention to the voice of women, disadvantaged and marginalised people and empowering them, and the bodies representing their interests to utilise the representation and oversight opportunities available to them. Facilitating a convergence between realistic popular expectations and Parliament's capacity to respond will inevitably deepen the social contract.

Finally, a behavioral change approach which will focus on capacity strengthening of Legislators and staff *changing* the way they do their work to increase institutional effectiveness.

The project ToC is specific about what the project is expected to deliver. The strategy outlines the project's contributions to the intended results. Project outputs and activities are included in the Results Framework. Assumptions about how one step leads to the next have been defined and further specified, and risks are reassessed and validated in the relevant Risk Log attached to this Project Document.
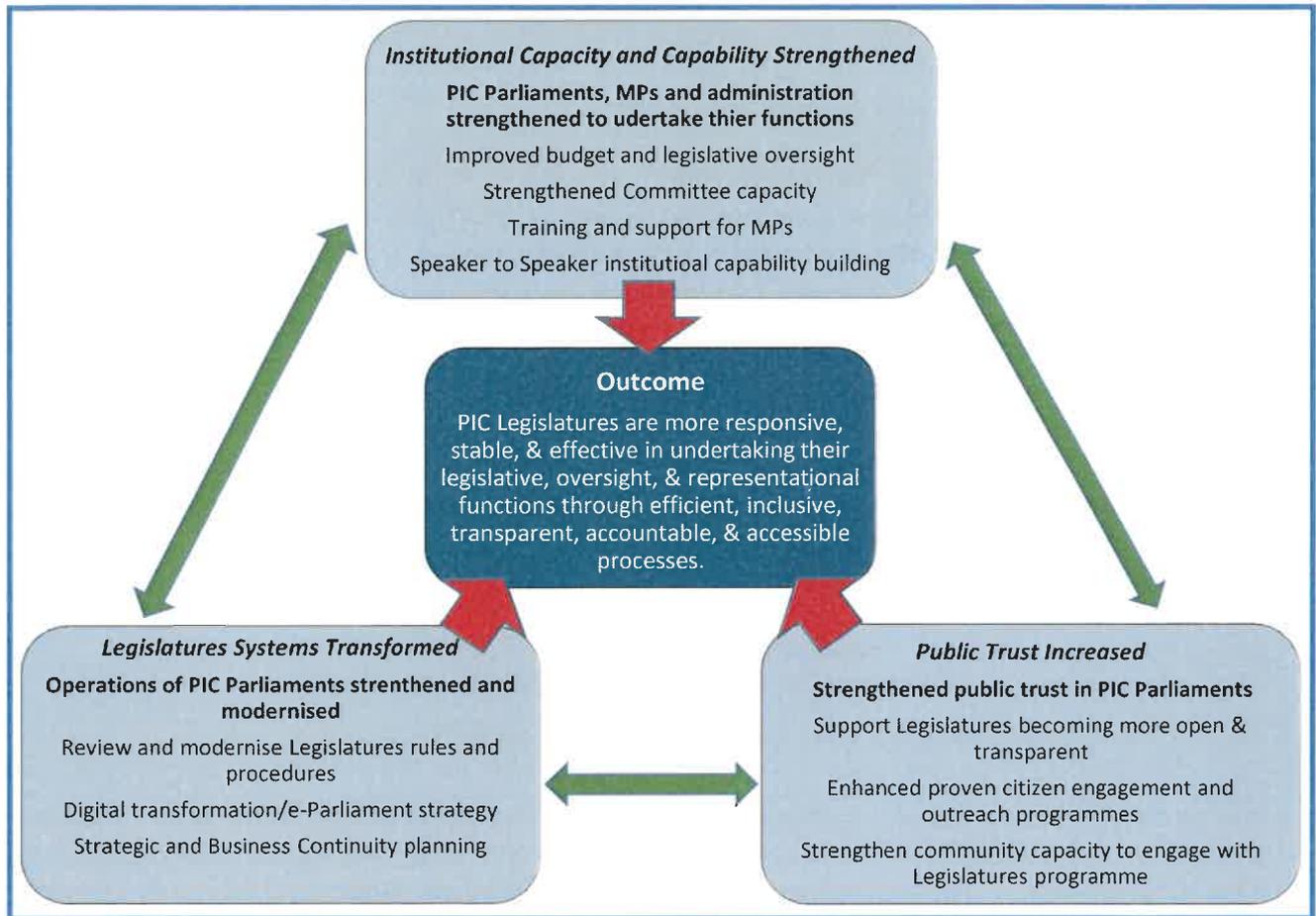
In the development of the project strategy, any potential environmental adverse impacts that could be caused by this project were considered and it was found that none of the anticipated activities to be conducted under this project are likely to cause any adverse impacts on the environment. The Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) was conducted to identify potential social and environmental impacts and risks, with the project assessed as no risks. The SESP report is attached as Annex 3.

As previously stated, the strategy is best advanced by bringing a regional approach to addressing common challenges to attain the desired outcome. Not only does this make effective use of resources, but as well illustrated with the flagship SLIP Phase 1 initiative, the *Floating Budget Office*, can help bridge human resource and capacity gaps across the Pacific legislatures while promoting South to South and regional cooperation. This is consistent with UNDP's global efforts to promote cooperation as an accelerator and multiplier of sustainable development.

The diagram illustrates how the Outputs and regional activities will feed into the Theory of Change. This will be discussed further in the Results and Partnerships Section which explains the regional inputs in detail.

As is shown in the diagram the project outputs are interrelated and success in one output activity will frequently result in a major change in another. A recent example of this is anecdotal evidence coming from work of Fiji Parliament's Standing Committees. There appears to be consistent evidence showing that the use of new ICT capacity to hold virtual committee meetings (as a response to the COVID crisis), has increased the number of Members attending committee hearings as well as substantially increasing the amount of citizen engagement in the form of submissions and other interactions with the committee inquiry process. As the figure reflects, the proposed strategy captures

how intended and unexpected results within one output (Transforming Systems) can have important impact on another (Building Institutional Capacity).

Institutional Capacity and Capability Strengthened

PIC Parliaments, MPs and administration strengthened to udertake thier functions

Improved budget and legislative oversight

Strengthened Committee capacity

Training and support for MPs

Speaker to Speaker institutioal capability building

Outcome

PIC Legislatures are more responsive, stable, & effective in undertaking their legislative, oversight, & representational functions through efficient, inclusive, transparent, accountable, & accessible processes.

Legislatures Systems Transformed

Operations of PIC Parliaments strenthened and modernised

Review and modernise Legislatures rules and procedures

Digital transformation/e-Parliament strategy

Strategic and Business Continuity planning

Public Trust Increased

Strengthened public trust in PIC Parliaments

Support Legislatures becoming more open & transparent

Enhanced proven citizen engagement and outreach programmes

Strengthen community capacity to engage with Legislatures programme

Results & Partnerships:

Expected Results

Outcome: PIC Legislatures are more effective, responsive, and representative in undertaking their legislative, oversight, and representational functions through efficient, inclusive, transparent, accountable, and accessible processes.	

Output 1: PIC Legislatures (including Sub-National Legislatures in relevant jurisdictions) and Legislators have the capacity and capability to effectively legislate and conduct oversight - *The capacity of PIC Legislatures and the capability of Legislators and the administration strengthened to undertake their respective functions, including scrutiny of the budget and the implementation and achievement of national development goals and SDGs, and planning for and managing change.* Particular emphasis will be given to the improved participation of women and the promotion of social, economic, and environmental security of women and the most vulnerable.	Activity 1: Build capacity of PIC Legislatures and key actors including civil society to engage with Legislatures and particularly committees to improve legislation and scrutiny of Government spending and programmes
	Activity 2 Establish effective support and capacity building for Legislators
	Activity 3: Legislatures, especially committees, have access to tools and resources improving the quality of legislation and oversight

Output 2: Transformed systems have strengthened and modernised the operations of PIC Legislatures - The operations of PIC Legislatures strengthened and modernised by bringing a regional approach to addressing common challenges. This will include improved governance frameworks and procedural effectiveness and innovation; transformed technology and digital capability, and better and more integrated service delivery.	Activity 1: Support PICs legislatures to review and amend their internal procedures, develop and implement Strategic Plans and business continuity plans to ensure effective and innovative solutions.
	Activity 2: Support the development and implementation of a digital transformation/e-Legislature strategy including a focus on connecting citizens and communities with Parliament; Development and piloting of regional platforms and networks promoting exchanges between PICs legislatures
Output 3: Public trust in PIC Legislatures is increased through citizen engagement and transparent processes - Public trust in PIC Legislatures strengthened through increased transparency, accessibility and accountability to citizens, and improved engagement with communities and civil society groups, with a focus on women.	Activity 1: Gender is mainstreamed through PICs legislatures and training programmes strengthening women's understanding and access to PICs legislature are implemented.
	Activity 2: Development and implementation of Open Parliament Action Plans with specific emphasis on increasing transparency of legislative work and promoting engagement of citizens

	Activity 3: Enhance programmes of proven citizen engagement including roadshows/island visits, and open days; promoting youth parliaments, women practice parliaments and model parliaments and promoting innovative educational and political dialog programs by integrating traditional & evolving communication platforms.

Outcome:

PIC Legislature are more effective, responsive, and representative in undertaking their legislative, oversight, and representational functions through efficient, inclusive, transparent, accountable, and accessible processes.

The new phase of the project will continue the focus on improving the effectiveness of law-making, oversight, and representation and connecting Legislatures to citizens through robust public outreach activities. Where possible, strengthening and modernising, the operations of PIC Legislatures will be advanced by bringing a regional approach to addressing common challenges. As noted above, the diverse experience, and the social, economic, and political needs and interests of each of the PICs is unique. Accordingly, a high degree of flexibility will be essential in developing and implementing programme activities with PIC Legislatures that are responsive to their particular situations.

