



**Public
Service
Fale**

Source: Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission

Independent evaluation of the Public Service Fale

Final technical report

23 May 2025

**MARTIN
JENKINS**



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Preface

This report has been prepared for Te Kawa Mataaho | The Public Service Commission by Mei Lin Harley, Natalie James, and Penny Fitzpatrick from MartinJenkins (Martin, Jenkins & Associates Ltd).

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We are recognised as experts in the business of government. We have worked for a wide range of public-sector organisations from both central and local government, and we also advise business and non-profit clients on engaging with government.

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Established in 1993, we are a privately owned New Zealand limited liability company, with offices in Wellington and Auckland. Our firm is governed by a Board made up of Executive Partners and Independent Directors. Our Independent Directors are Jenn Bestwick and Chair David Prentice. Our Executive Partners are Sarah Baddeley, Nick Carlaw, Allana Coulon, Nick Davis, and Richard Tait. Michael Mills is also a non-shareholding Partner of our firm.



Introduction and context

Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission (TKM) of New Zealand commissioned Martin Jenkins to undertake an independent end of assignment evaluation of the Public Service Fale (the Fale), a programme funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). This technical report presents a fuller discussion of the evaluation methods and evidence that supports the key findings and recommendations presented in the Summary Report.

The Fale serves as a Centre of Excellence for public service leaders in the Pacific

The Fale is a Centre of Excellence that works directly with public service leaders and their agencies in sixteen Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs): Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tokelau, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

The Fale is a newly established programme, delivered through TKM and funded by MFAT

The Fale was established by TKM in early 2020 following a request from the Pacific Public Service Commissioners (PPSCs) for New Zealand government support for public sector strengthening.

The Fale is a business unit of TKM with approximately 16 staff, overseen by a Deputy Commissioner. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between TKM and MFAT sets out that the Fale was initially funded for five years, then extended to six, to a maximum amount of NZD 19,840,000 for the period of 20 February 2020 – 1 March 2026.

It supports public service strengthening through regional programmes, bilateral support, and secretariat services

The Fale's overarching goal is that, over time, Pacific public services are strengthened to be more trusted by Pacific citizens, adaptable, results driven, gender inclusive and people centred.

To achieve this goal, the MOU sets out the two broad outputs to be delivered by the Fale:

- Pacific Public Service Fale: establish and deliver a Pacific public service Centre of Excellence to support public sector strengthening in Pacific Island countries and territories by facilitating sharing of knowledge and experience, brokering relationships and access to expertise, developing and testing Pacific-specific public management solutions, and providing specialist technical assistance, and



- Pacific Public Service Fono: provide secretariat support to the Pacific Public Service Commissioners' Conference including funding to support hosting of the annual conference.

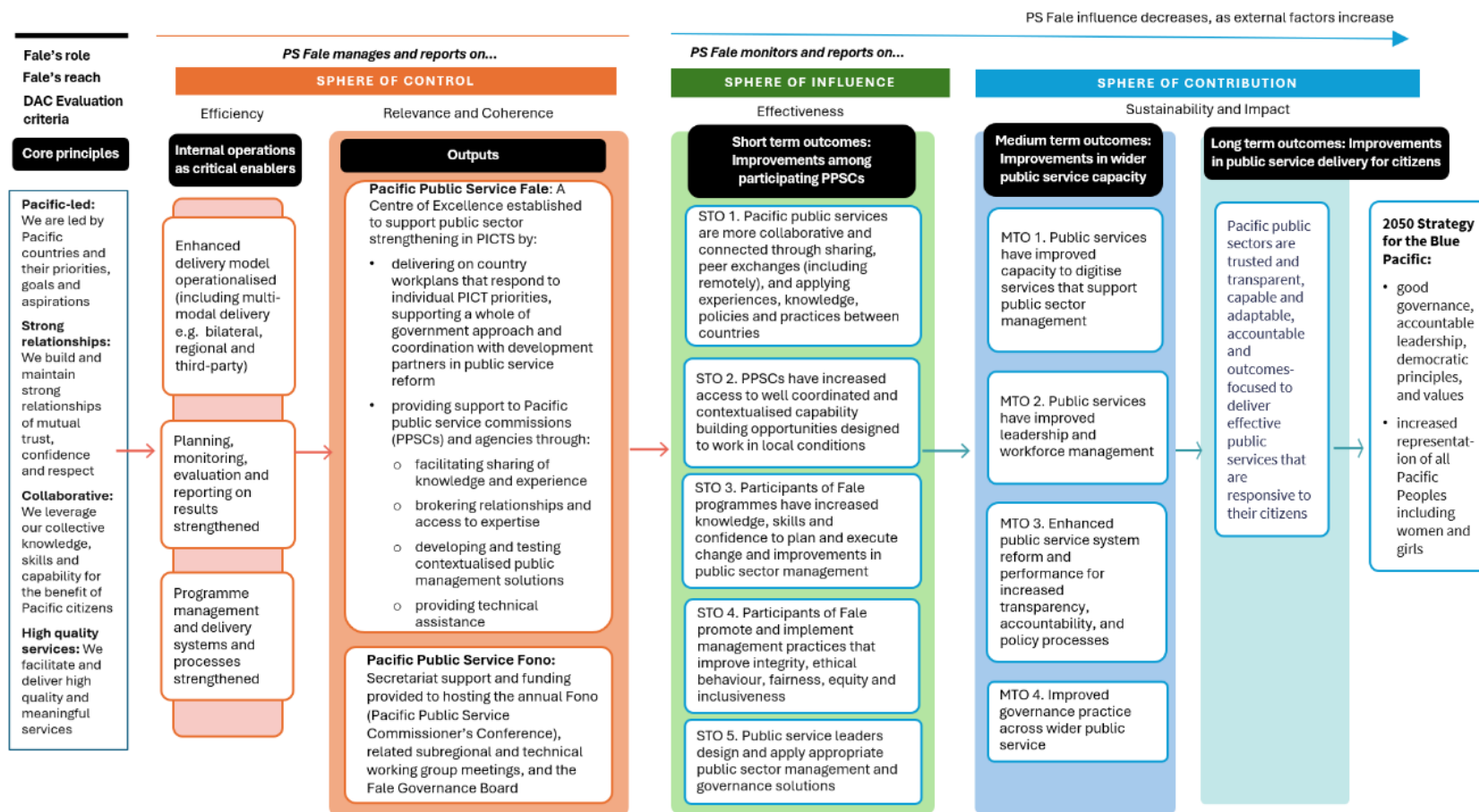
The Fale's way of working is driven by the following core principles:

- Pacific-led: the Fale is led by Pacific countries and their priorities, goals, and aspirations
- strong relationships: the Fale builds and maintains strong, relationships of mutual trust, confidence and respect
- collaborative: the Fale leverages collective knowledge, skills and capability for the benefit of Pacific citizens, and
- high quality services: the Fale facilitates and delivers high quality and meaningful services.

The programme logic for the Fale is set out in Figure 1. This logic was updated in 2024 and provides an important foundation for this evaluation, identifying the critical enablers for the Fale and defining the outputs and outcomes that the Fale are expected to deliver in the short, medium, and long term.



Figure 1: Refreshed programme logic for the Fale



Source: The Public Service Fale (2024)



Public sector strengthening is a complex process that is achieved over a long period of time

Pacific Island Forum Leaders have consistently articulated the importance of public sector strengthening and good governance for the region, acknowledging the contribution it makes to sustainable development and economic growth. Through various regional strategic agreements and declarations (such as the [2000 Biketawa Declaration](#), the [2018 Boe Declaration](#), and the [2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent Implementation Plan](#)), Pacific Island Forum Leaders have committed to good governance and addressing issues such as corruption and gender equality. The Fale's support to PPSCs directly contributes to these aspirations.

