

**OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-WSM\_D\_1.1**

**By 2027, more people, especially those at risk of being left behind, contribute to and benefit from sustainable, resilient, diversified, inclusive and human-centred socio-economic systems with decent work and equal livelihoods opportunities, reducing inequalities and ensuring shared prosperity [PCF Strategic Priority 3: Prosperity]**

This outcome is on track. In 2023, efforts to enhance the organization of Market Vendors Associations (MVAs) in marketplaces across Samoa and to bolster the capacity of market vendors and duty bearers became paramount. Collaborative partnerships between the interim MVAs, market administrators, and the Ministry of Women, Community, and Social Development (MWCSD) underscore a steadfast commitment to advancing decent work and equal livelihood opportunities while nurturing social cohesion within vendor communities. Rooted in a human-centered approach, these endeavors in Samoa's informal economic sector champion fairness, inclusivity, and empowerment for all stakeholders, laying a sturdy groundwork for the resilience and sustainability of marketplaces and the overall socio-economic landscape. The establishment and impending formalization of the first three interim Market Vendors Associations (MVAs) in Samoa, coupled with the increased representation of women in leadership positions, epitomize a human-centered approach to economic development. This transformation marks a paradigm shift in market dynamics, providing organized bodies to represent and advocate for women in the informal sector for the first time in Samoa. Prioritizing the needs, voices, and agency of women market vendors, these initiatives foster community, advocacy, and inclusivity, progressively contributing to building a more sustainable and resilient market ecosystem. By organizing themselves into associations, market vendors have gained collective bargaining power, enabling them to advocate for their interests more effectively and address marketplace challenges. This collective strength is essential for promoting sustainable practices and ensuring the long-term viability of the market ecosystem. Furthermore, the appointment of 16 women in leadership positions within interim Market Vendors Associations, representing 90 per cent of total positions, signals a shift in behavior—a departure from conventional practices where women vendors were formerly passive participants in the informal market economy. Diversified representation brings a broader range of perspectives, ideas, and strategies to address the needs and challenges faced by different groups within the informal sector, fostering inclusivity and innovation. By empowering women vendors to take on leadership roles and advocate for their interests, the socio-economic system in Samoa is progressively becoming more inclusive and equitable. Additionally, vendors now actively engage in decision-making and advocacy roles, increasingly influencing the determination of their own development outcomes through newly created platforms such as the Market Vendors Forum and the Project Working Committee. These initiatives have opened new pathways for increased women's voice and agency for decent work and equal livelihood opportunities. Institutions are recognizing the economic potential of women market vendors in Samoa, marking a change from traditional practices that overlooked or undervalued women's contributions. This potential is being realized through the capacitating of 102 women market vendors with enhanced business knowledge and skills. Acquiring skills in record-keeping, costing, pricing, marketing, finance, and technology, the women are transitioning from traditional financial practices to more informed and strategic business management and increased financial decision-making. This empowering process enables women market vendors to shape their economic futures and improve their livelihoods according to their aspirations and needs. Additionally, 61 women are transitioning their market vending businesses from informal to formal structures—signifying a recognition of the importance of formalization procedures and the need for compliance and efficiency in business operations. This progress in formalization

procedures grants vendors access to legal protections, financial services, and market opportunities previously unavailable in the informal sector, thereby enhancing the sustainability and viability of their enterprises. Furthermore, the focus on capacitating women market vendors and enabling them to make informed financial decisions lies at the core of a human-centered approach. It acknowledges their agency and capabilities within the economic system, empowering them to shape their own economic futures and improve their livelihoods according to their aspirations and needs. A total of 366 women market vendors (rural, urban, semi-urban) across 3 markets in Samoa were reached to access information, education, key resources (finances, technological tools), services (including health and social assistance), and protective goods to advance their economic potentials and adaptiveness in crisis. This achievement has been made possible through a shift in the approach of service providers, who are now focusing on facilitating access and removing barriers. In 2023, two national service providers undertook immersive initiatives in financial and health services, embodying a human-centered service provision model. These initiatives involved stationing service providers at the markets for extended periods, departing from conventional finance and healthcare delivery methods. Instead, they adopted a proactive approach to enhance financial and health awareness and accessibility for vendors, making resources more accessible and effective, prioritizing the comfort and convenience of women market vendors. These targeted efforts provided a diverse range of services, products, and information tailored to address the specific challenges faced by women market vendors. One such challenge was the vendors' inability to spare time to visit service providers due to their marketing priorities. By providing access to essential healthcare services and skill-building opportunities, MVAs empower women to take control of their health and economic well-being, thereby enhancing their income security and economic autonomy. For the first time, market administrators in Samoa have gained an understanding of the vulnerabilities of markets to disasters and climate change. Comprehensive disaster risk assessments conducted are contributing to the shifts in behavior and attitudes towards disaster resilience at the markets, which have been sustained through a series of training in response to the assessment findings, empowering market vendors and community-based volunteers with life-saving skills. Collaborative efforts made between market administrators and nearby villages are, also for the first time, promoting occupational health and safety with a commitment to inclusive community involvement and cultural sensitivity. Local government representatives, marketplace duty bearers, and key stakeholders have experienced a transformative shift in their approach to development after training on Gender-Responsive Infrastructure where they gained valuable knowledge and insights, recognizing the pivotal importance of integrating gender considerations into construction and infrastructure design. This shift signifies a profound change in their mindset, actively embracing and prioritizing gender-responsive development. This change has become a catalyst for re-evaluating the foundations of development. Institutions and individuals are proactively reshaping their thinking to conscientiously prioritize the inclusivity and safety of women and girls in infrastructure development, marking a significant step towards a more gender-inclusive and safety-conscious approach to development. In parallel, the installation of CCTV cameras in markets represents a human-centered approach to enhancing security and surveillance, particularly benefiting women and girls. Prioritizing the safety and well-being of individuals within the market environment, this initiative instills a sense of security and trust, creating a more conducive and welcoming atmosphere for vendors and patrons alike.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-WSM\_D\_2.1