The project will also endeavour to build the Legislatures' capacity to conduct oversight of government spending and programmes more effectively. With an emphasis on areas in which the Government has established commitments and policies (e.g., to achieve National Development Goals-NDGs and Sustainable Development Goals-SDGs) and in areas that have previously lacked scrutiny (subordinate legislation), the standing committees will be supported in conducting oversight through evidence-based inquiries.

Capacity development will also be offered through the Legislatures to civil society to build its capacity to act as an advocate and active partner in the work of Parliament. The project will continue to support the institutionalisation of best practices, including modernising Legislatures through a digital transformation and improved business continuity. A change management process will also be supported within the institution to ensure the Legislatures continue their positive trajectory and achieve their strategic goals and objectives.

Output 1: PIC Legislatures (including Sub-National Legislatures in relevant jurisdictions) and Legislators have the capacity and capability to effectively undertake their functions - *The capacity of PIC Legislatures and the capability of Legislators and the administration strengthened to undertake their respective functions, including scrutiny of the budget and the implementation and achievement of national development goals and SDGs, and planning for and managing change. Particular emphasis will be given to the improved participation of women and the promotion of social, economic, and environmental security of women and the most vulnerable*

Output 1 of this project will focus on further building the critical capacity of PIC Legislatures to effectively legislate and conduct oversight of government programming and spending including scrutiny of the budget, annual reports, reports of the Auditor General and regular estimates style hearings. This could include progressing work on the modernisation of Standing Orders and Rules of Procedure; and further strengthening of, respect for, and adherence to, parliamentary oversight mechanisms. An important part of achieving this will be through the monitoring of the NDP and SDG commitments and the capacity and success of the Government in meeting them, as well as building

the upstream capacity of civil society to provide input. Such support will also include a particular focus on supporting women and other vulnerable grouLegislators; civil society; citizens) actively engaging in the work of the legislatures.

Similarly, this output aims to build core capabilities that are critical at times of crisis, but equally, an essential foundation for resilient and robust parliamentary governance systems. Ongoing professional development and capacity building will continue to be a key, common institutional challenge for PIC legislatures. The focus of that professional development in this project, where feasible through collaborative regional initiatives, will be on building the skills and knowledge of Legislators and the administration, to effectively undertake their respective responsibilities, meet strategic goals and to plan for and manage change.

Activity 1: Build capacity of Legislatures and key actors including civil society to engage with Legislatures and particularly its committees to improve legislation and scrutiny of Government spending and programmes.

Critical to the institutionalisation of a Legislature that engages and communicates with citizens is to establish space for dialogue between Parliament and civil society. To date there has been some success in developing such space, including through the work of the standing committees and also through the work of the Parliamentary Outreach Units. But there are still indications that the space is not being fully utilised by committees or civil society. There are indications that there is limited capacity of civil society to advocate effectively and to produce evidence-based submission to the standing committees that can inform the committee work.

SLIP ll will continue to work with the standing committees, but with an additional emphasis on collaboration with civil society. The project will support capacity development of Legislators, committee staff and civil society to promote mutual engagement and to enhance the level of community understanding of Parliament. This could include:

- Organise induction of Legislators at start of new Term of Legislatures with follow-up capacity building based on the induction needs assessment results. With elections scheduled in all but one of the participating PICs within the life of SLIP Phase ll, the project will support the Legislatures in organising an induction programme for the newly elected Legislators. Such work in the past has included workshops with issue briefings by development partners and senior government officials and it is anticipated such detailed knowledge sharing will occur once again. In addition, the project will support a series of skills-based workshops for new Legislators to support their transition to the role of Legislator and leader representing national, regional, and local issues and addressing the systemic change necessary to achieve the national development and SDG goals. Workshops will focus on understanding and planning for change through the development of individual MP strategic work plans for the next 4 years. Communication workshops will allow Legislators to integrate a communication plan into their strategic plans.

- Enhance the capacity of women as political actors in oversight of government spending and programmes. A specific area of concern regarding Parliament's role in oversight is the need to ensure issues related to gender and the perspective of women are well articulated and provided in a timely manner for the Legislature to consider. This will require more active participation of women in the decision-making. The project will support CSOs working with women, women legislators, and other related actors to not only be active in the oversight work of Parliament, but to advocate for and support committees to engage in oversight of spending and programmes that are particularly impactful on women and girls.

  Using capacity development tools, such as training and mentoring, the project will build the skills of such actors. In addition, the project, by supporting standing committees to engage in

oversight, will create opportunities for such actors to be active and to advocate for the issues of concern to them.

Activity 2: *Establish effective support and capacity building for Legislators such as:*

- Improving budget oversight through strengthened Floating Budget Office operations. The "Pacific Floating Budget Office", (FBO) developed by the UNDP Pacific Office, is an innovative example of "South-South cooperation" with legislatures from SLIP countries sharing experiences with each other, and jointly tackling challenges they have in common. The FBO demonstrated the benefit to Legislators and staff of both host and visiting Legislatures in the exchange of knowledge and skills in budget analysis and research and provided independent budget analysis to the members of the host legislatures. In its early stages, the project deployed a number of "in person" FBO missions and more recently, with the pandemic disruptions and travel restrictions, successfully adapted the initiative to a virtual model.

  During Phase ll, this work would be expanded, to enable participating legislatures to undertake an independent analysis of the annual budget, which will be shared with all Members of Parliament before the budget debate takes place, along with briefings for civil society organisations.

- Establish effective mentoring & support networks & communities of practice on oversight topics such as climate change & blue economy. As noted in the previous bullet point, the SLIP Phase ll will provide a strong focus on Legislators professional development and leadership capability. The project will work with Legislators to develop mentoring and support networks within and between PIC legislatures and colleagues even further afield, to encourage the adoption of new knowledge and skills into Legislators own practice. Such relationships can be a very effective means to provide collegial support and development to Legislators, particularly in regions such as the Pacific, where the limitations of smaller numbers of colleagues in any given legislature, and substantial distances between jurisdictions, can be greatly limiting. Such limitation can, however, be overcome by virtual links and networks. Similarly, communities of practice on oversight topics such as climate change & blue economy can provide an extended exposure to diverse thinking, knowledge, and experience for Legislators. The project will provide professional advice, training, and technical support to advance this work.

- Develop a regional programme of capacity building "Master Classes" for Legislators. Master classes are a proven methodology for rapid capacity building of Legislators based on the priority needs identified by Legislators and Committees. Master classes are delivered by current or former Legislators on matters that they are passionate and skilled on and can be delivered face to face or virtually using the technology developed as part of the digital transformation and should be recorded for online use by Legislators as the need arises. Master classes are also an effective part of Induction programming,; and it will build upon the regional platform developed in Output 2 Activity 3.

  Such support also has strong links with other activities such as the mentoring programme, the FBO and, the leadership programme. Master Classes are a highly flexible modality and new classes can be developed rapidly as new priority issues arise. In terms of the development challenges identified above the programme can include (among others) such core issues as:

  - Building communication skills of Legislators;

  - Strengthening the capacity of Legislators to analyse and assess public policy issues especially where time is limited and provide a guide on how this can improve debating skills and increase consensus;

- Assessing innovative methods for public outreach;

- Ensuring the views of women, youth and marginalised groups are included in legislative and committee processes,

- Strengthening the capacity of Legislators to undertake more effective representation of constituents using new and improved information and communication technology and better communication skills. Practical ways of managing the various demands on Legislators and best practice ways of addressing concerns of constituents will be developed.

Activity 3: Activity 3: Legislatures, especially committees, have access to tools and resources improving the quality of legislation and oversight, which can include:

- Needs analysis, design, and implementation of a "Floating Legislative Drafting Office" and a "Floating Parliamentary Research Unit". There is a region wide paucity of skilled legislative drafting and parliamentary research capability. To address this and referencing the "Pacific Floating Budget Office" (FBO) developed by the UNDP Pacific Office, and successfully widely utilised through SLIP Phase I, a regional needs analysis will be conducted through the project in these two areas. Subject to the findings of that needs analysis, a design project will be initiated to develop and implement 2 pilots project. As with the FBO, these two mechanisms would facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills, and potentially create a shared specialist capability, on one hand on legislative drafting, on the other hand on parliamentary research, with a sufficient regional economy of scale to sustain it.

- *Strengthen standing committees' capacity to undertake Routine monitoring and comprehensive policy and portfolio-based oversight enquires of executive action & spending (including NDP and SDG monitoring) through annual reports, reports of the Auditor General and regular estimates style hearings, and reviews of subordinate legislation.* Through this project UNDP will continue to provide technical advice to committee Chairs and members but will place an enhanced focus on oversight. This will include the effective review of Annual Reports of Ministries, and the scrutiny of financial statements and Budget papers. This will enable committees to undertake what is usually referred to as Estimates Inquiries in other Legislatures, the monitoring of the expenditure and results of government expenditure of public funds by each Ministry. This work will be further enhanced through the review of relevant Auditor General's reports and recommendations. Further, using the SDGs as a less sensitive approach to initiating oversight of government activity, the project will support regular oversight inquiries into specific goals and their implementation. This will include strategic advice and coordination support to ensure the committees are working efficiently on NDP and SDG monitoring. It will also include direct technical advice to the committees as they conduct their inquiries. Included in such technical work is support for public hearings and field visits.

- Routine evidence-based gender impact analysis on all work by standing committees. As noted previously, a strong capacity to review and investigate Bills and what ministries have done and are doing to understand where gender inequalities lie and what structural inequalities exist in each portfolio area and especially in government service delivery, is critical to improved gender outcomes across government. This phase of the project will have dedicated activities related to building gender analysis capacity and institutionalizing standard practices to ensure the routine use of gender impact analysis in its work.