Public sector strengthening is a large and complex area with programmes and projects supported by various development agencies. It is often not a linear path to achieving outcomes that are sustainable. Instead, it is a mix of rapid improvement or decline, interspersed with periods of little to no change. The implication is that public sector strengthening requires sustained, ongoing effort, over an extended period of time. This is acknowledged in the Fale's original business case:

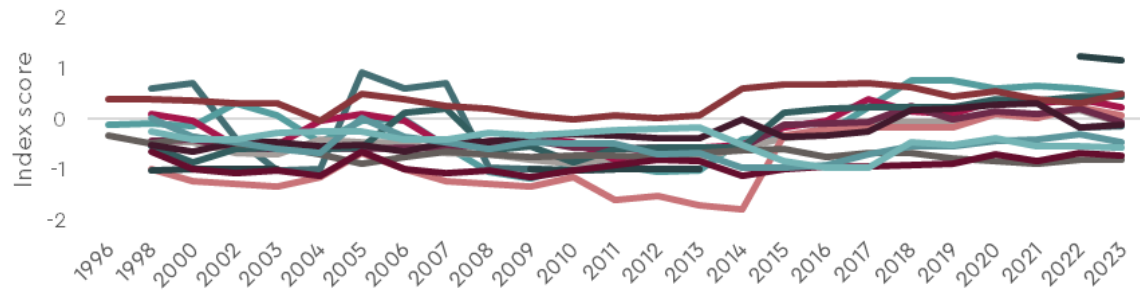
*"Public sector reform typically consists of long periods of slow, uncertain or unsustained change, interrupted by reform moments where more rapid progress is possible due to the alignment of change expectations, change leadership and a triggering crisis or opportunity. Effectively partnering on public sector change requires the **long, slow building of understanding and relationships and the ability to scale capacity** to provide strong, practical, hands-on support to agencies with momentum and mandate"* (Public Sector Strengthening MFAT Business Case 2019)

The complexity of public sector strengthening is illustrated by the World Bank's annual Worldwide Governance Index. Figure 2 presents data over three decades for one of its key indicators, Government Effectiveness, which captures perceptions and views of the quality of public services, the civil service's independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies.¹

¹ Kaufmann, Daniel; Aart C. Kraay. [The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and 2024 Update \(English\)](#). Policy Research working paper; RRR; PROSPERITY Washington, D.C : World Bank Group



Figure 2: Worldwide Governance Indicator: Government Effectiveness in 14 Pacific countries



Source: Pacific Data Hub, Worldwide Governance Indicators

This context informs how this evaluation assesses the Fale's progress towards outcomes five years into programme delivery – highlighting progress in establishing critical enablers and supporting foundations, as well as achieving outputs and short-term outcomes that align with the Fale's long-term goal.



About this evaluation

The MOU sets out that the Fale must provide both a progress report and completion report to show progress towards and achievement of intended outputs and outcomes. The progress report was delivered through a mid-term review that was conducted in 2023, covering the period of 20 February 2020 – 31 December 2022.

For the completion report, TKM commissioned MartinJenkins to undertake an independent evaluation of the Fale, the findings of which are detailed in this report. The evaluation findings will also serve as a key input to a business case for funding beyond 2026.

Evaluation purpose and scope

The purpose of this evaluation is threefold:

- assess the Fale's actions since, and its responsiveness to, the recommendations within the mid-term review
- evaluate the impact of the Fale and its contribution to its overarching goal, and
- identify opportunities for the Fale to have further impact into the future.

As set out in the evaluation terms of reference, the scope of this evaluation includes:

- the time period of 20 February 2020 – 1 March 2025; however, to ensure that insights are relevant and timely, specific focus is placed on the time period since the mid-term review (post December 2022)
- the 16 Pacific countries that the Fale serves, and
- activities that support the delivery of the two outputs set out in the Fale's MOU with MFAT.

Key evaluation questions

This evaluation is designed to address the following key evaluation questions (KEQs) agreed with the Fale and MFAT and aligned to the evaluation purposes:

- **KEQ 1:** To what extent has the Fale taken appropriate action to address the key recommendations of the mid-term review, including:
 - a. strengthen the Fale's focus on PPSC's individual country needs (relating to OECD Development Assistance Committee [DAC] Criteria of Relevance)
 - b. enhance coordination, communication, and stakeholder engagement (relating to OECD DAC Criteria of Coherence and Efficiency), and
 - c. review reporting requirements.



- **KEQ 2:** How effectively has the Fale achieved its intended outputs and outcomes over the period? (relating to the OECD DAC criteria of Effectiveness and Impact)
- **KEQ 3:** What are the opportunities for the Fale to continue to deliver value in the future?

Evaluation methodology

Evaluation Steering Group provided oversight throughout the evaluation

An Evaluation Steering Group consisting of the Fale management team and MFAT Activity Management team provided oversight throughout the evaluation process. Their advice, challenges, and insights enriched the evaluation through:

- feedback on the evaluation workplan and key evaluation questions
- identifying key stakeholders to be surveyed or interviewed
- participating in the sense-making workshop, and
- providing feedback on the draft report.

Evidence drawn from document review and inputs from over 60 stakeholders

This evaluation used a mixed-methods approach to gathering evidence.

- Review of key programme documents, including:
 - programme design and establishment documentation, such as the Business Case, MOU, and Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning (MERL) framework
 - governance records, including the Fale Governance Board Charter, Terms of Reference, and papers and minutes from Board meetings
 - Fono records, such as papers and minutes from Fono meetings, information regarding attendance, engagement, and effectiveness of the forum
 - examples of country plans, overview of country bilateral requests, summary of training participant data
 - annual progress reports and examples of dashboard reporting to MFAT, mid-term review report, overview of engagement and reporting for MFAT Posts, MFAT Activity Monitoring Assessments (AMA)
 - access to FaleOnline, and
 - relevant documents about the Pacific region's needs and priorities in public sector strengthening, including the [2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent](#).



- An online survey completed by 29 PPSCs, senior leaders, and former Commissioners across 16 countries.
- Engagement with key stakeholders, including:
 - PPSCs and stakeholders: four PPSCs participated in individual interviews and one focal point from a Pacific public service training institute provided written feedback
 - Fale team: seven members of the Fale's leadership and management team and senior staff participated in interviews
 - MFAT: 16 staff across 12 Pacific Posts (including two non-resident Posts) participated in interviews or provided written responses, two members of the Activity Management team in Wellington participated in interviews, and
 - partner agencies: seven stakeholders from six partner agencies participated in interviews, including three which deliver related programmes funded by MFAT, and three which have recently collaborated with the Fale.

Figure 3: Evaluation methodology overview



Source: MartinJenkins

The evaluation was committed to enabling frank feedback from Fale stakeholders

We provided multiple channels for feedback (interview, survey, email), and assured participants anonymity (both as individuals and of their country) to encourage honest feedback. For this reason, some quotes and examples in this report have been altered to maintain anonymity of individuals and countries. We take this opportunity to thank stakeholders for giving up their time to take part in the evaluation, and to acknowledge the valuable and constructive feedback they provided.



Key Evaluation Question 1

To what extent has the Fale taken appropriate action to address the key recommendations from the mid-term review?



KEQ 1: To what extent has the Fale taken appropriate action to address the key recommendations from the mid-term review?

The mid-term review, completed in August 2023, made several recommendations for the Fale to enhance its support to PPSCs and overall impact:

- strengthen the Fale's focus on PPSC's individual country needs
- enhance coordination, communication, and stakeholder engagement, and
- review the Fale's reporting requirements.

As part of this evaluation, we sought to understand the extent to which the Fale had responded to these recommendations and continued to maintain good practice.

KEQ1: We conclude that the Fale has made good progress in responding to the recommendations of the mid-term review.

The Fale has significantly improved its responsiveness to country needs in response to the mid-term review

In the 19 months since the mid-term review was completed, the Fale has implemented a range of improvements through a phased approach while looking to maintain delivery of its services (Table 1). It prioritised its focus on this first recommendation, that is, increasing responsiveness to country needs. This is the area where most progress has been made. The Fale's responsiveness to country-specific bilateral needs is recognised and highly valued by PPSCs.



