Report Number: ICRR0024875

## 1. Project Data

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|---|---|
| **Project ID**<br>P154943 | **Project Name**<br>TG: Digital Government Support Project |
| **Country**<br>Tonga | **Practice Area(Lead)**<br>Digital Development |

| L/C/TF Number(s) | Closing Date (Original) | Total Project Cost (USD) |
|---|---|---|
| IDA-D4490 | 31-May-2024 | 4,557,286.05 |
| **Bank Approval Date** | **Closing Date (Actual)** | |
| 09-May-2019 | 31-May-2025 | |

| | IBRD/IDA (USD) | Grants (USD) |
|---|---|---|
| Original Commitment | 4,650,000.00 | 0.00 |
| Revised Commitment | 4,653,376.00 | 0.00 |
| Actual | 4,557,436.45 | 0.00 |

| Prepared by | Reviewed by | ICR Review Coordinator | Group |
|---|---|---|---|
| Junko Narimatsu | Fernando Manibog | Avjeet Singh | IEGSD (Unit 4) |

## 2. Project Objectives and Components

### a. Objectives

The project development objective (PDO) as stated in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) (Page 14) and Financing Agreement (Schedule 1, Page 4) was **"to improve the Recipient's capacity for digital public service delivery."**

### b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?

Yes

**Did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?**
No

**c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?**
Yes

**d. Components**
The project comprised five components. While the PDO remained unchanged, several activities were adjusted during the June 2023 restructuring, which also revised selected end targets. References in this review to pre- and post-restructuring objectives reflect these changes in targets rather than any modification of the PDO.

**Component 1: Enabling Environment and Continuous Improvement** (appraisal estimate: US$0.75 million; actual cost at closing: US$0.76 million). This component aimed to (i) develop the Digital Government Strategic Framework (DGSF) to guide whole-of-government digital transformation; (ii) modernize the legal and regulatory framework for digital government, including the civil registration and national identification (ID) systems; and (iii) expand the government's cybersecurity program through training and awareness. Activities under this component remained broadly consistent with the PAD following restructuring.

**Component 2: Government Enterprise Architecture** (appraisal estimate: US$0.60 million; actual cost at closing: US$0.34 million). This component aimed to (i) conduct a priority business process review to map and streamline workflows across government; and (ii) develop a Government Enterprise Architecture (GEA) to guide ICT investments and ensure interoperability among ministries and agencies. No substantive changes were introduced to this component during restructuring.

**Component 3: Core Registries - Civil Registration and National ID Systems** (appraisal estimate: US$1.40 million; actual cost at closing: US$1.35 million). This component aimed to (i) upgrade the civil registration (CR) system to assign unique national ID numbers at birth and link vital records; (ii) upgrade the national ID system; and (iii) establish functional CR-ID integration to enable secure data exchange and digital authentication for public and private service providers. During the June 2023 restructuring, activity (ii) was revised from upgrading the centralized national ID system to developing a federated digital identity approach. Activities (i) and (iii) remained as originally designed. The revision reflected a change in technical design while maintaining alignment with the component's intent to strengthen foundational identification systems.

**Component 4: Digital Government Infrastructure** (appraisal estimate: US$1.40 million; actual cost at closing: US$1.55 million). This component aimed to (i) design and implement a secure government network and Government Cloud (G-Cloud) environment; (ii) design and develop a National Government Portal; and (iii) implement selected e-services, including workflow automation and feedback mechanisms. During restructuring, activity (i) was revised from establishing the secure network and G-Cloud to developing a whole-of-government integration platform and undertaking data center upgrades; and activity (ii) was adjusted from developing a new portal to upgrading and enhancing the existing National Government Portal. Activity (iii) remained broadly consistent with the PAD. The revised activities modified the technical

approach but remained consistent with the component's original purpose of enabling interoperable digital public services.

**Component 5: Project Management** (appraisal estimate: US$0.50 million; actual cost at closing: US$0.55 million) This component aimed to support project management and technical assistance, including the Project Management Unit (PMU) for coordination, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), fiduciary management, and reporting. Activities were implemented largely as designed in the PAD.

### e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates

**Project Cost.** The actual project cost was US$4.55 million, compared to the appraisal estimate of US$4.65 million. The slightly lower disbursement was mainly due to significant savings under Component 2, which underspent by approximately 43 percent relative to its original allocation. Expenditures for Components 1, 3, and 5 remained broadly in line with appraisal estimates, while Component 4 exceeded its planned cost by about 11 percent. The project was financed through an IDA grant (IDA-D4490) in the amount of SDR 3.4 million (US$4.65 million equivalent at appraisal), and the financing amount remained unchanged throughout implementation. Actual disbursements totaled US$4.55 million, representing 98 percent of the budgeted amount. No funds were canceled and no reallocation of disbursement categories occurred.