Output 2: Transformed systems have strengthened and modernised the operations of PIC Legislatures - The operations of PIC Legislatures strengthened and modernised by bringing a

regional approach to addressing common challenges. This will include improved governance frameworks and procedural effectiveness and innovation; transformed technology and digital capability, and better and more integrated service delivery.

Output 2 will support PIC legislatures in addressing some of the human and technical resource limitations that challenge much of their core business. The value of ICT and digital solutions has been well illustrated during the pandemic when many legislatures could not meet physically to undertake their work. Through SLIP Phase 1, some of the Pacific legislatures were supported to partially overcome these barriers through technology interventions. Through the development and implementation of a digital transformation/e-Legislature strategy including the automation of key information systems and support services, committees and plenary, legislatures will be helped to undertake much of their core business more efficiently and effectively.

Furthering the support some legislatures have received during SLIP Phase 1 to develop standard operating procedures and business continuity plans and extending it to help other legislatures develop business continuity plans and to conduct Legislators and staff training on their activation and use, will be critical to PIC legislatures future preparedness.

Activity 1: Support the review and modernising of PIC Legislatures rules of procedure and standard operating procedures to ensure effective and innovative solutions. This can include:

- While Executive control will continue to be a key issue in the process of advancing the Legislature's core functions, the project will continue and deepen engagement with the various Speakers, Legislature Leaders and Committee Chairs in relation to developing an ongoing review of the Standing Orders, as was achieved with the Vanuatu Parliament during Phase I. Studying regional best practice in improving oversight capacity and applying innovative solutions to the way legislatures operate will be key drivers for instituting change of the Rules of Procedure.

- The project will support the legislatures to conduct inclusive and participatory processes for developing, approving and implemented new or updated Strategic Plans. It is expected that such a planning process will include routine and robust engagement and inputs from civil society, independent commissions, and the government.

  Complementary to the Strategic Plan, the project will address the associated need for an effective business continuity strategy and a digital transformation strategy to respond to needs identified because of the pandemic and climate change events. Through SLIP Phase 1, some legislatures have been supported to develop standard operating procedures and business continuity plans. Phase 11 will further this support and extend it to help other legislatures develop business continuity plans and to conduct training for Legislators and staff on their activation and use. It will be important for the regional PIC legislatures to share insights and knowledge with each other, and learn from their experiences, actions, and insights. The business continuity plans will accumulate and consolidate lessons from previous disasters and crises and apply them to support business sustainability in the future.

Activity 2: Support the development and implementation of a digital transformation/e-Legislature strategy including a focus on connecting citizens and communities with Legislatures.

As noted in a recently conducted UNDP IT assessment of a number of legislatures in the Pacific region, an e-Legislature is one that can better carry out its legislative making, representative and oversight functions through the structural, managed and continuously optimized use of ICT. ICT allows for better information management, provision, and delivery of better information services to Legislators and committees (including Legislature research), to allow for more evidence-based

lawmaking, more timely and complete sharing of information and documentation for plenary proceedings. This allows Legislators to better prepare and act as truly well-informed people's representatives. Also, ICT can be used for better information dissemination, citizen engagement and outreach, notably via timely, accurate and complete provision of data on House proceedings via the Legislature website and Legislature social media channels. Importantly, ICT can not only cater for a one-way dissemination of information, but also provide for Legislature openness and citizen engagement and allowing citizens and civil society to reach out and connect with the Legislature and the people's representatives, at the appropriate stages in the lawmaking process.

The August 2021 UNDP report noted that the levels of ICT infrastructure and planning is varied. Some PICs, notably the Parliament of Fiji that have developed a strong baseline of IT infrastructure and systems that have enabled the Parliament to establish a work culture based on the use of IT, while others are at an earlier stage of the digital transformation journey.

The project will support the development of a Pacific regional Legislature digital transformation/e-Legislature strategy and national digital initiatives. Furthermore, the project will provide technical assistance to deliver on the strategy and, where feasible, assist with the procurement of necessary hardware and software.

Output 3: Public trust in PIC Legislatures is increased through citizen engagement and transparent processes - Public trust in PIC Legislatures strengthened through increased transparency, accessibility and accountability to citizens, and improved engagement with communities and civil society groups, with a focus on women.

The overarching goal of Output 3 is to build trust in PIC legislatures through increasing transparency, accessibility, and opportunity for meaningful participation in order to be genuinely accountable to citizens. Further initiatives will be instigated to maintain and develop inclusive political processes including engagement with political parties; and training of Legislators, legislative staff, and civil society organisations.

Activity 1: Activity 1: Mainstreaming of gender through PICs legislatures and training programmes strengthening women's understanding and access to PICs legislature are implemented.

The project will utilize the position of legislatures to encourage women to run for parliament, increase the capacity of potential women candidates and provide information to potential women candidates on the role and work of Parliament. The approach utilized will be the successful 'practice parliament for women' activity that will allow potential women candidates to undertake training on being a parliamentarians and practice undertaking parliamentary debates. The practice parliament for women approach allows for both the capacity of potential women candidates to be increased and the high-profile activity also sensitizes the community as the possibility of women being national leaders. Practice Parliaments for women have previously been held in PNG, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga and RMI.

In addition to considering the number of women elected to serve in the legislatures, Parliaments as institutions should be gender neutral; that is as Members conduct their work they must consider all matters with regard to their impact on both men and women equally. In Parliaments dominated by men it is critical to build systems and procedures that ensure the opinions and concern of women and girls are considered as Parliament conducts its work[18]. The project will support means by which

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[18] See, Parliament of Fiji Handbook, 2016

Parliament should consider the interest of women and girls in its work, including public input to ensure the voices of women are heard and their feedback is received and reviewed.

Routine evidence-based gender impact analysis on all work by standing committees: As noted previously, a strong capacity to review and investigate Bills and what ministries have done and are doing to understand where gender inequalities lie and what structural inequalities exist in each portfolio area and especially in government service delivery, is critical to improved gender outcomes across government. This phase of the project will have dedicated activities related to building gender analysis capacity and institutionalizing standard practices to ensure the routine use of gender impact analysis in its work.

Activity 2: Development and implementation of Open Parliament Action Plans with specific emphasis on increasing transparency of legislative work and promoting engagement of citizens

Support for Strategic Plan objectives that focus on making PIC Legislatures more open and transparent, will be central to supporting PICs continuing development of effective and participatory Legislative governance systems. The *Declaration on Parliamentary Openness* established by the Open Parliament Initiative (OPI) may be a useful reference point for this work. OPI was established in 2012 as a global initiative to support Legislatures in becoming more transparent.[19] It will also be important that the work on achieving an Open Legislature, and the goals of the digital transformation/e-Legislature are effectively coordinated. This work will also have strong links to the current and future strategic plans.

Activity 3: Enhance programmes of proven citizen engagement including: roadshows/island visits and open days; promoting youth parliaments and model parliaments and promoting innovative educational and political dialog programs by integrating traditional & evolving communication platforms. This can include:

- Programmes of proven value such as roadshows/island visits, and open days; youth parliaments, women practice parliaments and model parliament, will all be supported to promote and facilitate citizen engagement with, while building the upstream capacity of civil society to provide input to, their legislatures.

- In relation with the work strengthening the role and functioning of parliamentary committees, as well as on the review of internal rue of procedures when the legal framework requires, the project also has the potential to pilot oversight inquiries that ensure opportunities for direct interactions between Legislators and civil society, with the aim of leading to institutionalisation of such space for engagement.

- As already noted, ICT can be used for better information dissemination, citizen engagement and outreach, notably via timely, accurate and complete provision of data on parliamentary proceedings. Associated with the projects support for the development of a Pacific regional parliamentary digital transformation/e-legislature strategy, will be digital initiatives to build Legislature openness and citizen engagement, allowing citizens and civil society to reach out and connect with the Legislature and the people's representatives, at the appropriate stages of the lawmaking and accountability processes.

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[19] http://www.openingparliament.org/static/pdfs/english.pdf

Resources Required to Achieve the Expected Results

The required project resources can be categorised into financial, technical, and managerial. The financial resources needed by the project have been indicated on the cover page of the Project Document and associated funding indications the donors have been cited. These resources will be used to procure the required technical and managerial services, such as mapped in the Multi-year Work Plan of the Project Document.

Human resources will include Project staff, Government counterparts, Constitutional Offices holders, UNDP Country Office staff and networks, consultants and implementing partners.

Resources in terms of staff time from the Secretariats as the main project delivery stakeholder and the corporate support (financial management and management services, human resources, procurement management) of the UNDP Pacific Office in Suva will also be required to achieve the expected outputs and outcomes of the project. These resources are embedded within the project activities and will be defined further in the Annual Work Plans during the project implementation.

Additional resources deriving from partnerships like for example the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships programme, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, CROPs agencies such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the University of the South Pacific, as well as United Nations sister agencies will also be sought as expert resources in ensuring that project results are based on cutting-edge knowledge and international best practices.

In addition to project staff, as outlined below under management structure, the project will utilise short-term technical consultants and advisers as required to provide detailed, demand-driven advice and support to the Legislatures, their committees, staff, and Legislators. Such support will be defined in the Multi-Year Work Plan of this document and for each consultancy there will be the issuing of a ToR as to the expected outcomes and outputs of the planned work.

Partnerships

UNDP has a clear advantage to implement this project based on the global technical expertise available in inclusive and effective democratic governance, which includes successful parliamentary development and strengthening projects globally, regionally, and particularly in the Pacific. UNDP is a global leader in parliamentary development, currently implementing projects and activities in over 75 countries to strengthen the capacity of Legislatures. In the Pacific, UNDP has worked extensively with the Legislatures of Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, PNG, Cook Islands, Bougainville, Kiribati, and Marshall Islands to support their law-making, oversight and representative functions, as well as to strengthen the general capacity of Parliament Secretariats. Working closely with global parliamentary bodies such as the Commonwealth Parliament Association (CPA) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), UNDP has an extensive community of practice to draw on to support the project and ensure that global innovation is at the forefront of project implementation.