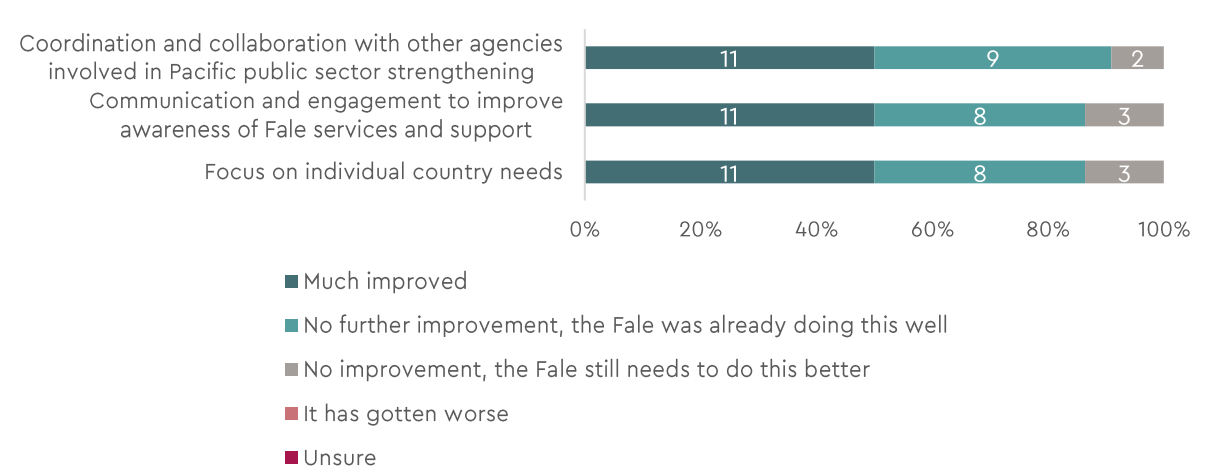
Table 1: Summary of key changes to improve Fale responsiveness to country needs

Key changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated the Country Planning process to improve focus and prioritisation, based on the annual stocktake survey of PPSCs and alignment to their country's national development plans.• Improved system for tracking bilateral requests received from countries which also improved reporting of country-specific activities.• Conducted an operating model review which resulted in an internal restructure and establishment of four Delivery Lead positions who are each responsible for managing the bilateral relationship with four countries.• Refreshed the intervention logic for the Fale to include "delivering on country plans that respond to individual PICT priorities, supporting a whole-of-government approach, and coordination with development partners in public service reform".

Of the 22 PPSCs we surveyed who have engaged with the Fale for more than one year, the majority were positive about the improvements or thought the Fale was already doing well in these areas (Figure 4):

- 20 PPSCS reported that the Fale's coordination and collaboration with other agencies was either much improved or already conducted to a high standard
- 19 PPSCs reported that the Fale's communication and engagement was either much improved or already conducted to a high standard, and
- 19 PPSCs reported that the Fale's focus on individual country needs was either much improved or already conducted to a high standard (Figure 4).

Figure 4: PPSC views on key improvements since the mid-term review



Source: MartinJenkins PPSC survey (2025), n=29



When asked about positive changes following the mid-term review, PPSC survey respondents emphasised more direct engagement face-to-face, improved responsiveness, and ongoing proactive engagement to understand their unique needs (Figure 5).

Figure 5: PPSC comments on improvements since the mid-term review



Source: MartinJenkins PPSC survey (2025)

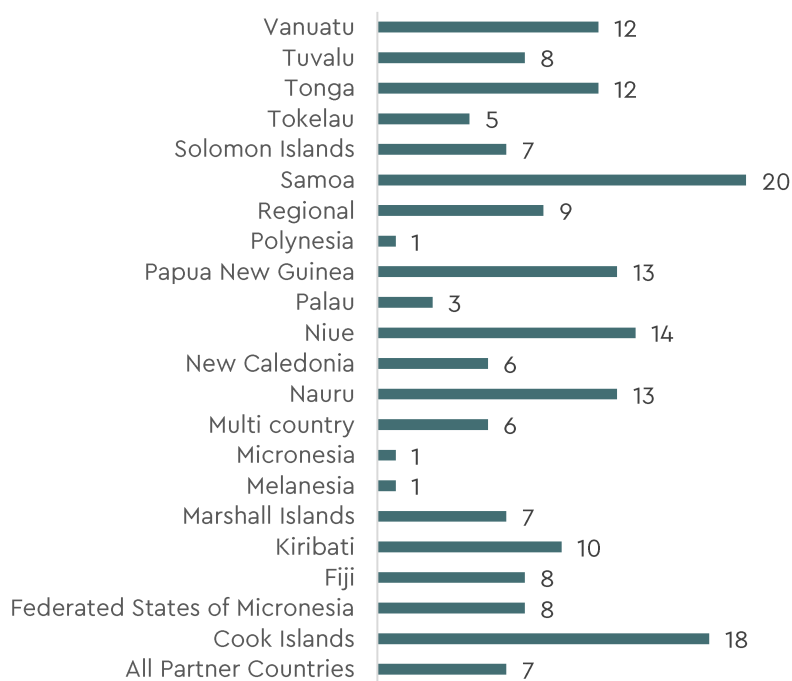
Effectively managing the increasing volume and breadth of requests will be important to ensure this responsiveness is sustainable

The Fale has established credibility and trust among PPSCs through its consistent responsiveness to requests and its reliable delivery of support. This is reflected in the high volume of requests it receives from PPSCs for country-specific support. Managing 16 country-specific work plans has resulted in bilateral support now consuming an estimated 70% of the Fale's time and effort. Moving forward, the challenge is considering how it can strategically and sustainably meet the needs of PPSCs, ensuring that it continues to uphold its reputation for responsiveness while balancing resourcing constraints. Being strategic in how it identifies key priorities will be important.

Analysis of the Fale's bilateral request summary shows that over the past 18 months, the Fale has received a total of 167 requests from PPSCs for country-specific support (Figure 6) and workstreams (Figure 7).

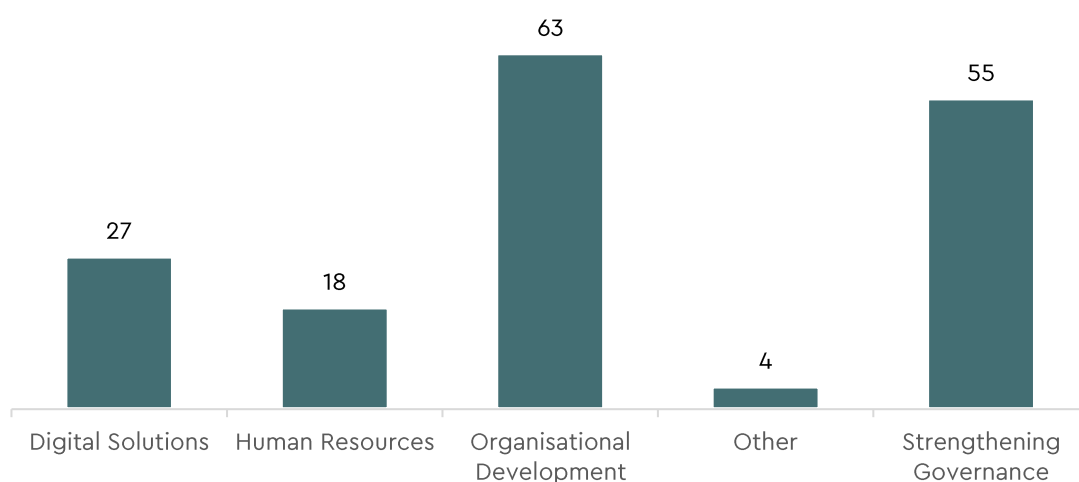


Figure 6: Number of bilateral support requests by country (or subregion) in past 18 months



Source: TKM

Figure 7: Number of bilateral support requests by workstream in past 18 months



Source: TKM



Plans and processes to enhance communication and collaboration with stakeholders have been developed, which will take time to bed in

The Fale has progressed several actions to improve communication and collaboration including having recently appointed country focal points, improved reporting to MFAT on country-specific activities, and established a schedule of regular meetings to enhance its engagement with MFAT headquarters and Posts. It has also recently developed its Advancing Partnerships Plan and is in the early stages of implementation with a recently appointed dedicated Senior Adviser. These changes are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of key changes to enhance communication and collaboration with stakeholders

Key changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advancing Partnerships Plan (APP) was developed in late 2024 and endorsed at the November Fono. The APP aims to improve coordination, expand collaboration, and strengthen integration with partners, and identifies several key actions to progress in 2025. The APP also identifies key measures for monitoring and reporting progress to the Fale Governance Board. A Senior Advisor was recently recruited to support the implementation of the APP.• Since mid-2024, monthly dashboard reporting and regular meetings with MFAT Activity Manager, and country desk-officers in Wellington to provide high-level updates on the progress of country plan activities. More recently, the Fale has updated its dashboard to include more country-specific reporting, providing an overview of current and upcoming work within each country.