**Borrower Contribution**. There were no Borrower contributions.

**Date.** The project was approved on May 9, 2019, became effective on August 12, 2019, and underwent a Mid-Term Review (MTR) in May 2023. The original closing date was May 31, 2024. It was extended once for a total of 12 months, on June 20, 2023, resulting in a final closing date of May 31, 2025.

**Other changes.** The project underwent one Level 2 restructuring on June 20, 2023. The PDO remained unchanged. Key changes included: (i) extension of the closing date by 12 months; (ii) revisions to activities under Components 3 and 4; (iii) updates to the Results Framework to reflect technical adjustments and revised timelines; and (iv) transfer of the implementing agency from the Ministry of Finance to the Prime Minister's Office. No funds were canceled and no additional financing was provided. The restructuring introduced a federated digital identity approach, refinements to the integration platform and national portal, and an institutional realignment intended to strengthen implementation capacity and accelerate progress in the final phase of the project.

**Split rating.** Although the PDO remained unchanged, the June 2023 restructuring revised downward the targets for two PDO indicators: (i) number of public and private service providers using identity federation for digital ID authentication; and (ii) number of National Portal visits per year. These revisions reduced the level of ambition at the PDO indicator level and were associated with changes in the technical design under Component 3 and the limited period available for system operationalization prior to project closing. According to IEG guidelines, a split rating is required when project scope and/or targets are reduced, even if the PDO and total financing remain unchanged, which is the case here. This review therefore applies a split rating, with the majority of disbursements occurring after the June 2023 restructuring.

## 3. Relevance of Objectives

## Rationale

**Country and sector context.** At the time of appraisal, Tonga had made progress in improving digital connectivity through investments such as the submarine cable. However, access to high-quality broadband remained uneven, particularly on outer islands. Most public services were manual, paper-based, and fragmented, and foundational systems, such as civil registration and the national ID, were not yet fully digitalized or interoperable. Recognizing these gaps, the Government, through the 2019 Tonga Digital Government Strategic Framework (TDGSF) aimed to modernize public service delivery, strengthen digital identity foundations, and lay the groundwork for an integrated, whole-of-government e-service platform."

**Alignment with Government strategy.** At time of appraisal, the project was well aligned with Tonga's Strategic Development Framework (TSDF) 2015–2025, which emphasized responsive governance and improved ICT infrastructure as enablers of service delivery. The Tonga Digital Government Strategic Framework (TDGSF) 2019–2024 further articulated the Government's whole-of-government vision for digital transformation, identifying the need for modernized foundational registries, strengthened legal and regulatory frameworks, and integrated digital platforms. The project's focus on core identity systems, interoperability, cybersecurity, and digital service delivery directly supported these national priorities and reflected strong government ownership of the digital transformation agenda.

**Alignment with Bank strategy.** The PDOs were fully aligned with the World Bank's Regional Partnership Framework (RPF) for Pacific Island Countries (FY17 - 21, extended to FY23), which emphasized the use of ICT and digital service delivery to strengthen governance and improve access to services in the Pacific. The project's focus on foundational digital government systems, including digital identity, civil registration, cybersecurity, and interoperability frameworks, directly supported these strategic priorities. A new RPF covering FY26 - 31 is currently under preparation.

**Previous World Bank experience.** The project design drew on lessons from earlier Bank operations in the Pacific and globally, particularly the importance of establishing robust legal and policy frameworks, undertaking advance preparation, and ensuring interoperability across government systems. The World Bank's Identification for Development (ID4D) Initiative provided technical expertise on digital identity, civil registration, and data-sharing architecture, while supporting knowledge exchange with countries pursuing similar reforms. The project also built on earlier Bank-financed regional connectivity investments, including the submarine cable initiative, which informed the technical design, sequencing of activities, and overall feasibility within Tonga's institutional and geographic context. These inputs strengthened the project's technical design and enhanced implementation readiness.