While implementing SLIP I, UNDP through its multilateral and impartial credentials has been building a trusted partnership with PIC Legislatures. The partnership is grounded in strong relationships with the Speakers, Secretaries General/Clerks, Committee Chairs, Whips, Legislators, and departmental staff. UNDP also has a long and effective relationship with the PIC Governments and other Constitutional bodies in the implementation of a range of activities and projects that contribute towards effective governance.

As a result of partnership relationships during the current and previous projects UNDP has created strong working relationships with regional partners and Legislatures. In particular the project should

expand relationships with Committees of the Japanese Diet which oversee matters such as Climate Change, Disaster Risk Management, Marine Environmental Management and Official Development Assistance as well as comparable Committees of other regional Legislatures. The Pacific Parliamentary Partnership (PPP) will also be important in terms of mobilizing expertise and hosting MP delegations and staff placements at affiliated regional legislatures.

As mentioned above, UNDP has a long history of working with the CPA and the IPU. The CPA each year convenes Parliamentary Staff Development Workshops for parliamentary staff from across the Pacific. The IPU has also supported PIC Legislatures' capacity to address SDGs and gender equality and provided online capacity building support. Members have benefited from attendance at IPU General Assembly meetings as well special conferences and other meetings organised by the IPU.

UNDP will also closely coordinate with other UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, including UN Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the United Nations Environment Programme. The project will work closely with ongoing UN projects, for example, particular projects such as the UNDP / UNODC project on anti-corruption (UNPRAC), or the Vaka Pasifika Project which has been working with Auditor Generals and Civil Society, as well as in a previous phase with Public Accounts Committees and legislators in the region to increase public financial management and governance. Other areas of the UN will be invited to participate in monitoring and evaluation processes.

In the context of activities intended to enhance the capacity, efficiency, and accountability of Parliamentary Committees to apply an inclusive and human rights-based approach with commitments to achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, the project will engage with relevant regional parliamentary women's groups as well as CSO and community groups representing women and girls. The project will also engage strongly with regional and national organisations and community groups representing the interests of other marginalised groups including disability and aged communities, the LGBTQI community and those confronting HIV/AIDS issues.

Risks and Assumptions

Project risks are comprehensively identified in the Risk Log attached. The project assumptions are detailed in the Strategy section of this Project Document. The project design includes measures to assist PIC Legislatures to realize and implement human rights as identified under the national Constitutions. The project is expected to ensure that Members of Legislatures and staff have an increased understanding of human rights standards and commitments, as well as a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities to ensure implementation and respect of HR by national institutions and agencies. Further, the project enhances the capabilities of parliamentary committees and the capacities of Members of Parliament, to scrutinize bills from a human rights perspective and monitor government policies and actions regarding the realization of human rights commitments, as well as addressing inequalities. The project will enable marginalized individuals and groups to claim and achieve their right of political participation. The project includes measures for increasing the meaningful participation of women in politics, in strengthening individual knowledge and capacity of women to contribute to political processes. Based on Gender Equality principles, the project will capacitate women Legislators and male Legislators about gender equality. Further, the project will build the capabilities of parliamentary committees to conduct gender impact analysis of proposed bills and reports of government agencies. To the extent possible, the project will incorporate gender-disaggregated data and gender statistics, as well as specific, measurable indicators related to gender equality and empowerment, with the Results Framework including outputs and indicators to address gender inequality. Gender is effectively mainstreamed, and all three project outputs have gender equality as a significant objective (gender marker GEN2).

The project has no direct negative environmental effects or risks; it will ensure that activities implemented are taking indirect environmental impact into account. The project support to legislatures will be offering trainings and technical assistance, ensuring that the SDGs and development issues are mainstreamed across legislatures' work, including gender mainstreaming, and reducing inequality, while at the same time promoting inclusive economic growth, action to combat climate change and its impacts, and conserve and sustainably use natural resources. The project will support the ongoing digital transformation of the Parliament, thus reducing the carbon footprint of the partner institution.

All three project outputs are linked to supporting strengthening of inclusive political participation, through the increase of parliamentary citizen engagement and outreach activities and increase of legislatures transparency. Furthermore, the entire project is designed to increase accountability of public State institutions in the pacific – through the strengthening of the parliamentary oversight of the Executive branch. The strengthening of the overall accountability to stakeholders is therefore at the same time the purpose of a number of the activities, as well as the expected outcome of the project.

Stakeholder Engagement

The project combines an upstream institutional focus with downstream public engagement to strengthen both the supply and demand sides of the work of Parliament and Legislators as leaders and representatives of the people of PICs who are the key stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project. While PIC legislatures, as the primary institutions of democratic governance are the chief target, the project's theory of change supports a longer-term and wide-ranging benefit for PIC citizens. The 3 Outputs provide a strategic approach to institutional change and development including how it can impact on improving the machinery of government, government policy and the expenditure of public funds to meet National Development Plan and the SDG goals for the benefit of the people of PICs.

As indicated, the key stakeholders and at the same time principal beneficiaries are the Speaker, Members and staff of PIC legislatures, PIC governments, Constitutional Offices, and civil society.

During the formulation of this project, regular meetings were conducted by UNDP, to inform and update the stakeholders of the process. The draft Project Document was shared widely with a wide range of Legislators, including the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, political leaders, and Standing Committee Chairs. Equally, the Secretariats were consulted, including the Secretaries General/Clerks and relevant senior managers. The Project Board considered the document in depth and made considered recommendations and amendments.

South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSC/TrC)

Both UNDP's global strategic plan and the Multi-Country Programme Document (MPCD) (2023-2027) call for using SSC/TrC to facilitate knowledge exchange on policy reforms and innovations that have been applied in other contexts and to support peer-to-peer learning. Under the MCPD, UNDP undertakes regional programming to help countries take collective action or seek shared solutions to common challenges through South-South cooperation and knowledge sharing. A peer review of country systems in Samoa was recognized as an example of how countries in the Pacific could learn through regional peer-to-peer mechanisms and adopt and replicate proven solutions.[20]

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[20] Pacific countries are innovators of peer-to-peer learning, 3 December 2016, https://pasifik.news/pacific-countries-innovators-peer-peer-learning/

Continuing the excellent experiences under SLIP I, the project will continue to expand its south-south and triangular cooperation with other Legislatures in the Asia-Pacific Region that have similar parliamentary systems or have similar parliamentary development challenges, to create a two-way learning process. As identified in the Partnership sections above, the IPU and CPA through their international programming strongly support SSC/TrC learning.

UNDP will actively engage with Pacific CROPs agencies, in particular with the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) and the University of the South Pacific (USP) to envision mechanisms based on SSC/TrC which aim at developing dedicated and specialist expertise in the Pacific region over the long term, thus ensuring sustainability of the assistance.

Sustainability is also achieved through the membership of PIC legislatures in a variety of fora including the Asia Pacific Parliamentarians Forum (APPF), Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) and others. The various Inter-Parliamentary Relations and Protocol Units also facilitates SSC/TrC by strengthening and maintaining relations with other legislatures and other inter-parliamentary organisations regionally and globally.

The Team will also, under the overall guidance of the MCO/Pacific Office management and of the Regional team in Bangkok, envision collaborations with UNOSSC/BPPS SSC unit, as the highest custodian of south-south cooperation activities.

Digital Solution

The project had been developed with the overall purpose to provide digital solutions that empower Pacific Legislatures to respond to challenges of the XXIst century, based on experiences made by other legislatures worldwide and in particular in the Pacific region, notably as implemented by the UNDP Pacific Office through SLIP phase 1 and its other regional parliamentary development projects.

More specifically, Output 1 will address the (human) digital capacity gap and provide training to both elected Members and parliamentary staff in PICs Legislatures on ICT matters. The project's Output 2 is entirely devoted to the PICs legislatures' digitization and modernization, which entails developing their internal digital capacity – both in terms of infrastructure as well as internal capabilities, as well as the Legislatures' capacity to plan strategically around digital matters, though the development of e-parliament strategies. Finally, Output 3 will support the full integration of digital solutions into outreach and engagement mechanisms, for instance though the development, drafting and implementation of "Open Parliament Action Plans" that are deeply rooted in ICT solutions.

Knowledge

A considerable number of knowledge products, including manuals, guidance notes and handbooks for Legislators and staff, as well as media products used under the parliament outreach and public engagement component have been developed during SLIP I and are in current use. The project will continue to support the production of knowledge products by its primary institutional stakeholders and partners, for use across Outputs including engaging the broader public to increase awareness on the functioning of legislatures and the separation of powers. Strategy documents produced by the legislatures and UNDP will serve as knowledge tools to inform key stakeholders and the broader public of institutional goals and priorities. Assessments and public perception surveys will deepen understanding of thematic issues, as well as establish project baselines and support monitoring of progress. Research papers and guidance notes will be produced across the areas of focus in the

project. The exact research and policy agenda will remain flexible and responsive, but will be planned annually, under the oversight of the project board.

Knowledge products will also support duty-bearers (such as the Standing Committees) by providing practical tools that support the development and strengthening of their oversight mandate and increase the accountability and transparency of legislatures. Key institutional structures supporting knowledge management and exchange will continue to be supported, including the library and research departments of PIC legislatures, the Floating Budget Office, and the proposed Floating Legislative Drafting Office.