Acknowledging these improvements, feedback from partners about collaboration continues to be varied (as explained in the next section), which is to be expected as these action plans and processes have recently been developed and will take time to implement and bed in.

Increasing alignment and coherence with MFAT priorities and engagement with each country is a priority going forward

MFAT is a key stakeholder of the Fale and has strong interest in how the Fale's work "on the ground" impacts its own engagement with each country and progresses the NZ Inc agenda overall. Engagement with MFAT happens at two levels. At the "headquarters" level, the MFAT Unit Manager overseeing the MFAT investment in the Fale attends Fale governance meetings as an observer. There are also monthly meetings and activity reporting to the MFAT Activity Manager. At the MFAT Post level, the nature of the Fale's engagement and reporting on country activities has evolved over the years.



There were varying views across MFAT Posts on the quality of current engagement. Some Posts reported that engagement was positive or has improved recently. They appreciate the updates the Fale provides (whilst maintaining the confidence of PPSCs), opportunities identified for progressing shared priorities, and see the Fale as providing valuable support to the country's public service commission. Other Posts felt there was lack of engagement and visibility of the Fale's work in-country, and some had concerns about lack of coordination with other partners, and risk of duplication in some areas. There is a strong desire for better sharing and collaboration to ensure coherence with wider MFAT priorities and investments, particularly in contexts with higher risks or volatility. The trusted relationships that the Fale has developed with PPSCs have the potential to be an important part of NZ Inc's total engagement with the country.

The views across Posts partly reflect the differences in the context and focus of MFAT's programme in each country. There have also been disruptions in engagement resulting from changes in focal points on both sides. There is recognition by MFAT that communication and visibility is impacted by limited bandwidth of staff at Post. This is a common issue, as much of the attention of staff at Post is on managing MFAT bilateral programmes in country.

Moving forward, the Fale expects to focus on a smaller number of key priorities per country and ensuring alignment and coherence with MFAT and wider NZ Inc priorities and bilateral programmes will be key. This issue is recognised by the Fale leadership and management team as a key priority.

Partner coordination and collaboration has progressed, with further improvements planned from 2025

There are specific examples of effective collaboration with several New Zealand agencies in recent years (Figure 8). There are also significant collaborations planned for 2025 including training workshops for PPSCs that will be funded by the Australian and Singaporean PSCs. These are good examples of partners sharing their expertise and resources to increase PPSCs' access to support.

The initiatives are well received by PPSCs. Survey respondents highlighted how the Fale's coordination with their network of technical experts has supported capacity building. They also noted that the Fale had made increased efforts to ensure collaborative engagement with other Pacific public sector agencies.

"By bringing in leading experts from other regional agencies, Fale significantly expands participation and elevates awareness of its impactful initiatives." – *PPSC survey respondent*

"There is also a Fale/Singapore PSC workshop in Suva... This new collaboration with the Fale is very good. I was amazed, because sometimes the developed countries are willing to help, but sometimes that help is duplicated... When the donors are collaborating and working together, it is more efficient, saving their money and [our] time." – *PPSC interviewee*



Figure 8: Examples of effective collaboration with partners

CASE STUDIES	Public Policy Institute at Auckland University	<p>In collaboration with the Public Policy Institute, Fale staff have delivered tailored half-day sessions on public sector leadership and governance to Pacific public servants, recipients of MFAT's Manaaki Scholarships. Over the past two years, the Fale has conducted three sessions, engaging a total of 90 scholars.</p> <p>The Fale's expertise, strong connections, and culturally relevant training, which embraces the diversity of Pacific contexts, have been highly praised. Attendees also spoke of the value of FaleOnline resources as practical tools that complement the training.</p>
	NZ Pacific Maritime Safety Programme	<p>The Fale's collaboration with Maritime New Zealand has demonstrated the power of partnership in sharing knowledge and resources. By leveraging FaleOnline e-learning modules, the Pacific Maritime Safety Programme (PMSP) has expanded its reach beyond the six countries it was initially funded to support. Other Pacific nations can now access PMSP resources, enhancing regional maritime safety.</p> <p>This collaboration combines strengths: PMSP supplies the learning materials, while the Fale team provides crucial support—helping users log in, delivering user statistics, and maintaining regular engagement with PMSP focal points. A joint visit to Niue highlighted the effectiveness of their partnership, showcasing FaleOnline's value in promoting maritime safety. Fale's commitment to collaboration, as evidenced by their culturally attuned and hands-on approach, has been praised as a highly positive experience, exemplifying trust and teamwork.</p>

There is a strong desire from some partners for greater collaboration with the Fale and the new APP identifies clear actions including potential areas to explore with specific partners. With a clear plan and dedicated resource in place, the Fale expects to make significant progress in enhancing collaboration.



Meaningful measurement of outcomes remains a work in progress; this is a common challenge for development programmes

The Fale has a strong customer-focused culture that values ongoing reflection and continuous improvement. It has established processes to regularly seek feedback from PPSCs who participate in training, attend meetings, and receive tailored bilateral support.

In response to the mid-term review, the Fale has updated its MERL framework and processes to focus more on outcomes monitoring. However, it still needs to address internal capacity to undertake these functions effectively; and further work is needed to ensure outcomes and evidence sources are both tailored to the journey of each country, and sufficiently consistent and credible for Fale stakeholders.

There also needs to be further clarity on which tasks should be conducted internally and externally for a more comprehensive and independent assessment of outcomes. This issue is recognised by the Fale leadership and management team as a key priority for future focus.

Going forward, the country work planning process that the Fale undertakes with each PPSC is an important opportunity to enable self-assessment of the current state for each country's public sector, including their specific strengths and needs. This will enable goals and timeframes to be developed jointly with the PPSCs, so they are context appropriate and meaningful. It will also set a baseline from which the Fale can assess outcomes and gauge the value of its contribution.



Key Evaluation Question 2

How effectively has the Fale achieved its intended outputs and outcomes?



KEQ 2: How effectively has the Fale achieved its intended outputs and outcomes?

The Fale has pursued an ambitious agenda of outputs and outcomes based on the requirements of the TKM-MFAT MOU. The first broad output area is to provide a range of bilateral and regional capability building supports to PPSCs in the areas of digital transformation, leadership and organisational development, and strengthening governance. The second output area is to provide comprehensive secretariat services to the annual conference of PPSCs and subregional meetings.

Together these outputs are intended to contribute to public sector strengthening through the following outcomes in the short-term:

- strengthened collaboration and connection among PPSCs
- PPSC have increased access to well-coordinated and contextualised capability building opportunities
- participants of Fale programmes have increased knowledge, skills and confidence to plan and execute change and improvements in public sector management
- participants of Fale programmes promote and implement management practices that improve integrity, ethical behaviour, fairness, equity and inclusiveness, and
- public service leaders design and apply appropriate public sector management and governance solutions.

As part of this evaluation, we sought to understand the extent to which the Fale had achieved its intended output and outcomes; and we drew on multiple data sources to triangulate our findings.

KEQ2: We conclude that the Fale has been productive and purposeful in delivering its intended outputs, despite being a new programme and operating in a challenging context during its early years (COVID-19). We find high levels of satisfaction among the Fale's key customers – PPSCs – and indications of emerging outcomes, which is promising for such a young programme and for a programme with such a broad scope.



The Fale has delivered high-quality outputs despite contextual challenges

The Pacific region is both diverse and dynamic and public sector strengthening is a complex, long-term, non-linear process. Supporting 16 countries, the Fale must navigate distinct cultural contexts, varying absorptive capacities, unique government structures, and self-determined aspirations for public service strengthening. Additionally, frequent changes in leadership and shifting priorities across Pacific governments can disrupt the consistency of partnerships and projects. This requires adaptability and perseverance, and an operating model that is responsive and resilient to change.

The Fale was established as a new programme only five years ago. Compared to many development programmes, it is a relatively young programme based on a new relationship between the PSC and the MFAT Pacific Development programme. It has spent most of the past five years establishing the key foundations necessary for success and sustainability. This included building a team, establishing systems and processes, and developing trusted relationships resulting in tailored bilateral programmes with 16 PPSCs. The Fale has demonstrated the ongoing importance of agility and adaptability in how it supports PPSCs.