**Level of the PDO.** The PDO "to improve the Recipient's capacity for digital public service delivery" was well aligned with Tonga's digital development priorities and the country's need to establish the foundational systems required for e-government. It was framed at a medium-term outcome level, appropriate for a project focused on building core enablers such as digital identity, civil registration, enterprise architecture, and the initial uptake of digital services. While the PDO did not encompass higher-level impacts such as improved service quality or socioeconomic outcomes, this was reasonable given the project's scope and the expectation that such benefits would emerge only after the new systems had operated for some time. The PDO-level indicators appropriately measured early operational deployment and use of these foundational systems. Overall, the PDO was relevant, achievable, and appropriately scoped. The relevance of the PDO is rated High.

**Rating**
High

## 4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

### OBJECTIVE 1

#### Objective
To improve the Recipient's capacity for digital public service delivery

#### Rationale
**Theory of Change**

While a formal Theory of Change (ToC) was not required at appraisal, the PAD included a results framework outlining the project's intended logic. For the ICR, a ToC was developed to clarify how project interventions, including updates during the June 2023 restructuring, were expected to improve digital public service delivery through strengthened foundational digital systems and institutional capacity.

The project mobilized inputs such as IDA financing, technical assistance (TA), and international expertise, to support activities such as: (i) developing a government enterprise architecture and the Digital Government Strategic Framework; (ii) upgrading core registries, including civil registry and national ID systems, with a shift during restructuring to a federated digital identity model; (iii) establishing enabling legislation for electronic transactions, privacy, and data protection; (iv) designing and implementing the national government portal and selected e-services; and (v) capacity building, including cybersecurity training for officials.

These activities generated outputs including: (i) an operational enterprise architecture and digital government strategy; (ii) upgraded and linked Civil Registration–national ID (CR-ID) enabling unique IDs at birth and digital authentication; (iii) enactment of the Electronic Transactions Bill and preparation of the Privacy and Data Protection Bill; (iv) an upgraded national portal with feedback mechanisms and initial e-services; and (v) officials with enhanced cybersecurity and digital service delivery skills.

Outputs were expected to enable intermediate outcomes such as operational digital identity authentication, expanded online service channels, improved platform reliability, and stronger institutional capacity, together forming the causal pathway toward improved digital public service delivery.

The project's focus on interoperability, foundational registries, and enabling legislation underpinned long-term sustainability and broader efficiency and inclusion gains. Several process-oriented contributions (e.g., technical assistance, coordination, training) supported these results but were not explicitly reflected in the Results Framework.

In line with IEG split-rating methodology, efficacy under the original objectives is assessed against the original targets applicable prior to the June 2023 restructuring.

**Outputs:** The following outputs were delivered and assessed against the original targets, presented in line with the ToC causal logic.

- **Digital Government Strategic Framework (DGSF) was completed and adopted, achieving the target.** It provides a unified vision and whole-of-government roadmap for digital transformation.
- **Government Enterprise Architecture (GEA) was designed, developed, and adopted, achieving the intermediate indicator on architectural completion.** It established the technical and governance foundations for coordinated ICT investment and system interoperability.
- **Legislation for electronic transactions was approved by Cabinet, achieving its target.**
- **The privacy and data protection bill was approved by Cabinet after project closure and subsequently enacted as the Privacy Act in December 2025, achieving its target** (as confirmed in TTL correspondence, January 27, 2026).
- **Foundational CR–ID systems were upgraded and linked, achieving two of the three related indicators**: (i) "Civil Registration (CR) system upgraded to enable issuance of unique national ID numbers at birth," and (ii) "CR–National ID system linkage established for automated exchange and synchronization of birth and death events." The third indicator, requiring the CR upgrade to be gender-informed, was not achieved due to lack of documented evidence. According to TTL correspondence (January 27, 2026), gender-responsive consultations reportedly occurred, but no written records are available.
- **'ID system upgrade completed' is assessed as achieved in substance toward the original target through the revised indicator 'identity federation orchestrator operational.'** The restructuring shifted from a centralized ID upgrade to a federated model enabling multi source digital identity verification. Both approaches serve the same functional purpose of providing reliable identity verification.
- **"Tonga G-Cloud designed" is assessed as achieved in substance toward the original target through the revised indicator "Government integration platform developed."** The G-Cloud approach intended to create a shared space for hosting government systems, while the integration platform enables systems to connect and share information across agencies. Both approaches support a common objective of enabling cross-government interoperability.
- **Unique National ID numbers assigned at birth registration is assessed as achieved in substance toward the original indicator through the revised indicator 'Unique ID numbers issued at birth registration.'** The revision reflected the shift to the identity-federation model, under which the Civil Registration (CR) system, rather than the National ID system, became the authoritative source for assigning unique ID numbers at birth, confirming activation of the upgraded CR–ID system.
- **The original indicator, "National government portal designed and developed," is assessed as achieved in substance toward the original target through the revised indicator, "National government portal upgraded."** Early implementation delays led the Government to launch a basic portal using its own resources. TTL correspondence (January 27, 2026) confirms that this version served as the baseline for project-financed work, which delivered substantial upgrades and full integration with the broader digital government architecture, providing the functionality and integration envisaged under the project.
- **A feedback mechanism was incorporated into the upgraded portal, and user satisfaction with the reliability of digital services reached 100%, exceeding the 70% target.** However, this result is based on only five responses, as the portal launched one week before project closure; according to TTL correspondence (January 27, 2026), no additional user satisfaction data were collected post-closing.