Various means of dissemination will be used to increase visibility and to engage stakeholders, including, policy discussions and coordination forums to facilitate increased interaction between duty-bearers and rights-holders. Traditional media, such as radio, TV, and print, will be used alongside social media channels in public awareness campaigns on key themes. Press releases about public events will inform and invite local media. Visibility of the project will be increased further by the communication activities of project partners and donor. The project team will contribute to funding communication work from the UNDP Pacific Office, in order to coordinate the activities related to the visibility of the project. Lessons learned generated by the project will be included in the Lessons Learned Log and shared with other Regional Legislatures and partners.

The project will also use UNDP global reach to channel learning, case-studies, research papers and innovations generated into global governance practice networks for use by development practitioners in the wider international community. All knowledge products will mention the support provided by UNDP and project donor and be available on on-line, including on the relevant legislatures' web sites.

Sustainability and Scaling Up

The Project prioritises national ownership both at the formal level by supporting and strengthening the legislatures capacity, as well as with a bottom-up approach of engaging the public and civil society and supporting mechanisms of civic-engagement. To ensure sustainability the design of the project is based on the following:

- Project interventions have been developed after **extensive consultations** with primary institutional beneficiaries, building on UNDP's existing project partnerships.
- Project priorities directly support the **targets and goals of PIC Legislatures' strategic plans** (and when these do not exist yet, support these plan's development based on their expressed priorities). The change management Output is specifically designed to ensure project sustainability, scaling up of results and strengthening institutional capacity and resilience.
- Primary institutional stakeholders will drive the implementation of core project priorities using in most cases existing staff and **results will be delivered through existing institutional structures in the legislatures and partner agencies**.
- While the project will utilise South-South cooperation to share development experience, it will **not promote the practice of importing ready-made "best practices"** or solutions. National stakeholders will be supported to research case-studies and country practices, and to examine and present different options. The final decisions on the best fit for PIC legislatures will lie with the respective legislatures.

The project activities related to capacity building for Legislators and staff are expected to also enhance the capabilities of the respective legislatures Corporate and Human Resources Management sections, both to design, mobilise and offer periodic professional development opportunities, and to create the potential of retaining capacity within the Secretariats. In addition, related to outreach, the

project will build up capacities at the various Outreach units to sustain and scale up its resources and activities beyond the duration of the project. The aim is that by the end of the project, the various Secretariat units and standing committees are sufficiently capacitated, so that support can be phased out.

III.   PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Cost Efficiency and Effectiveness

Cost efficiency and effectiveness in the project management will be achieved through adherence to the UNDP Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP) and reviewed regularly through the governance mechanism of the UNPF Annual Review, and by regular meetings of the Project Board. In addition, there are specific measures for ensuring cost-efficient use of resources through using a portfolio management approach on parliamentary matters. This approach by the UNDP Pacific Office leverages activities and partnerships among several initiatives and projects on parliamentary development in Fiji and across the Pacific.

Applying this approach, the project will look to ensure synergies with the other projects working in the region, including the Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness Initiative Phase II (PPEI-II and potentially PPEI-III) and Country specific Parliamentary Strengthening Projects such as the Fiji Parliament Support Programme Phase III (FPSP-III). Opportunities for collaboration will be explored with other projects operating within the political governance systems of PICs, including those working in support of elections, women's political empowerment, public finance management and political party assistance.

The project is also designed to deliver maximum project results with the available resources by ensuring the design is based on good practices and learned lessons, that activities are specific and clearly linked to the expected outputs, and that there is a sound results management and monitoring framework in place with indicators linked to the Theory of Change. The project aims to balance cost efficient implementation and best value for money with quality delivery and effectiveness of activities. For its capacity building activities, the project will utilise outside experts as well as in-house experts from within UNDP and UN sister organisations, and in-kind contributions from stakeholders including the PPP. UNDP works across the Pacific region on diverse projects, retaining a country presence, and therefore has a footprint, across the Pacific to draw on.

Additionally, UNDP provides operations support agency for other UN agencies, and operates a regional Joint-Operations Centre in Suva, ensuring full administrative, logistical, procurement, and programming support to UNDP and many other UN agencies operating in the Pacific region. UNDP offers value for money through cooperation and cost-sharing with other UNDP projects and UN agencies, for example cost-sharing of staff, overhead, expenses, and implementation of activities. This not only decreases project implementation costs, but also amplifies the reach and effects of project activities. This approach has already been proven in the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji. Audits will be conducted in accordance with UNDP's audit policy to manage financial risk.

Through successful project delivery across the Pacific Legislatures, UNDP has established a solid reputation for being able to establish and effectively deliver large projects in challenging, complex, and politically sensitive environments. UNDP develops and implements 'signature solutions', programming based on global evidence for effective democratic governance, tailored appropriately to the context.

The Project Board will oversight the project and all reports will be produced on time to ensure the smooth flow of communications between project partners. The project will contain an effective

monitoring and evaluation framework aligned to donor requirements and following the mid-term evaluation, the results will be shared with project partners to allow for the incorporation of alterations to project activities where required.

Project Management

Based on discussions with PIC legislatures, the Project is expected to be delivered through a Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). Under DIM, UNDP will bear full responsibility and accountability to manage the project, achieve project outputs and ensure the efficient use of funds. UNDP will be accountable to the funding partner for the disbursement of funds and the achievement of the project objective and outcomes, according to the approved work plan. UNDP will be responsible for the following functions: (i) coordinating activities to ensure the delivery of agreed outcomes; (ii) certifying expenditures in line with approved budgets and work-plans; (iii) facilitating, monitoring, and reporting on the procurement of inputs and delivery of outputs; (iv) approval of Terms of Reference for consultants and tender documents for sub-contracted inputs; and (vi) reporting to the Project Board on project delivery and impact.

As noted, through successful project delivery across the Pacific Legislatures, UNDP has established a solid reputation for being able to establish and effectively deliver projects in challenging, complex, and politically sensitive environments. SLIP Phase ll is such a project, with the inevitable political, social, and indeed, environmental complexities of multi-PIC jurisdictions, the need for responsive and flexible project management will be critical.

This capacity was well illustrated by the SLIP project team with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the resulting imposition of travel restrictions and safety measures which severely impacted on the ability of several legislatures to perform their normal functions and prevented the SLIP project team from traveling to Pacific countries to provide its usual support to the Legislatures. The project rapidly pivoted to support PICs capacity to respond to the crisis, adapting quickly with the provision of relevant technical support including ICT solutions, which helped legislatures to stay operational and relevant during the crisis.

Notwithstanding the appropriately rigorous management, reporting and accountability provisions outlined in the preceding paragraph, it will be essential that an effective procedure is established and maintained between the project management and the Project Board to enable similar levels of flexibility and responsiveness throughout the project's operations.

The project is expected to be implemented by the UNDP Effective Governance Team as part of its Parliamentary Development Portfolio.

The SLIP Phase 2 will include the following team members:
- The Regional Programme Specialist / Project manager (P4)
- Technical Specialist, NPSA 11
- Administrative Officer, NPSA6

The project will also share resources with other UNDP projects, such as an M&E officer and a communication officer.

The Regional Parliamentary Development Programme Specialist / Project Manager (P4) will report to the EG&IG Team Leader. In addition, the project will benefit from the quality assurance and strategic guidance input by the Effective Governance Unit Team Leader.

The Regional Programme Specialist will take overall responsibility for achieving results of the project. Under her/his supervision, the day-to-day management of the Project will be delegated to the Project Manager and the Team.

The Project Manager will be supported by technical experts with the expertise required for the various project activities, who will be recruited on a needs basis by UNDP as consultants. The project's Multi-Year Work Plan also includes a General Management Support (GMS) charge that covers the costs for UNDP that are not directly attributable to specific projects or services, but are necessary to fund the corporate structure, management, and oversight costs of UNDP as per global UNDP practices. The GMS is applied to all projects funded by either member governments at 3% for projects implemented directly in those member countries, and at 8% for contributions from other development partners for all projects that are implemented by UNDP around the world.

UNDP, as an IP, may enter into agreement with other entities, or Responsible Parties (RP) to deliver project outputs. For example, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has a global partnership agreement with UNDP which, following agreement, could be utilised for the delivery of a number of activities. UNDP will ensure technical and financial monitoring of all activities undertaken by RP and state institutions are in line with the signed agreements.

PROJECT DOCUMENT

[Country name, or Global/Regional Project]

IV.   **Results Framework**

Intended Outcome as stated in the Regional Programme Results and Resource Framework: UNSDCF Strategic Priority 4: Peace. **Outcome 4: By 2027, people enjoy and contribute to more accountable, inclusive, resilient and responsive governance systems that promote gender equality, climate security, justice and peace, ensure participation, and protect their human rights. Sub outcome 2, 5 and 6.** **UNDP Multi-Country Programme Document (MCPD) Output 3:** Countries are able to uphold human rights and nurture a governance environment that ensures an expanded civic space, women's leadership, harnessing the demographic dividends, empowerment of young people, and people's participation in decision-making.	
Outcome indicators as stated in the MCPD IRRF, including baseline and targets: **Indicator 3.2.3: Number of parliament committees with improved capacities that are conducting inclusive, and accountable law making and oversight (Refer IRRF 2.4.1)** Baseline (2021): Fiji MCO: 3 / Target (2027): Fiji MCO: 6 ;. Data Source: Hansard, Annual reports of Parliaments	
<mark>**Applicable Output from the UNDP Strategic Plan:**</mark> UNDP Strategic plan output **2.4:** Democratic institutions and processes strengthened for an inclusive and open public sphere with expanded public engagement.	
Applicable Sustainable Development Goals **SDG16:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels **Target 16.6:** Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels	

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Target 5c: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.)