**By 2027, more people, particularly those at risk of being left behind, benefit from more equitable access to resilient, and gender-responsive, quality basic services, food security/nutrition and social protection systems. [PCF Strategic Priority 2: People]**

This Outcome is on track. In 2023, Samoa achieved notable progress in addressing gender-based violence and promoting gender equality, as evidenced by institutional and societal changes. The development and forthcoming 2024 adoption of the National Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls Framework

(NPF) underscore this commitment. The Ministry of Women Community and Social Development (MWCSD) led the NPF's creation, drawing on the 2018 National Public Inquiry into Family Violence Report. The NPF distinguishes itself with its holistic approach, focusing on prevention, providing survivor-centred response services, holding perpetrators accountable, and strengthening prevention infrastructure. Notably, it aims to support transformative shifts in gender and social norms and related practices and behaviours which are at the root of violence against women and girls. The framework's development process, inclusive of diverse stakeholders from civil society to traditional governance bodies, reflects a commitment to a culturally tailored and collective approach. The NPF's comprehensive approach encompasses prevention, survivor-centered response services, perpetrator accountability, and infrastructure strengthening to address gender norms and stereotypes. UN Women offered technical assistance as well as support in the reviewing of the Framework prior to its finalisation. The integration of the Get Into Rugby (GIR) Plus Programme in schools has fostered positive shifts in gender equality and violence prevention attitudes in school environments. The programme's training components have not only improved safety and protection practices in schools but survey results from the programme show improvements in student behaviors and attitudes, including a 47% to 70% increase in standing up against gender stereotypes and a unanimous recognition of the Child Helpline for support. The GIR Plus Programme uses the IESG (referral pathway for access to Service Providers) in its trainings, increasing participants knowledge of services available and confidence on how to refer people to GBV services in Samoa. This initiative demonstrates an integrated approach to embedding gender equality principles across educational and social environments. UN Women supports GIR Rugby Plus with technical and financial support. Moreover, the MWCSD has enhanced support services for gender-based violence survivors with the 2021 launch of the Inter-agency Essential Services Guide (IESG). This guide improves structured support, delineating services and referral pathways. Training for service providers, part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign, reached 1,300 individuals, 61.5% of whom were female, emphasizing a survivor-centered approach and equipping participants with essential skills for support and referral navigation. UN Women contributed technical assistance to presenters and funding for the training activities. The ToC and strategy remains unchanged for 2024. These initiatives collectively represents Samoa's dedication to a collaborative, culturally sensitive, and survivor-centered approach to preventing and responding to violence against women and girls (VAWG), setting a precedent for comprehensive and coordinated actions which support the well being, safety and empowerment of women and girls

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-WSM\_D\_2.2

### **By 2027, the operational, normative and collaborative potential of the UNCT Cooperation Frameworks to contribute to greater gender equality is fully optimised by UN Women's interventions**

This outcome is on track. There has been some progress towards the realisation of the operational, normative, and collaborative potential of the Pacific United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) to contribute to greater gender equality and women's empowerment in Samoa. The United Nations in the Pacific has committed to the rollout out of a comprehensive assessment of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UNCT-SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard for a second time in less than 5 years. This commitment demonstrates willingness to being able to more concretely understand areas that need further joint action to progress gender mainstreaming and advance gender equality and women's empowerment. The assessment will be undertaken across all three sub-regional United Nations Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs), including the Samoa RCO, in a separate but coordinated manner as the RCOs come under one Pacific regional UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-2027). The Samoa RCO covers Samoa, Cook Islands and Niue. In November 2023, the Government of Samoa signed the the Samoa Country Implementation Plan 2023-2024 (CIP). Also in November 2023, the Government of Cook Islands signed the Cook Islands Country Implementation Plan 2023-2024. These endorsements signify country-level agreements with the Pacific UNSDCF. The Niue Country Implementation Plan 2023-2024 is earmarked for signing in the first quarter of 2024. The CIPs of

Samoa, Cook Islands and Niue builds upon the Pacific United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023–2027 (UNSDCF) developed by the United Nations (UN) and 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). These CIPs is firmly anchored to country-level priorities and structures and defines the UN actions and deliverables in Samoa, Cook Islands and Niue, including those of UN Women, to help achieve the outcomes of the Pacific UNSDCF. The CIPs will guide the joint efforts, and the collective results expected will help these countries ensure all people are equal and free to exercise their fundamental rights, enjoy gender equality and peace, remain resilient to existential threats, and live in harmony. Throughout 2023, UN Women played a pivotal role within the Joint Programme Presence in Samoa to advance and ensure the inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the Samoa CIP, and additionally the Cook Islands CIP and the Niue CIP. Capacity building of agencies through training and access to tools and guidance on gender responsive programming was undertaken which in turn has advanced/ is advancing joint action on gender equality for the three countries. UN Women's overarching commitment focused on supporting Samoa, Cook Islands and Niue national development priorities on gender, Sustainable Development Goal 5, and alignments with international standards such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action.