The Fale moved rapidly into delivery mode, despite the disruption that was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It focused on two output areas.

- Centre of Public Service Excellence: Delivering regional programmes and bilateral support, that strengthen the capacity and capability of Pacific public services across three key priority areas: leadership development, strengthening governance, and digital transformation.
- Providing secretariat support to the Pacific Public Service Leaders' Group, the annual Fono: Pacific Public Service Leaders' Conference, the Public Service Fale Governance Board, and technical working groups as directed by the Board.

There is evidence of substantive activity in relation to both output areas, both in terms of the quantum of activities and the scale and breadth of people that activities reached (Table 3).



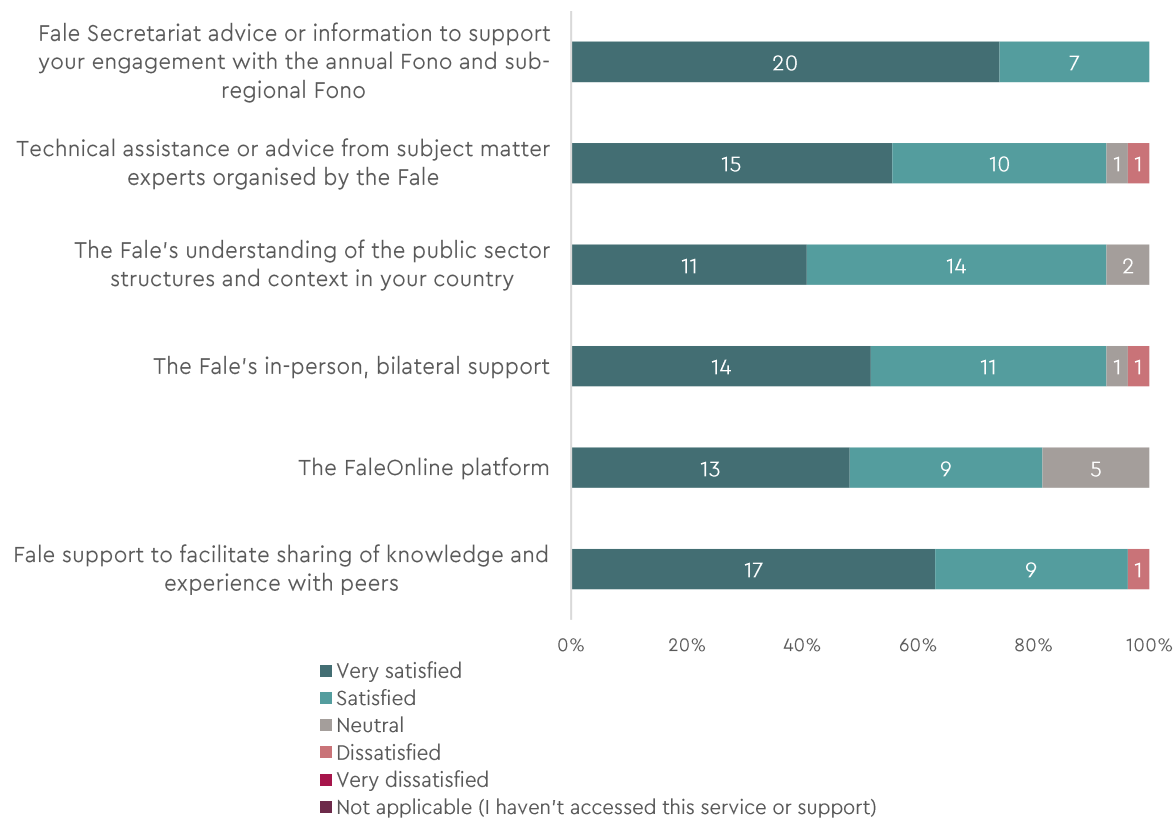
Table 3: Overview of Fale outputs

Centre of Public Service Excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral support in response to country requests: Over 160 requests received over past 18 months, ranging in complexity from a relatively quick email response, to complex projects that span several months and include in-country visits and training. 93% of PPSCs surveyed satisfied/very satisfied with the Fale's in-person support and technical assistance organised from subject matter experts. • FaleOnline platform: This digital platform provides online access to useful resources, tools and learning content on Pacific-focused public service management practices. Since its launch in 2022, over 3000 Pacific public servants have registered as users. The platform also hosts training materials for some partners and PPSCs (for example, Solomon Islands Institute of Public Administration and Management, New Zealand Customs, Pacific Maritime Safety programme, and Ministry for Primary Industries under development). 81% of PPSCs surveyed are satisfied/very satisfied with FaleOnline. • Virtual Communities of Practice: Human Resources with 34 members and Digital with 28 members facilitates learning and sharing among practitioners across the Pacific countries. • Fale Mentoring programme: There have been six cohorts since 2021, each with 10-14 participants at Tier one or two level across the Pacific who are paired with mentors (mostly Tier one and two leaders from New Zealand public service agencies). In the latest participant survey, 100% of mentees said the programme was useful and relevant and they would recommend it to other Pacific public servants and 87.5% agreed or strongly agreed the programme increased their confidence and ability to lead others and improved their skills in developing future leaders and ability to communicate effectively. • Integrity and ethics programme: There have been three cohorts since 2021 with participant numbers having grown from 15 to 43 participants per cohort. • Governance essentials training conducted at the end of Fono in 2023 in partnership with the Institute of Directors and attended by 14 participants across four countries. • Pacific Women in Leadership programme conducted as bi-monthly sessions in 2023/24 with a total of 118 participants across 12 countries.
Secretariat support to annual PPSC Fono, subregional Fono, and governance board meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Fono: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2023: New Zealand PSC hosted the first PPSC Fono with 44 delegates across 16 countries as well as New Zealand and Australia, including New Zealand Public Service Commissioner (NZPSC). – 2024: The Fale supported Samoa to host the second Fono with 53 delegates, including NZPSC. – For 2025: The Fale is supporting Fiji to host the next Fono in November. – 100% of PPSCs surveyed are satisfied/very satisfied with the Fale's secretariat advice or support. Some also highlighted that having PPSCs host the Fono is important for shared ownership. • Sub-regional Fono: The Fale convenes preparatory face-to-face sub-regional meetings during the year to support PPSCs to engage fully in the annual Fono and strengthen peer-to-peer connections. • Governance Board meetings: The Fale provides secretariat services to the Fale Governance Board which meets quarterly. It is a representative board of the Pacific Public Service Leaders' Group Members and provides high-level strategic oversight and direction to the Public Service Fale, accountable to the Pacific Public Service Leaders' Group.



Feedback from PPSCs about the relevance and value of Fale activities is positive (Figure 9).²

Figure 9: PPSC satisfaction with Fale services



Source: MartinJenkins PPSC survey (2025), n=29

The Fale's support is highly valued by PPSCs and there are signs of progress towards outcomes

Public sector strengthening is a complex area. While the refreshed programme logic for the Fale (2024) provides a clearer articulation of the outcomes it is seeking to achieve, it would benefit from greater clarity about how soon many of these outcomes can be expected to materialise. Some outcomes may be realised more immediately, while others take longer, and this would vary across

² 1 respondent who expressed dissatisfaction explained that he believed the potential for the Fale to provide additional services is hampered by lack of innovation or flexibility to reach out to other development partners for funding.



countries depending on the maturity of their public sector institutions and their self-determined areas of focus.

At the end of this five-year establishment phase, we see that the Fale has built strong foundations for future success, and we see examples of outcomes and value beginning to emerge.

- The Fale has built a credible and capable team with strong, trusted relationships with PPSCs (illustrated in Figure 10). These relationships with individuals have diplomatic value. This is recognised by partners as a significant achievement given it had to build relationships with remote engagement under COVID-19 travel restrictions. 25 of the 29 PPSC survey respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Fale's understanding of the public sector structures and context in their country.

Figure 10: Examples of feedback on the Fale's good reputation with PPSCs



Source: MartinJenkins PPSC survey and feedback from MFAT Posts

- The Fale programme has built systems and a good reputation for facilitating relationships, learning and sharing among PPSCs and with New Zealand agencies, through its convening role, training programmes, online platform, and bilateral country-specific technical support (as illustrated in Figure 11).