Project title and Atlas Project Number: *Strengthening Legislatures' Capacity in Pacific Island Countries (SLIP) Project – Phase II*

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS (by frequency of data collection)					DATA COLLECTION METHODS
			Value	Year	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	FINAL	
PROJECT OUTCOME: Outcome: PIC Legislatures are more responsive, stable, & effective in undertaking their legislative, oversight, & representational functions through efficient, inclusive, transparent, accountable, & accessible processes.	**UNSDF Pacific Suboutcome 2: SDG 16.7.1: No. of countries with increased positions in national local institutions, including (a) legislatures, compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups** *1. .*	**Data on age and sex of Members, Speakers, and Data on age and sex of Chairs of permanent committee, Reports**	0	2023	1	3	4	6	100%	Data from Parliaments and IPU reports;
			0	2023	1	3	4	5	5	As provided by budget analysis undertaken by the Floating Budget Office
						-		-		

	Indicator	Means of verification	Baseline		Targets					
				Year						
UNSDF Pacific Suboutcome 5: SDG 16.6.1: No. of countries with increased approved budget for SDGs		**Government nt expenditure report, budget analysis report** / Data analysis from Parliaments and IPU reports by IPU,	0	2023	1	0	1	1	3	
UNSDF Suboutcome 6: SDG 5.5.1: No. of countries with increased proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliament 2.		**National data from parliaments**								
Output 1: The capacity of PIC Legislatures	*1.1: Number of parliament committees with improved capacities that are conducting*	Parliament & Parliament Reporting;	3	2022	3	4	5	6	6	

Outcome	Indicator	Means of Verification	Baseline	Year						Reporting
Legislators and administration to undertake their respective functions, including scrutiny of the budget and the implementation and achievement of national development goals and SDGs, is strengthened	*inclusive, and accountable law making and oversight*	Committee Reports; CSO Reports; Media Reports; FBO Reports;								Project M&E; Project Evaluation Annual Reporting
	1.2: Number of recommendations by all standing committees based on gender impact analysis per Legislature	Committee Reports; Media Reports; CSO reports	0	2022	5> per year	100> per year	20< per year	20< per year	20< per year	20< in total — Project M&E; Project Evaluation; Quarterly & Annual Reporting Parliament Reporting
	1.3 Percentage of newly elected Legislators who participated in induction programmes per Legislature (disaggregated by gender)	Parliament Reports; MP Survey; Committee Reports Staff Survey; Trainers Reports; Mentor Reports	In Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands: M/F 50%< In Palau, FSM, Kiribati: 0 (no induction programme)	2022	Training Programmes developed	60%< / 20%<	70%< / 40%<	80%< / 60%<	80%< / 60%<	80%< / 60%< — MP Survey; Project M&E; Project Evaluations and Staff Survey;

	Means of Verification	Baseline	Year					Means of Verification
Output 2: Transformed systems have strengthened and modernised the operations of PIC Legislatures								
2.1: *Number of Legislatures undertaking a needs assessment for updating their rules, strategic plans and operating procedures*	Parliament Reports; Committee Reports; Needs Assessment	0	2022	0 / 2 / 3 / 6 / 6				Parliament Reporting; Project M&E; Project Evaluation
2.2 *Percentage of Bills tracked online and visible to the public per Legislature*	Parliament Reports; Media Reports; Annual Reports	No Bills Currently Tracked	-	0% of Bills / 50%< of Bills / 100% of Bills / 100% of Bills / 100% of Bills (80%< of submissions)				Parliament Reports; Project Evaluation; Quarterly & Annual Reporting
2.3 *Percentage of Strategic Plans priorities actively progressed per Legislature*	Parliament Reports; Survey; Strategic Plans	2	2022	SPs priorities set / 25% progressed / 50% progressed / 75% progressed / 75%< progressed				Parliament Reporting; Project M&E; Project Evaluation

Output	Indicator	Means of Verification	Baseline		+10%≤	+25%<	+50%≤	+75%≤	+75%≤	Data source
Output 3: Public trust in PIC Legislatures strengthened through increased transparency, accessibility and accountability to citizens, and improved engagement with communities and civil society groups.	3.1 Percentage of substantive, evidence-based inputs and submissions received by Standing Committees from civil society per Legislature	Training Reports; CSO Reports; Committee reports;	less than 10		+10%≤	+25%<	+50%≤	+75%≤	+75%≤	Project M&E; Project Evaluation; Quarterly & Annual Reporting
	3.2: Number of Parliament webpage interactions with civil society on the "Open Parliament Feedback" section per Legislature		No Action Plan currently	-	0	100<	200<	400<	400<	
	3.3: Number and type of citizen engagement programmes per country	Media reports; CSO Reports; Committee reports	1	-	1	2	4	6	10< in total	Project M&E; Project Evaluation; Quarterly & Annual Reporting

V. MONITORING & EVALUATION

In accordance with UNDP's programming policies and procedures, the project will be monitored through the following monitoring and evaluation plans:

Monitoring Plan

Monitoring Activity	Purpose	Frequency	Expected Action	Partners (if joint)	Cost (if any)
Track results progress	Progress data against the results indicators in the RRF will be collected and analysed to assess the progress of the project in achieving the agreed outputs.	Quarterly, or in the frequency required for each indicator.	Slower than expected progress will be addressed by project management.	UNDP Project Report and Project Board to	Output 4: Effective Technical Advisory Services and Evaluation
Monitor and Manage Risk	Identify specific risks that may threaten achievement of intended results. Identify and monitor risk management actions using a risk log. This includes monitoring measures and plans that may have been required as per UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards. Audits will be conducted in accordance with UNDP's audit policy to manage financial risk.	Quarterly	Risks are identified by project management and actions are taken to manage risk. The risk log is actively maintained to keep track of identified risks and actions taken.	UNDP Project Report and Project Board to	Identified in Multi-Year Work Plan
Learn	Knowledge, good practices, and lessons will be captured regularly, as well as actively sourced from other projects and partners and integrated back into the project.	At least annually	Relevant lessons are captured by the project team and used to inform management decisions.	UNDP Project Report and Project Board to	Identified in Multi-Year Work Plan
Annual Project Quality Assurance	The quality of the project will be assessed against UNDP's quality standards to identify project strengths and weaknesses and to inform	Annually	Areas of strength and weakness will be reviewed by project management and used to inform	Project Board	Identified in Multi-Year Work Plan

Monitoring Activity	Description	Frequency	Expected Action	Partners (if joint)	Cost (if any)
Review and Make Course Corrections	management decision making to improve the project. Internal review of data and evidence from all monitoring actions to inform decision making.	At least annually	Performance data, risks, lessons, and quality will be discussed by the project board and used to make course corrections. decisions to improve project performance.	UNDP Project Report and Project Board	Identified in Multi-Year Work Plan
Project Report	A progress report will be presented to the Project Board and key stakeholders, consisting of progress data showing the results achieved against pre-defined annual targets at the output level, the annual project quality rating summary, an updated risk long with mitigation measures, and any evaluation or review reports prepared over the period.	Annually, and at the end of the project (final report)	The project board, based on the findings of the report, will provide strategic direction to the Project Management Team and project Manager to ensure the project continues to meet its outputs and outcomes.	UNDP Project and Project Board	Identified in Multi-Year Work Plan
Project Review (Project Board)	The project's governance mechanism (i.e., project board) will hold regular project reviews to assess the performance of the project and review the Multi-Year Work Plan to ensure realistic budgeting over the life of the project. In the project's final year, the Project Board shall hold an end-of project review to capture lessons learned and discuss opportunities for scaling up and to socialize project results and lessons learned with relevant audiences.	Specify frequency (i.e., at least annually)	Any quality concerns or slower than expected progress should be discussed by the project board and management actions agreed to address the issues identified.	UNDP Project and Project Board	Identified in Multi-Year Work Plan

Evaluation Plan

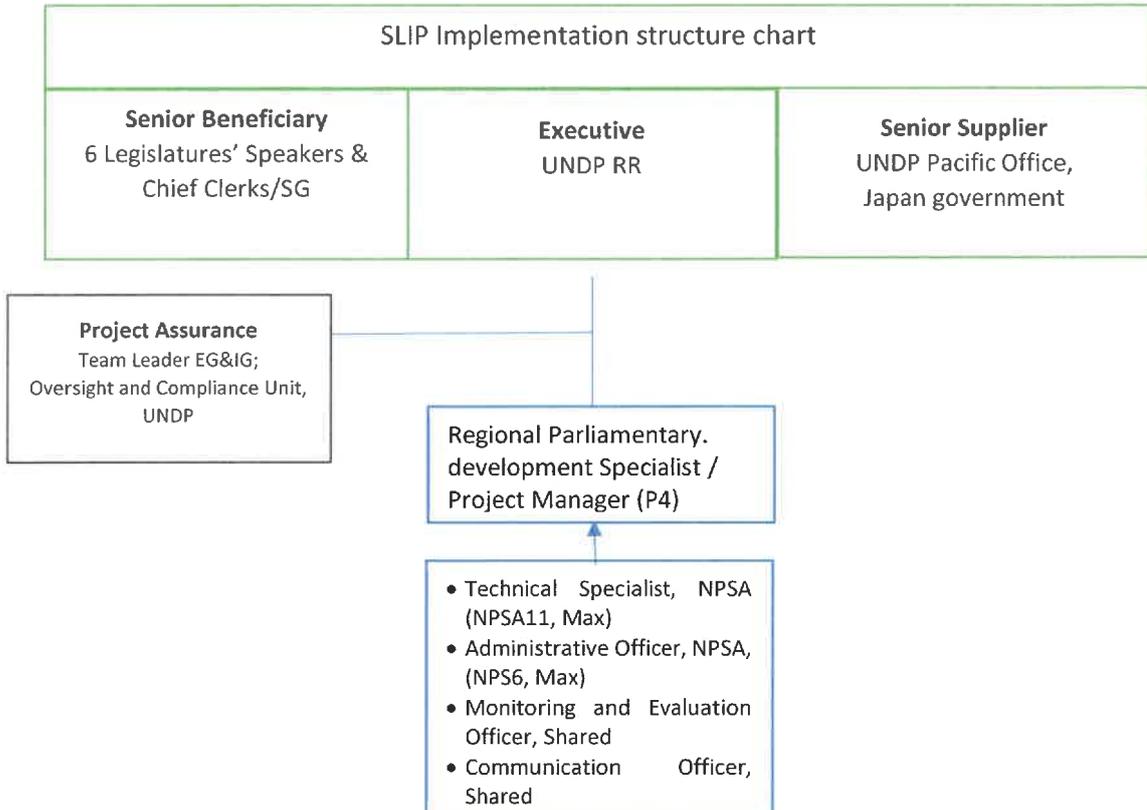| Evaluation Title	Partners (if joint)	Related Strategic Plan Output	UNDF Outcome	Planned Completion Date	Key Evaluation Stakeholders	Cost and Source of Funding
Mid-term Evaluation	UNDP	SP 5	Outcome 3: Peace – By 2027, people enjoy and contribute to more accountable, inclusive, resilient and responsive governance systems that promote gender equality, climate security, justice and peace, ensure participation, and protect their human rights.	September 2026	Legislatures; Parliamentary Staff; Legislators; Parliamentary Party Groups; National Government; CSOs	30,000 USD
Final Evaluation	UNDP	SP 5	Outcome 3: Peace – By 2027, people enjoy and contribute to more accountable, inclusive, resilient and responsive governance systems that promote gender equality, climate security, justice and peace, ensure participation, and protect their human rights.	September 2026	Legislatures; Parliamentary Staff; Legislators; Parliamentary Party Groups; National Government; CSOs	30,000 USD