- **Two new e-services -- birth and death registration -- were developed and launched, achieving the target for expanding digital public services, and reduced processing times by 79 percent compared to previous in-person processes.** However, the share of women users could not be reported because gender-disaggregated data were not captured due to encryption and privacy safeguards; according to TTL correspondence (January 27, 2026), no feasible workaround was identified given the short interval between system launch and project closure and the dissolution of the PMU.
- **Cybersecurity training reached 217 officials from 47 entities, exceeding the target of 75 officials.** Of these participants, 81 were women, surpassing the target of 37 women. The training contributed to institutional cyber awareness and preparedness.

In addition, the ICR reported the following achievements supporting outcomes. These were not included in the Results Framework (RF) and therefore had no associated targets.

- **Interoperability standards were developed** as technical inputs required for the government integration platform, identity federation orchestrator, and CR–ID linkage, all of which depend on system-to-system data exchange.
- **Cloud-first policies were adopted** as part of the policy foundations underlying the government integration platform, which relies on shared, cloud-based infrastructure.
- **Business process mapping was completed** as an input to the Priority Business Process Review under Component 2, which supported the Government Enterprise Architecture.
- **Government officials participated in targeted capacity building activities,** including vendor-led training on the upgraded Civil Registration (CR) system, use of digital notifications generated by the Health Information System, and implementation of new CR–ID workflows.

**Outcomes:** The outputs were expected to result in increased use of digital identity, improved capacity for service delivery, and strengthened institutional capacity. The following outcomes were realized, assessed against their original targets:

- **Government Enterprise Architecture was developed and became operational, achieving the target.** This reflects the establishment of shared architectural foundations for harmonized business processes, standardized data structures, and coordinated ICT investments across government, conditions necessary for integrated digital service delivery.
- **Unique National ID numbers assigned at birth registration is assessed as achieved in substance toward the original target through the revised indicator "Unique ID numbers issued at birth registration."** This reflected the shift to the identity-federation model in which the Civil Registration (CR) system, instead of the National ID system, became the authoritative source for assigning unique ID numbers at birth. This demonstrates the functional activation of the upgraded CR–ID system, enabling the digital identity ecosystem to operate as intended.
- **Two public sector service providers, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health, adopted the digital identity system for authentication, below the original target of six service providers.** A third provider, Digicel, began onboarding shortly after project closure, indicating early momentum for strengthening the emerging digital ecosystem. As confirmed in a correspondence with TTL (February 12, 2026), integration is reported to be progressing and is undergoing security testing.
- **Annual portal visits increased from 3,576 at project closing to 6,655 by the ICR stage, but remained well below the original target of 12,000.**

The project delivered the core institutional, technical, and legal foundations required for digital public service delivery, including operational CR–ID systems enabling unique ID issuance at birth, a functioning identity federation orchestrator, an integration platform, and an upgraded national portal with initial transactional e-services. However, adoption outcomes were only partially achieved at closing: only two service providers were using digital authentication and portal traffic remained well below the original target reflecting the short operational period prior to closure and limited uptake. In addition, several intermediate outcome indicators could not be fully reported due to weak M&E design and data constraints, particularly for gender-related indicators and user satisfaction. As a result, assessment of improvements in digital public service delivery relies partly on evidence that is indicative rather than directly verified. As documented in the ICR, implementation occurred in a capacity constrained context marked by limited institutional staffing, repeated government and institutional changes, and major exogenous shocks, including COVID 19 disruptions and the 2022 volcanic eruption and tsunami. These factors constrained both implementation bandwidth and the post-deployment adoption period. While foundational systems became operational, limited adoption and weak outcome measurement reduce confidence that sustained improvements in digital public service delivery were achieved during the project period. Taken together, and consistent with IEG guidelines linking efficacy to demonstrated outcomes, the project made meaningful progress in establishing foundational systems, but the limited evidence on adoption and usage constrains the extent to which improvements in the government's capacity for digital public service delivery can be demonstrated. On balance, achievement of the original objective is therefore rated **Modest.**