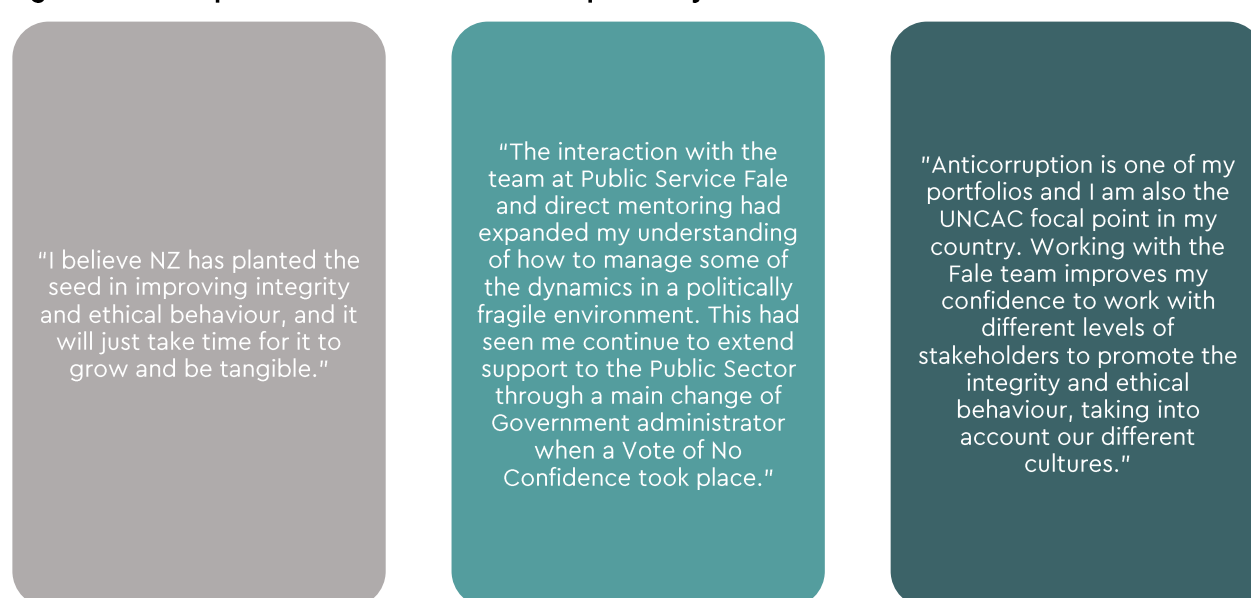
Figure 11: Examples of feedback on the Fale's role in facilitating relationships between PPSCs



Source: MartinJenkins PPSC survey and interviews (2025)

Examples reported by PPSCs (Figure 12) illustrate how support from the Fale has improved their connection, learning, and sharing with peers across the Pacific, increased their skill and confidence, and organisational capacity in areas of leadership, governance, anti-corruption, Human Resources management, integrity and ethics, merit-based recruitment, and digitisation of services.

Figure 12: Examples of short-term outcomes reported by PPSCs

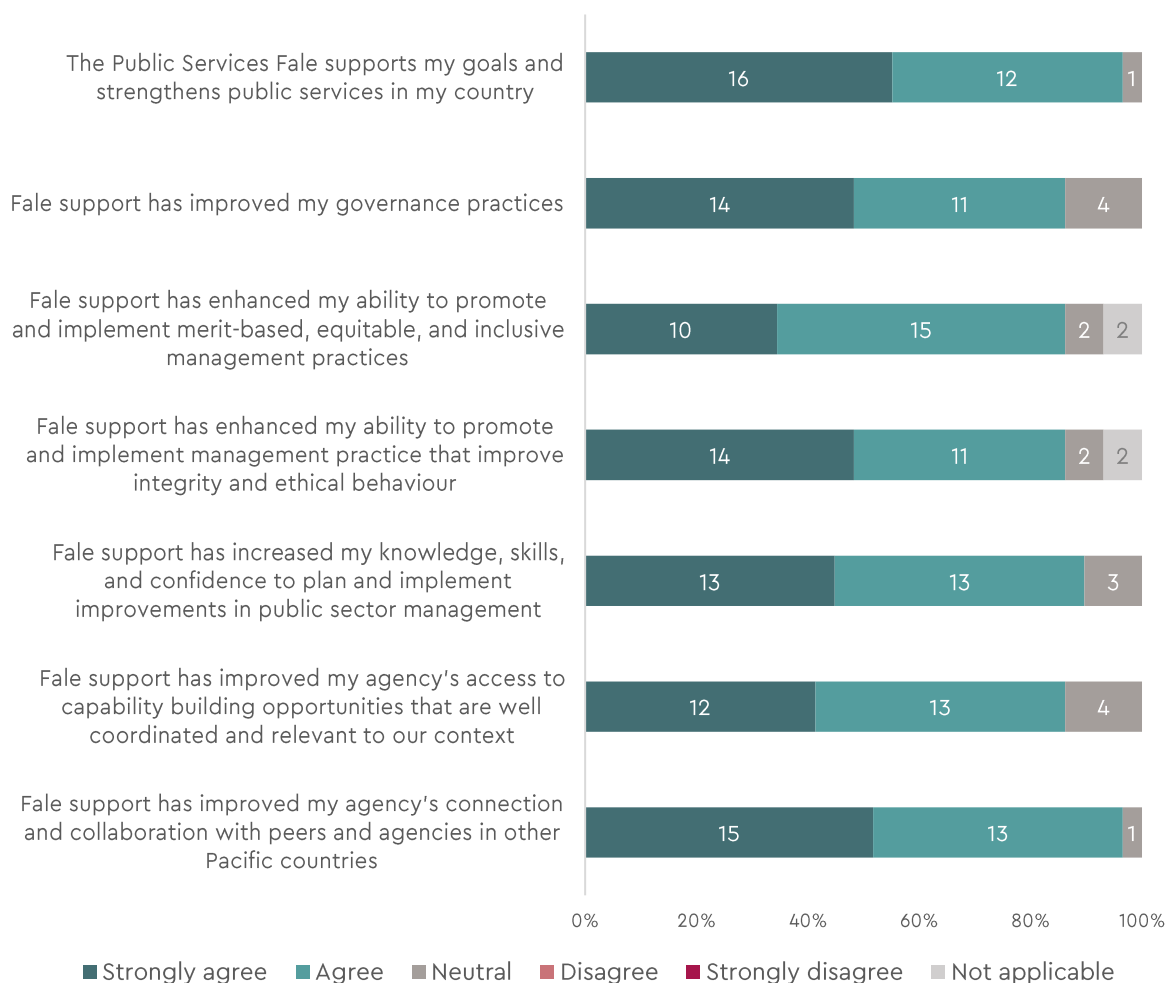


Source: MartinJenkins PPSC survey (2025) and The Fale PPSC Senior Leader Survey (2024).



Between 86-96% of PPSCs surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that support from the Fale has led to improvements in each of the short-term outcome areas listed in the Fale programme logic (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Progress towards short-term outcomes