VI. MULTI-YEAR WORK PLAN

(see Excel table annexed)

VII.   Governance and Management Arrangements

Governance of the project is expected to be undertaken by the Project Board which will convene at least twice a year and more frequently if decided so by the Board. Based on the discussions with each of the senior beneficiaries, the Project Board will convene separate Board Meetings with each of the Senior Beneficiaries.

The Project Board is the group responsible for making by consensus, management decisions for a project when guidance is required by the Programme Specialist/ Project Manager, including a recommendation for approval of project plans and revisions. In order to ensure accountability, Project Board decisions should be made in accordance with standards that shall ensure management for optimal development results, best value for money, fairness, integrity, and transparency. In case a consensus cannot be reached within the Board, the final decision shall rest with UNDP. In addition, the Project Board play a critical role in UNDP-commissioned project evaluations by quality assuring the evaluation process and products, and using evaluations for performance improvement, accountability, and learning. The Terms of Reference for the Project Board are annexed. The Project Board structure is provided in the diagram below.

SLIP Implementation structure chart		
Senior Beneficiary 6 Legislatures' Speakers & Chief Clerks/SG	**Executive** UNDP RR	**Senior Supplier** UNDP Pacific Office, Japan government

Project Assurance
Team Leader EG&IG;
Oversight and Compliance Unit,
UNDP

Regional Parliamentary.
development Specialist /
Project Manager (P4)

- Technical Specialist, NPSA (NPSA11, Max)
- Administrative Officer, NPSA, (NPS6, Max)
- Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Shared
- Communication Officer, Shared

The Regional Parliamentary Development Programme Specialist / Project manager (P4) has the authority to lead the project on behalf of UNDP within the parameters laid down by the Project Board and in accordance with the UNDP Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP). The Parliamentary Development Programme Specialist / Project Manager is responsible for the everyday management and decision-making of the project. The Project Manager's prime responsibility is to ensure that the project produces the results (outputs) specified in the Project Document to the required standard, and within the specified constraints of time and cost. Project backstopping and quality assurance will be provided by the Regional Parliamentary Development Portfolio Team in the UNDP Pacific Office.

Legal Context

This project document shall be the instrument referred to as such in Article 1 of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Governments of the 6 focus countries and UNDP. All references in the SBAA to "Executing Agency" shall be deemed to refer to "Implementing Partner."

This project will be implemented by UNDP("Implementing Partner") in accordance with its financial regulations, rules, practices and procedures only to the extent that they do not contravene the principles of the Financial Regulations and Rules of UNDP. Where the financial governance of an Implementing Partner does not provide the required guidance to ensure best value for money, fairness, integrity, transparency, and effective international competition, the financial governance of UNDP shall apply.

Risk Management
UNDP (DIM)

1.   UNDP as the Implementing Partner will comply with the policies, procedures and practices of the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS.)

2.   UNDP as the Implementing Partner will undertake all reasonable efforts to ensure that none of the SLIP-II project funds[21] are used to provide support to individuals or entities associated with terrorism , that the recipients of any amounts provided by UNDP hereunder do not appear on the United Nations Security Council Consolidated Sanctions List, and that no UNDP funds received pursuant to the Project Document are used for money laundering activities. The United Nations Security Council Consolidated Sanctions List can be accessed

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[21] To be used where UNDP is the Implementing Partner

via https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/un-sc-consolidated-list. This provision must be included in all sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered into under this Project Document.

3.   Social and environmental sustainability will be enhanced through application of the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (http://www.undp.org/ses) and related Accountability Mechanism (http://www.undp.org/secu-srm).

4.   UNDP as the Implementing Partner will: (a) conduct project and programme-related activities in a manner consistent with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards, (b) implement any management or mitigation plan prepared for the project or programme to comply with such standards, and (c) engage in a constructive and timely manner to address any concerns and complaints raised through the Accountability Mechanism. UNDP will seek to ensure that communities and other project stakeholders are informed of and have access to the Accountability Mechanism.

5.   In the implementation of the activities under this Project Document, UNDP as the Implementing Partner will handle any sexual exploitation and abuse ("SEA") and sexual harassment ("SH") allegations in accordance with its regulations, rules, policies and procedures.

6.   All signatories to the Project Document shall cooperate in good faith with any exercise to evaluate any programme or project-related commitments or compliance with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards. This includes providing access to project sites, relevant personnel, information, and documentation.

7.   UNDP as the Implementing Partner will ensure that the following obligations are binding on each responsible party, subcontractor, and sub-recipient:

a. Consistent with the Article III of the SBAA *[or the Supplemental Provisions to the Project Document]*, the responsibility for the safety and security of each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient and its personnel and property, and of UNDP's property in such responsible party's, subcontractor's and sub-recipient's custody, rests with such responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient. To this end, each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient shall:

i.put in place an appropriate security plan and maintain the security plan, taking into account the security situation in the country where the project is being carried;

ii.assume all risks and liabilities related to such responsible party's, subcontractor's and sub-recipient's security, and the full implementation of the security plan.

b. UNDP reserves the right to verify whether such a plan is in place, and to suggest modifications to the plan when necessary. Failure to maintain and implement an appropriate security plan as required hereunder shall be deemed a breach of the responsible party's, subcontractor's and sub-recipient's obligations under this Project Document.

c. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient (each a "sub-party" and together "sub-parties") acknowledges and agrees that UNDP will not tolerate sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse of anyone by the sub-parties, and other entities involved in Project implementation, either as contractors or subcontractors and their personnel, and any individuals performing services for them under the Project Document.

(a) In the implementation of the activities under this Project Document, each sub-party shall comply with the standards of conduct set forth in the Secretary General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13 of 9 October 2003, concerning "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" ("SEA").

(b) Moreover, and without limitation to the application of other regulations, rules, policies and procedures bearing upon the performance of the activities under this Project Document, in the implementation of activities, each sub-party, shall not engage in any form of sexual harassment ("SH"). SH is defined as any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. SH may occur in the workplace or in connection with work. While typically involving a pattern of conduct, SH may take the form of a single incident. In assessing the reasonableness of expectations or perceptions, the perspective of the person who is the target of the conduct shall be considered.

d. In the performance of the activities under this Project Document, each sub-party shall (with respect to its own activities), and shall require from its sub-parties (with respect to their activities) that they, have minimum standards and procedures in place, or a plan to develop and/or improve such standards and procedures in order to be able to take

effective preventive and investigative action. These should include: policies on sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse; policies on whistleblowing/protection against retaliation; and complaints, disciplinary and investigative mechanisms. In line with this, sub-parties will and will require that their respective sub-parties will take all appropriate measures to:

(i) Prevent its employees, agents or any other persons engaged to perform any services under this Project Document, from engaging in SH or SEA;

(ii) Offer employees and associated personnel training on prevention and response to SH and SEA, where sub-parties have not put in place its own training regarding the prevention of SH and SEA, sub-parties may use the training material available at UNDP;

(iii) Report and monitor allegations of SH and SEA of which any of the sub-parties have been informed or have otherwise become aware, and status thereof;

(iv) Refer victims/survivors of SH and SEA to safe and confidential victim assistance; and

(v) Promptly and confidentially record and investigate any allegations credible enough to warrant an investigation of SH or SEA. Each sub-party shall advise UNDP of any such allegations received and investigations being conducted by itself or any of its sub-parties with respect to their activities under the Project Document, and shall keep UNDP informed during the investigation by it or any of such sub-parties, to the extent that such notification (i) does not jeopardize the conduct of the investigation, including but not limited to the safety or security of persons, and/or (ii) is not in contravention of any laws applicable to it. Following the investigation, the relevant sub-party shall advise UNDP of any actions taken by it or any of the other entities further to the investigation.

e. Each sub-party shall establish that it has complied with the foregoing, to the satisfaction of UNDP, when requested by UNDP or any party acting on its behalf to provide such confirmation. Failure of the relevant sub-party to comply of the foregoing, as determined by UNDP, shall be considered grounds for suspension or termination of the Project.

f. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will ensure that any project activities undertaken by them will be implemented in a manner consistent with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards and shall ensure that any incidents or issues

of non-compliance shall be reported to UNDP in accordance with UNDP Social and Environmental Standards.

g. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will take appropriate steps to prevent misuse of funds, fraud, corruption or other financial irregularities, by its officials, consultants, subcontractors and sub-recipients in implementing the project or programme or using the UNDP funds. It will ensure that its financial management, anti-corruption, anti-fraud and anti money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism policies are in place and enforced for all funding received from or through UNDP.

h. The requirements of the following documents, then in force at the time of signature of the Project Document, apply to each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient: (a) UNDP Policy on Fraud and other Corrupt Practices (b) UNDP Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Policy; and (c) UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations Investigation Guidelines. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient agrees to the requirements of the above documents, which are an integral part of this Project Document and are available online at www.undp.org.

i. In the event that an investigation is required, UNDP will conduct investigations relating to any aspect of UNDP programmes and projects. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will provide its full cooperation, including making available personnel, relevant documentation, and granting access to its (and its consultants', subcontractors' and sub-recipients') premises, for such purposes at reasonable times and on reasonable conditions as may be required for the purpose of an investigation. Should there be a limitation in meeting this obligation, UNDP shall consult with it to find a solution.

j. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will promptly inform UNDP as the Implementing Partner in case of any incidence of inappropriate use of funds, or credible allegation of fraud, corruption other financial irregularities with due confidentiality.