### Rating
Modest

## OBJECTIVE 1 REVISION 1

### Revised Objective
To improve the Recipient's capacity for digital public service delivery

### Revised Rationale
While the PDO itself remained unchanged, the June 2023 restructuring improved alignment between expected outcomes, measurement indicators, and the implementation time remaining, enabling outcome achievement to be assessed on the basis of observable system use rather than anticipated future adoption. The restructuring adjusted several indicators and end targets to reflect refinements in technical design, implementation scope, and the limited time remaining before project closure. These revisions aligned the Results Framework with shifts such as adoption of a federated digital ID model, upgrading the existing portal rather than building a new one, and refocusing digital infrastructure on an integration-platform approach. These were technical updates rather than changes in project ambition, and the revised indicators more accurately captured what could realistically be achieved within the remaining period. No new PDO-level indicators were introduced. Accordingly, the efficacy assessment focuses on whether completed technical systems translated into operational use and observable early adoption consistent with the revised outcome expectations.

**Theory of Change**

The Theory of Change remained broadly applicable following restructuring, as the PDO was unchanged and post-restructuring adjustments focused on refining technical approaches, sequencing, and indicator targets rather than altering the causal pathways leading to improved digital service delivery.

**Outputs:** Key outputs were maintained during restructuring and were largely achieved or exceeded against revised targets.

- DGSF completed and adopted, achieving its target (unchanged target).
- Government Enterprise Architecture (GEA) designed, developed, and operationalized, achieving its targets (unchanged targets).
- Electronic Transactions legislation approved; achieving its target (unchanged target).
- Privacy and Data Protection Bill approved and enacted, achieving its target (unchanged target).
- CR system upgraded, unique ID numbers issued at birth, and CR–ID linkage established (unchanged targets).
- Gender-informed CR upgrade, not achieved due to lack of documented evidence (unchanged target).
- Identity federation orchestrator operational, achieving the revised indicator.
- National government portal upgraded, achieving the revised indicator.
- Two e-services launched (birth and death registration) and target achieved (unchanged target).
- Feedback mechanism incorporated; user satisfaction with reliability of digital services reached 100%, achieving 70% target, though based on very few early responses. Share of women e-service users not achieved due to privacy-preserving design (targets unchanged).
- A whole-of-government integration platform was developed, achieving the revised target.
- Cybersecurity training reached 217 officials, including 81 women, exceeding participation and gender targets (target unchanged).
- Additional institutional strengthening delivered: interoperability standards, cloud-first policies, business process mapping, and operational training on CR–ID workflows and digital notifications.

**Outcome:** Restructured activities produced broadly consistent outcomes, with most revised targets met or exceeded

- Government Enterprise Architecture became operational, achieving the target (unchanged target).
- Unique ID numbers were issued at birth registration, achieving the revised target (the original target was “unique National ID numbers assigned at birth registration”)
- Two public sector service providers (Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Health) adopted the digital identity system for authentication, and a third provider (Digicel) began onboarding shortly after closure, indicating continued uptake and nearing achievement of its target.
- Annual portal usage reached 6,655 visits by the ICR stage, exceeding the revised target of 6,000 and indicating early post-deployment uptake.

The revised objectives were largely achieved. The project delivered the institutional and technical foundations introduced through restructuring, which became operational and were used in line with revised outcome expectations, including federated issuance of unique ID numbers at birth, operational identity federation and integration platforms, and an upgraded National Portal with initial transactional services. Most outcome targets were met or nearly met: two service providers had adopted digital authentication, with a third in the process of onboarding. Portal usage showed early traction, exceeding the revised target by ICR stage. User satisfaction exceeded its target but this was based on only five responses. Gender indicators were unreported

due to the privacy-preserving design of the systems and the lack of documented evidence for the gender-informed CR upgrade. Compared with the pre-restructuring period, the revised Results Framework enabled verification of system functionality and initial adoption, allowing assessment of early outcomes rather than reliance primarily on outputs. As documented in the ICR, implementation occurred in a capacity-constrained environment that limited both implementation bandwidth and the post-deployment adoption period. On balance, the substantial delivery of core digital government foundations, together with achieved outcome indicators, supports a rating of **Substantial** for the revised objectives.

### Revised Rating
Substantial

## OVERALL EFFICACY
### Rationale
Efficacy for the original objective was rated Modest

### Overall Efficacy Rating
Modest

### Primary Reason
Low achievement

## OVERALL EFFICACY REVISION 1
### Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rationale
Efficacy under the revised targets is rated **Substantial**.

### Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rating
Substantial

## 5. Efficiency
**Economic Efficiency.** The ex ante and ex post economic efficiency analyses are not directly comparable. Economic efficiency is assessed ex post based on implementation evidence rather than appraisal-stage calculations. At appraisal, the PAD's economic analysis focused on expected downstream benefits from the shift to shared, cloud-based ICT infrastructure, estimating a benefit-cost ratio of roughly 7:1 and projecting savings from reduced capital expenditure, efficiency gains from digital-ID-enabled service delivery, and long-term welfare improvements. These estimates were based on modelled assumptions rather than observed data, which is why the ex-ante and ex-post analyses are not directly comparable. Ex-post the expected benefits centered on cost avoidance from shared ICT infrastructure, efficiency gains from shorter processing times, and welfare improvements from more accessible services. The project delivered foundational digital infrastructure, including

cloud-related policies, the identity federation orchestrator, CR–ID linkage, and an upgraded national portal, within the original financing envelope. Processing times for the two digitized services fell by 79%, demonstrating early efficiency gains typical of digital government reforms. While fiscal savings cannot yet be fully quantified due to limited post–go-live experience, observed time savings and cost-contained delivery show efficiencies broadly consistent with or above expectations. All planned and several additional outputs were delivered without additional financing after the June 2023 restructuring. Disbursement reached 98%, with over- and underspending across components balancing at the portfolio level. Delivering an expanded set of outputs within budget indicates strong cost efficiency and suggests economic returns likely aligned with appraisal expectations.

**Administrative and Operational Efficiency.** The project maintained adequate administrative and operational efficiency throughout implementation, supported by a capable PMU and coordination with government counterparts. Most activities were completed within the planned implementation period and budget. The PMU adapted to challenges by reallocating resources, implementing parallel activities, and coordinating closely with stakeholders. Despite delays from COVID-19, supply chain constraints, procurement bottlenecks, and limited local capacity, nearly all outputs were delivered, and activities were completed cost-effectively.

Although implementation delays and procurement bottlenecks caused moderate inefficiencies, they did not materially affect value for money. With high disbursement, delivery of all foundational systems, significant reductions in processing time, and no cost overruns, efficiency is rated **Substantial.**

### Efficiency Rating

Substantial

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

| | Rate Available? | Point value (%) | *Coverage/Scope (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Appraisal | | 0 | 0<br>☐ Not Applicable |
| ICR Estimate | | 0 | 0<br>☐ Not Applicable |

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

## 6. Outcome

A split evaluation was applied. Efficacy was rated Modest prior to the June 2023 restructuring and Substantial thereafter. Weighting the pre- and post-restructuring outcome ratings by disbursement share results in an overall Outcome rating of Moderately Satisfactory.

| | PDO and targets before the June 2023 restructuring | PDO and targets after the June 2023 restructuring |
|---|---|---|
| Relevance of Objective | High | High |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Efficacy | Modest | Substantial |
| Efficiency | Substantial | Substantial |
| Overall outcome rating | Moderately Unsatisfactory | Satisfactory |
| Numeric value of outcome rating | 3 | 5 |
| Disbursements (USD million) | 1.54 | 3.02 |
| Share of disbursements (%) | 33.8 | 66.2 |
| Weighted Value (Rating x Share) | 3 × 0.338 = 1.01 | 5 × 0.662= 3.31 |
| Total Weighted Value | 1.01 + 3.31 = 4.32, rounded to 4 | |
| Final Overall Outcome Rating | Moderately Satisfactory | |

### a. Outcome Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

## 7. Risk to Development Outcome

**Institutional and Capacity Risk.** Sustaining outcomes will require ongoing institutional capacity, technical expertise, and coordination. Although core systems such as the integration platform and federated identity are operational, long-term arrangements for their management, financing, and further development were not secured at closing. MEIDECC has allocated resources for immediate operations, but formalizing mandates and funding remains uncertain. Continued capacity building and interministerial collaboration are essential for effective use and expansion of digital services. The post-closure transfer of DTD from the Prime Minister's Office to MEIDECC adds uncertainty to whole-of-government coordination.

**Government Ownership Risk.** Government commitment to the digital agenda is strong, reflected in new legislation and operational systems. However, shifts in leadership or priorities could affect the pace of digital transformation and resource allocation. Institutional anchoring within MEIDECC mitigates some risk, but continued high-level support is essential.