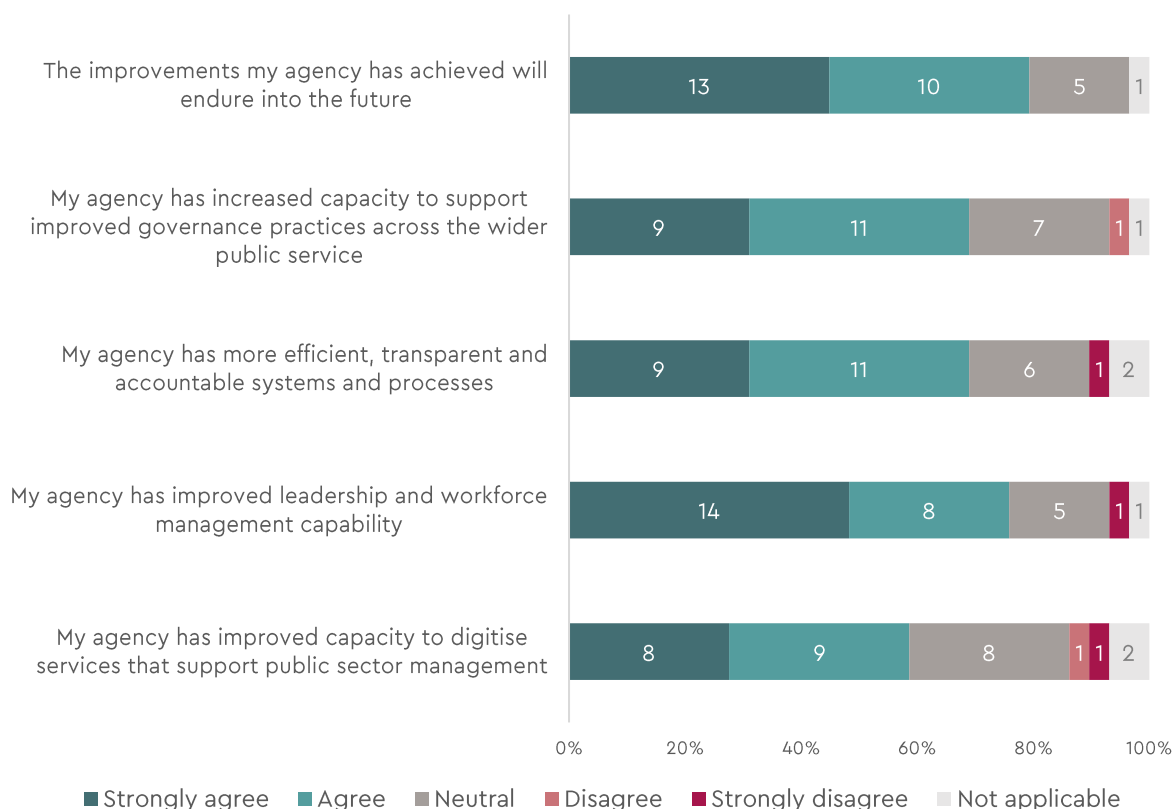


Source: MartinJenkins PPSC survey (2025), n=29



On medium-term outcomes, majority of PPSCs surveyed agreed or strongly agreed support from the Fale has contributed to the medium-term outcomes listed in the Fale programme logic (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Progress towards medium-term outcomes



Source: MartinJenkins PPSC survey (2025), n=29

Most (79%) of PPSCs agreed or strongly agreed that the improvements their agency has achieved will endure into the future. There are also some positive indications that the Fale's support has the potential to contribute to wider improvements in the public sector. Following participation in regional Fale courses, some countries have requested the Fale to deliver adapted workshops in-country for wider groups in their public service. Notable examples of the Fale's reach across the wider public service are provided in Table 4.



Table 4: Examples of Fale support reaching beyond PPSCs (medium-term outcomes)

Examples of Fale support reaching beyond PPSCs to engage (and benefit) the wider public sector

- Development of Pacific-wide integrity and ethics guidance valued and used by countries to adapt to their local context, for example, developing their own anti-corruption policy.
- In-country leadership programme for Tier two leaders across the public sector, train the trainers for local facilitators ensures sustainability.
- Developed a specific portal on FaleOnline to provide an online learning management system for a country's public sector training institute.
- Partnered with the New Zealand Serious Fraud Office to deliver in-country training on improving customer service (25 participants across 15 agencies) and anti-corruption training (20 participants across four agencies).
- Recruitment practices shared by Fale and other countries helped one country ensure they have inclusive open merit-based recruitment principles and policies.
- Technical support for a few countries with functional and structural review of public sector including to more effectively and strategically prioritise, justify and right-size positions for agencies.



Key Evaluation

Question 3

What are the opportunities for the Fale to continue to deliver value in the future?



KEQ 3: What are the opportunities for the Fale to continue to deliver value in the future?

The development agenda and ecosystem of partners in the Pacific is continuously evolving. Since its inception, there have been multiple changes that have impacted the operating context of the Fale:

- COVID-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions on travel and in-person meetings
- changes in government in many Pacific countries affecting priorities of PPSCs, and
- changes in focal points at PPSCs and at MFAT Posts.

Through the evaluation, we considered the changing context and sought views from stakeholders about the ongoing relevance of the Fale and future opportunities for increased impact.

KEQ3: We find that:

- the overarching objective of the Fale for more trusted, transparent, capable, accountable and outcomes-focused Pacific public sectors remains relevant
- PPSCs continue to be a group that is underserved by development partners, and
- the Fale has built strong foundations – trusted relationships, skilled team, reputation with New Zealand central agencies, a good combination of bilateral and regional programmes, a culture of learning and continuous improvement – that make it well-positioned to continue to be the delivery agency for supporting PPSCs.

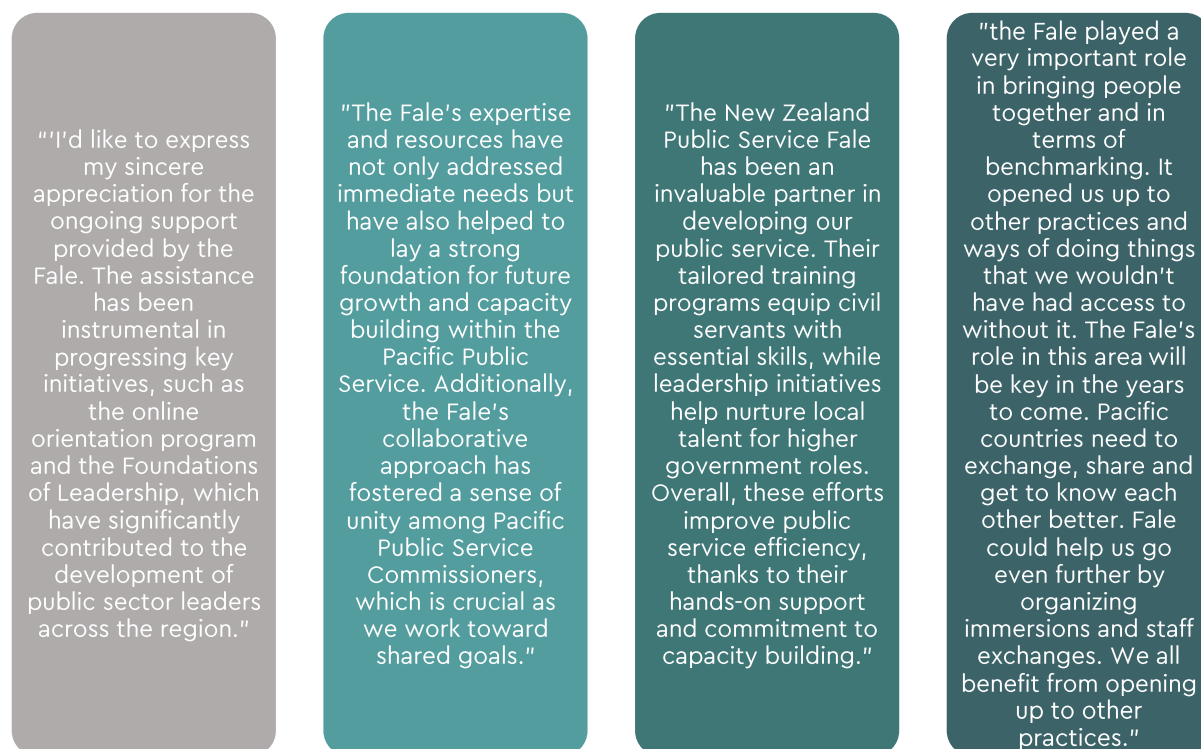
The Fale programme remains relevant and valuable

The work of the Fale is valued by PPSCs

There is strong appetite and demand by PPSCs for continued support from the Fale based on feedback from PPSCs (Figure 15) and eight of the 12 MFAT Posts. This is an area not usually covered by development partner support. PPSCs play a leading role in public sector strengthening, which contributes to the wider goal of a safer and more resilient Pacific.