Where it becomes aware that a UNDP project or activity, in whole or in part, is the focus of investigation for alleged fraud/corruption, each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will inform the UNDP Resident Representative/Head of Office, who will promptly inform UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigations

(OAI). It will provide regular updates to the head of UNDP in the country and OAI of the status of, and actions relating to, such investigation.

k. *Choose one of the three following options:*

Option 1: UNDP will be entitled to a refund from the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient of any funds provided that have been used inappropriately, including through fraud corruption, other financial irregularities or otherwise paid other than in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Project Document. Such amount may be deducted by UNDP from any payment due to the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient under this or any other agreement. Recovery of such amount by UNDP shall not diminish or curtail any responsible party's, subcontractor's or sub-recipient's obligations under this Project Document.

Note: The term "Project Document" as used in this clause shall be deemed to include any relevant subsidiary agreement further to the Project Document, including those with responsible parties, subcontractors and sub-recipients.

l. Each contract issued by the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient in connection with this Project Document shall include a provision representing that no fees, gratuities, rebates, gifts, commissions or other payments, other than those shown in the proposal, have been given, received, or promised in connection with the selection process or in contract execution, and that the recipient of funds from it shall cooperate with any and all investigations and post-payment audits.

m. Should UNDP refer to the relevant national authorities for appropriate legal action any alleged wrongdoing relating to the project or programme, the Government will ensure that the relevant national authorities shall actively investigate the same and take appropriate legal action against all individuals found to have participated in the wrongdoing, recover and return any recovered funds to UNDP.

n. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient shall ensure that all of its obligations set forth under this section entitled "Risk Management" are passed on to its subcontractors and sub-recipients and that all the clauses under this section entitled "Risk Management Standard Clauses" are adequately reflected, *mutatis mutandis,* in all its sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered into further to this Project Document.

1. **Project Board Terms of Reference and TORs of key management positions**
2. **Project Quality Assurance Report**
3. **Social and Environmental Screening**
4. **Risk Analysis.**

1. Overall Objective of the Project Board

Under this project, a project boards shall be established. The overall objective of the Project Board is to provide guidance and support to the Project management team in order to reach the Project's overall objective.

2. Specific Objectives of the Project Board

The specific objectives of the Project Board are as follows:

- Provide overall guidance and direction to the project, ensuring it remains within any specified constraints;
- Review the Quarterly Project Progress Report and provide direction and recommendations to ensure that the agreed deliverables are produced satisfactorily according to plans;
- Review Annual financial and narrative reports;
- Appraise the Project Annual Review Report, make recommendations for the next AWP;
- Provide guidance and agree on possible countermeasures/management actions to address specific risks;
- Agree on Project Manager's operational parameters as required.
- Provide ad-hoc direction and advice for exception situations when project manager's operational parameters are exceeded;
- Assess and decide on project changes through revisions.
- From time to time approve terms of reference for studies and evaluations
- Address project issues as raised by the Project Manager;

3. Composition of the Project Board

The Project Board will consist of relevant representatives of UNDP, donor(s) to the project, and the participating PIC jurisdictions to provide guidance to the Project management team in the implementation of the Project.

The level of the participants will be at a management and senior technical level. The names of the representatives of each organization will be submitted to UNDP two weeks before the first Project Board meeting. Any subsequent changes of a representative should be sent in writing to UNDP that functions as the Secretariat to the Project Board and chairs the meetings.

4. Organization of Project Board Meetings

The meetings shall be organized twice a year and more frequently if decided so by the Project Board.

The Board Meetings shall be held at an appropriate place, time, and date convenient for all representatives to attend – virtually or in person.

The following documentation will be submitted to the Project Board Members one week before the meeting:

- Agenda;
- Minutes from previous meetings;

- Summary documents for review, such as annual work plans and progress reports;
- Other documentation deemed relevant.

For urgent matters, such as unforeseen difficulties in any of the components of the Project, an ad hoc Project Board meeting may be convened, upon the request, of any of its members.

5. Outputs of the Project Board

The minutes of each Project Board meeting will be produced by the Project management team and a draft circulated to Project Board members within one week after the meeting, requesting for comments. Any comments should be sent back to UNDP within the following week. Thereafter, the final minutes will be produced within five days of receipt of comments and re-circulated.

Aside from these minutes, it is anticipated that the Project Board will have a positive effect on the dissemination of information among the stakeholders to the Project and reinforce cooperation and coordination.

Annex 2:   Project Quality Assurance Report

(see word document in annex)

Annex 3:   Social and Environmental Screening
(see word document in annex)

Annex 4: Risk Analysis

Probability and Impact Scale:

Probability   Impact

Probability			Impact	
5	Almost Certain		5	Severe
4	Highly Likely		4	Significant
3	Possible		3	Moderate
2	Unlikely		2	Minor
1	Slight		1	Minimal

#	Description	Type	Prob	Imp	Countermeasures / Management response
1	Political and organisational environment impacts on project implementation through factors such as: political tension, suspension of Parliament, change of government after elections, or leadership change in Parliament (Speaker) and Secretariat (Secretary General).	Political	3	4	Build trust through continuous dialogue with Parliament, to retain flexibility, strong stakeholder ownership, accountability through oversight by the Project Board. Build formal and informal networks with a broad spectrum of champions across and within project stakeholders, including political parties and NGOs.
2	The multi-Pacific Island Countries (PIC) focus of the project means that instabilities, or different priorities in one jurisdiction could disrupt the programme delivery and	Political	3	4	Careful and pragmatic prioritisation, planning and sequencing of project activities together with stakeholders to achieve that project activities are reflected in stakeholders' annual plans; that regular updates to the Project Board on potential challenges and

#	Risk	Category			Mitigation
	resulting in lack of priority to implement project activities and to adopt change.	Organisational Strategic			mitigation strategies are identified early – including flexibility to agree adjustments to project activities; that change leaders are identified early; and that over ambitious scheduling is avoided. Ensure that the pace of implementation is appropriate to avoid 'project fatigue' and matches the stakeholder's capacity to engage by stakeholders. Ensure the scope of activities and terms of references are endorsed by stakeholders.
3	Government limits Parliament's role in oversight.	Strategic Political	3	4	Project will support, at first, oversight initiatives that are less sensitive and focused on SDG implementation. Ongoing relationship building will ensure communication of added value in oversight work.
4	Internal parliamentary procedures and decisions may impact the implementation of certain activities	Operational	4	2	Continuous discussions with beneficiaries of project to explore and agree on alternative approaches to deliver certain activities and ensure minimal impacts on the timely implementation of project activities.
5	Reduction in ownership and engagement by stakeholders and project results in delays or halt to project implementation.	Political Strategic	2	3	Appropriate project management arrangements established and maintained to ensure stakeholder understanding of project management tools, including annual work planning processes, corporate procurement practices and timelines. Ensure the project is fully staffed and supporting project teams provide effective and timely services. Active Project Board monitoring and oversight is taking place.
6	Parliament fails to endorse an effective change management system, resulting in limited implementation of the Strategic Plan	Operational Strategic	2	3	Parliamentary leadership will be supported and provided with information and knowledge on effective change management; Timely technical assistance will be provided throughout key

#	Risk description	Category			Response / mitigation
					milestones and when required to overcome organizational barriers.
7	Committees unable to engage women sufficiently to be able to conduct effective gender impact analysis	Political / Strategic / Operational	3	4	Project will support standing committees, Legislators and Parliament staff to support operational and cultural change required to ensure gender impact analysis is a priority for all work. Technical assistance on implementing gender impact analysis will be provided in a timely manner.
8	Natural disasters that impact directly on stakeholder priorities and ability to implement and participate in activities under the project.	Environmental	3	4	Ensure flexible schedule for activity implementation to minimise potential impact on outputs and ensure sequenced and timely implementation of project activities, with adjustments made where necessary.
9	Staff required by Project not in place to assist in implementation of the project within tight timeframes.	Political / Organisational	2	3	There are some project staff currently in place to allow for a seamless transition. Additional capacities required by the project will be identified within the UNDP and short-term Consultants will be recruited to assist with the implementation until the additional staff are recruited.
10	Currency fluctuations negatively impact the budget	Operational / Financial	2	2	UNDP and project management will closely monitor any significant currency impacts on budget and if necessary, engage donor and Project Board in budget and/or programme modification deliberations