**Financial and Technical Risks.** Adequate budget allocations for maintenance, upgrades, and cybersecurity are critical for sustaining project-financed digital infrastructure. Without follow-up investments, key systems may not remain fully utilized or technologically up to date. Limited local IT capacity poses additional challenges, making ongoing training and regional partnerships important mitigation measures. According to TTL correspondence (February 12, 2026), ongoing integration efforts with Digicel, currently in a security-testing phase, and planned enhancements to support offline credential verification provide indication of continued system operationalization, suggesting partial mitigation of risks related to early adoption and

utilization. The long-term effectiveness of these measures, however, remains contingent on continued investment and capacity-building.

**Environmental and External Risks.** Tonga's vulnerability to natural disasters presents moderate risks to digital infrastructure despite investments in resilient systems. External threats, including cyber risks and shifts in global digital standards, may also affect system security and performance, requiring ongoing preparedness and adaptive capacity.

## 8. Assessment of Bank Performance

### a. Quality-at-Entry

The project was well aligned with Tonga's digital government priorities and drew appropriately on global experience and preparatory technical assistance, with a design that emphasized foundational registries, interoperability and enabling legislation. Moderate shortcomings at entry were present in the Results Framework, as several indicators such as gender disaggregated usage and user satisfaction measures were introduced without corresponding data collection mechanisms or operational planning during preparation, which limited their feasibility once implementation began. In addition, the technical requirements for upgrading the national identification system were not sufficiently specified at entry, contributing to delays and a later shift to a federated identity model, and elements of the portal and government cloud design required adjustment during restructuring as government systems evolved in parallel. While strategic alignment and core technical preparation were strong, these gaps represented moderate shortcomings and the Bank's quality at entry is therefore rated **Moderately Satisfactory.**

#### Quality-at-Entry Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

### b. Quality of supervision

The World Bank provided regular and timely implementation support, carrying out at least two supervision missions each year and submitting ISRs at appropriate intervals, as documented in the ICR. The team supported the onboarding of new officials, delivered capacity building in procurement, financial management and safeguards, and mobilized technical specialists to address operational issues, guide the transition to the federated identity model, and adjust portal and infrastructure activities during restructuring. Following a period of turnover in task team leadership, supervision became more hands-on, with intensified engagement that was critical in resolving long-standing implementation bottlenecks and enabling the project to accelerate progress. The Results Framework was updated at restructuring to reflect the revised technical approach, but no additional measures were introduced to strengthen M&E for gender or service-adoption indicators, which remained under-reported due to data limitations and the short operational period before closing. Overall, Bank supervision was proactive, technically strong and instrumental in turning around project performance, with moderate shortcomings in M&E strengthening. The quality of supervision is therefore rated **Satisfactory.**

### Quality of Supervision Rating
Satisfactory

### Overall Bank Performance Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

## 9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

### a. M&E Design
The project's M&E design had some shortcomings. While the objectives were clear, several indicators lacked precise definitions or feasible data-collection arrangements, limiting their validity. Heavy reliance on binary milestones reduced the ability to track incremental progress, an important gap for technically complex, emerging areas such as digital ID and interoperability reform. Key inclusion and gender indicators were not operationally measurable, and restructuring did not resolve these design limitations. Consequently, the M&E framework was adequate for basic activity tracking but insufficient to credibly measure project-specific outcomes or support a robust efficacy assessment. Some gaps, particularly for gender-disaggregated usage and user-level indicators, also reflected technical constraints inherent in the privacy-preserving design of the digital ID system, rather than M&E design weaknesses alone.

### b. M&E Implementation
The PMU oversaw M&E and coordinated data collection and reporting, with indicators updated regularly in ISRs. However, baseline data were incomplete, and several indicators depended on administrative data that became available only at the end of implementation, reducing their utility. Critical usage and inclusion indicators could not be measured due to system-design constraints and the absence of data-collection mechanisms, undermining the credibility of adoption-related evidence. Data-quality controls were limited, beneficiary feedback produced minimal usable information, and the dissolution of the PMU before closing eliminated the possibility of verifying or updating late-stage results. Overall, implementation weaknesses further constrained an already limited M&E design and reduced the strength of evidence available for assessing outcomes.

### c. M&E Utilization
Utilization of M&E evidence to inform decision-making was limited. While routine reporting supported basic monitoring of activities, M&E data did not meaningfully influence strategic decisions, and major design adjustments, such as the shift to a federated ID model, were driven by technical considerations rather than evidence. Gaps in data availability, especially for adoption and gender-related indicators, prevented M&E from informing adaptive management or validating assumptions embedded in the results framework. Communication of findings to stakeholders was inconsistent, reducing opportunities to realign activities. Overall, M&E utilization was weak and did not contribute substantively to implementation management or learning.

