Tonga's infrastructure planning process – evolution, lessons learned and next steps

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Role & History of NIIP Process in Tonga

- Prioritizing large infrastructure projects helps:
  a) make better use of limited time and resources
  b) focus on areas of greater need
- Seek to apply objective and reliable criteria
- Tonga had NIIPs in 2010 (1st in Pacific), 2013 (10 years) and 2015 (review)
- Government observed the need for government driven and to strengthen M&E processes
Lessons and solutions from the review of NIIP in Tonga

- **Lesson 1**: Sectors covered by NIIP in Tonga:
  - National infrastructure plans need to move beyond the initial limited focus on Transport and Utilities Infrastructure.
  - Providing a comprehensive coverage of all large infrastructure that is managed through the government budget.

- **Lesson 2**: Positioning the NIIP in the Tongan planning system:
  - NIIP 3 now covers about 29 sectors squarely placed in its position as a cross-cutting plan for hard infrastructure.
  - The NIIP has the role to build understanding of improved infrastructure planning and management into sector plans. It does not ‘own’ the sector projects.

- **Lesson 3**: Identifying NIIP projects in the Tongan planning system.

- **Lesson 4**: Positioning NIIP prioritization in the Tongan project cycle:
  - Project cycle covers the whole process from identification, to formulation, appraisal, approval, funding and implementation with appropriate M&E at each stage.
  - All projects in Tonga are required to go through this cycle. A simple version of the project cycle in Tonga, with prioritization, is shown in Figure 2.
The Tongan Project Cycle-with NIIP
Prioritization Mainstreamed

(a) Identify Project Titles

Non-NIIP

Titles

NIIP

(b) preparing short proposal

(c) screening, scoring, prioritizing, approving

First
prioritized

Re-
prioritized

(d) preparing full proposal

(e) appraising, approving
for funding

Non-NIIP

PPA Approved
seeking funding

NIIP

(f) Fund, in Budget, Implement, M&E

Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility

Government of Tonga
Lessons Learned continued....

Lesson 5: MCA prioritization methodology for Tonga: Project screening using the Project Proposal Application to ensure:

- that they meet minimum standards: consistent with Government policy (TSDF and other plans); are adequately completed; have consulted with other key planning and related regulators; face no risks significant enough to cancel the project; and contain a completed MCA.
- Submissions not passing any of these screening steps are returned to the MDA/PE for reconsideration. Those passing are then subject to NPD for scoring and ranking via the MCA.

Lesson 6: From “MCA-priority list” to “Government-priority list”

- MCA-priority list is submitted (with any notes) by NPD to the NIIP-TWC/TC for cross government consultation and consideration.
- MCA-priority list to become the Government-priority list for endorsement by PAD-CC to Cabinet, with the reasoning for any adjustments between the two.
For example: MCA project list ranking by criteria scores and project number
Lessons Learned continued....

- **Lesson 7: Content of the NIIP in the Tongan planning system:**
  - review overall progress with infrastructure development and key cross-sector issues
  - review the policy framework supporting infrastructure and emphasizing the importance of linking to other key cross-cutting plans,
  - highlighting and supporting the role of infrastructure related planning and management tools, e.g. standard infrastructure service KPIs, asset registers, maintenance schedules etc. to help inform sector planning
  - compilation of all NIIP projects from all existing planning and policy documents and decisions

- **Lesson 8: building NIIP M&E into planning and project M&E process**
Enhancements made and tested

- Active staff participation and leadership

- NIIP projects = hard infrastructure, TOP$1m & above

- Prioritization mainstreamed early in project cycle, before full funding proposal to PAD-CC for funding approval

- Project Proposal Application (PPA) modified, with MCA, link to resilience\CC, risk\hazards, spatial planning etc – consistent with TSDF
Roadmap for taking infrastructure planning forward

- Establish a sub-working group of NIPP-TWC

- Key follow up actions:
  a. in consultation with PSC, ensure staff responsible for projects and planning have this clearly set out in the JDs, and are required to participate in regular training related to these skills
  b. ensure other relevant guidance is updated to capture this modified project cycle and the enhanced documentation – for example how the CPs and Ars can support the NIIP process
  c. MDAs use the Government NIIP priority list to guide PPA preparation for funding, and MoF use the list to seek funding
  d. NIIP report share with Development Partners and invite them to use it in their development programming with Tonga

- Next MCA-prioritization