Figure 15: PPSC views on the future value of the Fale



Source: MartinJenkins PPSC survey (2025), n=29

When asked what the Fale's role should be over the next five to 10 years to address emerging needs and priorities, PPSCs focused on:

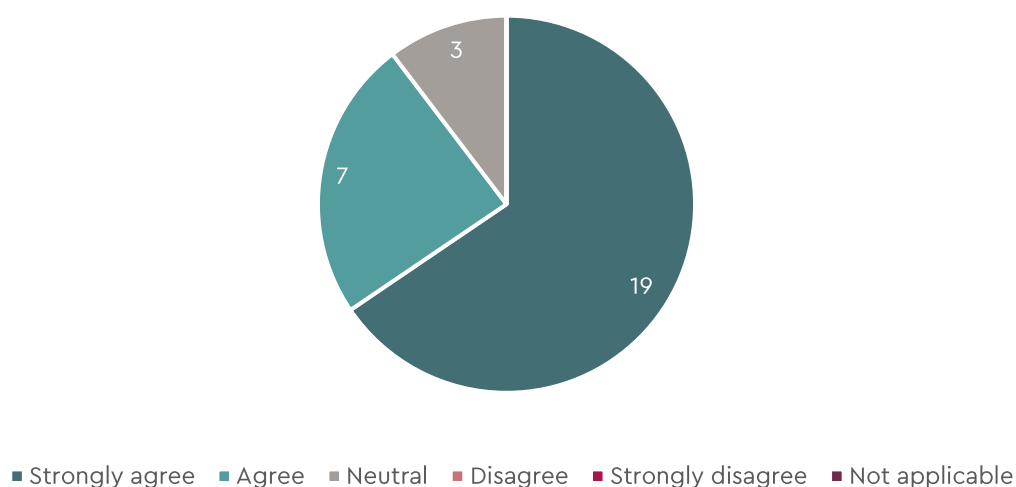
- the Fale maintaining its crucial role as a facilitator in strengthening relationships and promoting the exchange of best practices between the public services of Pacific countries
 - *"Continue its assistance to Pacific PSC in terms of funding of in-county trainings as well and regional trainings; providing technical assistance and continuation of online meetings"* – PPSC
 - *"Provide technical assistance and support to Pacific PS Commissioners on technical issues/areas where the relevant expertise is not available in-house."* – PPSC
- the Fale coordinating and facilitating knowledge sharing and collaboration between Pacific Island countries.
 - *"The Fale could play a pivotal role in facilitating collaboration and knowledge sharing among Pacific countries, enabling Commissioners to address emerging challenges such as digital transformation, workforce sustainability, and cross-jurisdictional collaboration."* – PPSC



- *"To provide and facilitate a peer learning network among the region to exchange best practices in strategic workforce planning to address skills gaps and future needs."* – PPSC

Of the 29 PPSCs surveyed, 90% (26 PPSCs) either agree or strongly agree that the Fale is well positioned to respond to the emerging needs and priorities of Pacific public service agencies (Figure 16).

Figure 16: PPSC confidence in the Fale's ongoing relevance



Source: MartinJenkins PPSC survey (2025), n=29

The work of the Fale supports an important priority in the Pacific region

The Fale supports PPSCs to improve integrity and ethical behaviour and implement merit-based, inclusive management practices. This is essential for strong, transparent, effective public services and contributes to the 2050 Strategy for Blue Pacific Continent goals for regional peace, security, and good governance.

Examples from MFAT Posts highlight how political change or instability in the region has created opportunities for the Fale to provide guidance, ensuring PPSCs can navigate transitions effectively and uphold key governance principles.

"The Fale has been doing really useful work, [providing support for] managing staffing shortages, restructuring, which fits the context of [country] at this point in time. It's a really important resource for people here to have an entry point to access the Fale support to help them navigate these changes." – MFAT Post



The Fale is an important part of New Zealand's foreign policy and development programme

The programme enables New Zealand to develop strategic relationships with PPSCs. These central agencies are the backbone of the public sector in Pacific Island countries, responsible for the recruitment and performance management of heads of public sector agencies and setting agency performance standards. In many countries, they are also directly responsible for human resource policy setting and payroll across the entire public sector workforce. The programme leverages and strengthens New Zealand's reputation in public sector governance expertise. There is also interest in exploring whether the Fale can work more closely with MFAT to organise visits and exchanges to further cement institutional linkages between New Zealand and Pacific public services.

We heard from key stakeholders in MFAT that the Fale should continue to consolidate its position as a trusted advisor to PPSCs. There is significant appetite in the Pacific for the Fale's ongoing support. The Fale has developed strong relationships with PPSCs who confide in the Fale. It has been very faithful in maintaining the trust and confidence of PPSCs. Going forward, there is an opportunity for these relationships to contribute more strongly to the wider NZ Inc engagement with the country.



Recommendations



Recommendations to increase impact

Through its focus on learning and continuous improvement, the Fale can build upon the strong foundations established so far to support PPSCs to achieve outcomes that are Pacific-led, Pacific-owned and therefore more enduring. Our recommendations are organised into two groups: improvements to continue strengthening the Fale's achievement of outcomes, and extension opportunities for further investigation.

Improvements to strengthen the Fale programme

1. Clarify expectations for mutual benefit with MFAT

As part of deepening engagement with MFAT, it will be important to co-design and clearly set out shared understanding on the following:

- a. the programme logic, with greater clarity on what success looks like in terms of direct and indirect outcomes, and realistic timeframes for outcomes to be demonstrated, and
- b. the purpose, intent, frequency and nature of reporting, and of engagement with Posts that is fit for purpose for the context and needs of MFAT and NZ Inc's wider engagement with the country.

2. Harness opportunities presented by the country planning process

Building on the strong relationships and collaboration with PPSCs, and the culture of continuous improvement, continue to develop the tailored country planning process to:

- a. enable clearer assessment of outcomes and impact that is appropriate to the needs and context of each country: the Fale should develop with each PPSC an assessment of where the public sector is currently at (a baseline against which the outcomes they are wanting to achieve can be understood), what they are aiming for (targets) and how progress will be measured; this will enable the Fale to gauge the value of its contribution to country strengthening
- b. further enhance the PPSC's access to timely and quality support: country workplans to include clarity on how the Fale will coordinate and collaborate with relevant partners in responding to the country's priorities (including ensuring direct alignment with MFAT's country plans in relation to strengthening governance – when these are made available to the Fale)



- c. ensure requests from PPSCs are prioritised according to alignment to the agreed country plan, and other partners are leveraged to respond to requests that are out of scope for the Fale or not well aligned to the agreed plan
- d. identify (and where possible maximise) alignment with MFAT's wider NZ Inc country plans and regularly seek input of Posts to maximise opportunities for ongoing alignment, and
- e. identify potential partners who could respond to other requests.

3. **Strengthen monitoring and evaluation capacity**

Strengthen the Fale's internal monitoring and evaluation capacity to support ongoing demonstration and communication of impact. The country plans could be a valuable vehicle for improved monitoring and evaluation if they are enhanced to include a current state assessment, goals, and progress indicators.

With the next business case, plan for and resource an outcomes evaluation at an appropriate timeframe, with in-country data collection from a range of key stakeholders to assess progress towards outcomes.

Extension opportunities for further investigation

Evaluation participants suggested other opportunities for the Fale, that require further consideration to ensure they are aligned to and represent the best potential use of Fale resources to achieve maximum impact:

- 4. continue to explore opportunities for greater collaboration with partners on use of FaleOnline, including the feasibility of serving as a platform for NZ Inc partners to share resources more effectively with PPSCs:
 - many stakeholders that participated in the evaluation were complimentary about FaleOnline, and noted it is a valuable resource that could be further leveraged as a cost-effective tool for NZ Inc (and other partners) to share information and training resources with PPSCs. We agree; however, we also observe the Fale should be cautious about how much it takes on in terms of extending the functions and customers of FaleOnline and potential overreliance on this technology (for example, maintaining a lively and engaged online community of practice is a resource intensive endeavour that requires dedicated facilitation)
- 5. continue to support more peer learning exchanges between Pacific countries for PPSC leaders, senior as well as emerging leaders
- 6. continue to explore opportunities to strengthen and expand collaboration with Pacific public service training institutes (such as the current partnership with the Solomon Islands Institute of Public Administration as well as potential collaborations with the newly established Fiji Learning Institute for Public Service, the Somare Institute of Leadership and Governance in PNG, and the University of South Pacific), and



7. in exploring opportunities to collaborate with Pacific regional agencies and development partners, continue to ensure there is clear value-add to PPSCs, that it is in line with the Fale's mandate, and supports MFAT's engagement with the agency within the context of a regional architecture that is over-stretched, crowded, and currently under review.



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