In summary, shortcomings in M&E design and implementation constrained the project's ability to track progress, support adaptive management, and demonstrate outcomes. With indicators that were difficult to measure, limited data collection and weak utilization, the overall quality of M&E is rated Modest. Despite a Modest rating for M&E, the ICR and TTL correspondence (January 27, 2026) provided additional evidence sufficient to support a Substantial rating for efficacy under the revised objectives.

### M&E Quality Rating

Modest

## 10. Other Issues

### a. Safeguards

The project was assigned Environmental Category C, reflecting its focus on digital government systems and the absence of civil works or activities with significant environmental or social impacts. No World Bank environmental or social safeguards policies were triggered during preparation or implementation. The project did not finance physical infrastructure or activities requiring land acquisition, and thus did not require an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) or site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs). The ICR confirms that project activities were limited to technical assistance, capacity building, and the development of digital platforms, all of which carried negligible environmental and social risk. The project complied with all applicable Bank safeguards requirements, and no waivers were requested or granted.

### b. Fiduciary Compliance

**Financial Management.** The project's financial management arrangements were rated satisfactory throughout implementation. Quarterly Interim Financial Reports (IFRs) were prepared and submitted on time, consistently meeting World Bank requirements. Despite the PMU's limited prior experience with Bank procedures, staff—including the financial management and procurement specialists—adapted quickly to reporting, disbursement, budgeting, and internal control obligations. Audit reports were submitted on schedule with unmodified (clean) opinions, and internal controls were assessed as effective. Budget planning and execution were well managed, and the project maintained high compliance with all FM requirements. Overall, the financial management arrangements were adequate to support project operations.

**Procurement.** Procurement performance was rated satisfactory during the project. The PMU adhered to World Bank Procurement Guidelines and utilized the STEP system to track procurement activities. Although initial fiduciary risk was substantial due to limited capacity, careful procurement planning and mitigation measures ensured timely contract execution and generated cost savings. All procurement activities were completed in accordance with Bank procedures, and no significant procurement issues were reported.

### c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

Not applicable

### d. Other

Not applicable

## 11. Ratings

| Ratings | ICR | IEG | Reason for Disagreements/Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Outcome | Satisfactory | Moderately Satisfactory | The ICRR applies a split evaluation, under which the project's efficacy in achieving the PDO with the original outcome targets prior to restructuring is rated Modest, resulting in a Moderately Unsatisfactory pre restructuring outcome and a Moderately Satisfactory overall outcome rating. |
| Bank Performance | Moderately Satisfactory | Moderately Satisfactory | |
| Quality of M&E | Modest | Modest | |
| Quality of ICR | --- | Substantial | |

## 12. Lessons

- **Early political commitment and high-level leadership are key factors in promoting intra-governmental coordination and accelerating project momentum.** Implementation accelerated only after the Prime Minister's Office assumed leadership in 2023, using its convening power to resolve bottlenecks and align ministries.
- **Early agreement on technical approaches for core foundational systems is one of the key actions during preparation that can help avoid major redesigns and delays.** Lack of early consensus on the National ID system caused multi-year delays and required a shift to a federated model during restructuring.
- **The on-schedule implementation of ICT-heavy operations can be greatly facilitated by staffing PMUs with specialized procurement and contract management expertise.** The three-person PMU lacked a procurement specialist, slowing ICT contracting and disbursements.

- **The efficiency of approving laws and regulations can be increased by early engagement with legal authorities on legislative reforms.** Late engagement, including with the Attorney General's Office, contributed to repeated delays in advancing the project's two core bills.
- **The early operationalization of M&E systems and the clarity regarding data collection arrangements can, among other contributing factors, significantly enhance the reliability and actionability of evidence on digital adoption and inclusion.** Several indicators, including gender-disaggregated usage, could not be reported because the necessary data fields were not configured in system design.

## 13. Assessment Recommended?

No

## 14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR is clear, well-structured, and provides a balanced account of achievements and implementation challenges. The report demonstrates candor in its assessment of implementation performance and is transparent regarding M&E limitations. Nevertheless, moderate evidence and measurement constraints weaken the robustness of the assessment. The report also did not apply a split evaluation despite downward revisions to PDO-level targets. Overall, the quality is rated Substantial with minor shortcomings.

**a.** **Quality of ICR Rating**
Substantial