

Position Title	MERLA Manager
Project	Partnerships for Social Protection (P4SP) program
Contract Term	Fixed-term contract: up to 48 months, between October 2025 – September 2029
FTE	Negotiable between: 0.8 FTE to 1.0 FTE
Location	This is a remote home-based role, with a regular in-person presence at our co-working locations. This position may be based in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Canberra or Adelaide. The position location is flexible for the right candidate. Some intra/interstate and international travel to Australia and the Pacific region is a requirement of this position.
Reports To	Deputy Team Leader
Direct reports	Direct reports include: sub-contractors and consultants hired for discreet inputs.
Purpose	The purpose of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, Learning and Adaptive Management (MERLA) Manager is to lead program-level management of monitoring, evaluation, reporting, learning and adaptive management for the P4SP program. The MERLA Manager will provide support across four broad categories of input: - Supporting activity, country and regional level MERLA planning and implementation. - Providing MERLA advice on program strategy, risks and issues - Leading whole of program MERLA. - Supporting development of TORs and implementation of P4SP research activities. - Developing MERLA products, including annual and 6 monthly reports and plans, and other forms of reporting required by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).
Summary	The MERLA Manager will: Lead P4SP's approach to monitoring, evaluation, reporting, learning and adaptation.

	• Maintain a focus on building robust, credible and useful performance information that serves the overall goals of the P4SP program and supports the P4SP Team to use this information to shape programming approaches and directions. • Support design and implementation of P4SP research activities. • Support P4SP partner governments with their MEL frameworks and activities, if requested. • Emphasise collaborative and flexible approaches to support the P4SP Management Team and their emerging priorities. • Facilitate and support effective coordination and information flow between P4SP, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and other relevant stakeholders. • Provide independent and evidence-based advice that applies best-practice and innovative approaches to support delivery of the program. • Ensure a strong focus on gender equality, disability equity and inclusion considerations throughout the MERLA cycle, including disaggregation of data for different excluded, marginalised or vulnerable groups.
Job Specification	The specific responsibilities of the MERLA Manager include: • Overseeing implementation, regular review, and refinement of P4SP's MERLA Strategy and P4SP MERLA Toolkit, ensuring they meet both DFAT M&E (monitoring & evaluation) Standards and P4SP needs. • Developing and implementing P4SP's annual MERLA plan. • Providing expertise and guidance to the Deputy Team Leader and other members of the SMT, the P4SP Activity Leads, DFAT and other partners as required on MERLA related issues. • Working collaboratively with P4SP team members to develop and operationalise a MERLA system, including reviewing and providing advice on activity-level M&E Plans, data collection, analysis, reporting, and dissemination approaches that are robust, fit-for purpose and efficient. • Leading the reporting and dissemination of MERLA results, ensuring regular, high-quality reporting to DFAT, and contributing to the development of communication and public diplomacy materials. • Supporting P4SP activity evaluation and research design and implementation –including baselines, midlines, endlines, and other assessments—by drafting TORs, developing or reviewing data analysis plans, supporting analysis, translating results into actionable insights, and managing MEL subcontractors engaged for discrete inputs as required. Providing evidence and analysis of the program's impact and contribution to social protection outcomes at

	a country and regional level, through Most Significant Change (MSC), outcomes harvesting, case studies, and other methods. • Supporting P4SP programming team members to strengthen their MERLA capabilities by providing them with high quality advice, mentoring and support. • Briefing new staff and providing refresher training for all staff on P4SP's MERLA Strategy. • Developing P4SP milestone reports, including progress reports, annual reports, annual plans. • Supporting P4SP and DFAT with additional reporting as required. This includes Tier 2 reporting, Investment Monitoring Reporting (IMR), and ad hoc requests for information. • Supporting partner governments to strengthen their MERLA systems, activities, and internal capacities upon request. This may include delivering MERLA training to government counterparts, reviewing MERLA plans and strategies, and providing ad hoc technical support as needed. • Championing a culture and discipline for regular learning, adaption, and effective knowledge management across the Program. • Designing and facilitating P4SP Reflect and Refocus sessions to promote cross-team learning, develop a shared understanding of progress, challenges, risks, and opportunities for strengthening program performance. • Developing P4SP's annual plan and updating it as part of P4SP's 6-month reporting requirements. Continuously review, assess, and revise P4SP's Program Logic and Theory of Change to ensure it is fit for purpose. Providing regular communications and updates to the Deputy Team Leader on the progress of assigned work activities. • Participate and contribute to P4SP meetings. • Other tasks as assigned by Deputy Team Leader and/or Team Leader.
Special Conditions	• Australian residency or current works permit is required. It is a responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence of a current work permit. • The successful applicant is required to gain a National and/or International Police Clearance, prior to being employed and as determined by Development Pathways. The police clearance is required to be renewed periodically and as advised by Development Pathways. • The successful applicant will be required to obtain a medical clearance as a condition of this employment, which is required to be renewed annually or as determined by Development Pathways. • The successful candidate will be required to undertake mandatory trainings as advised by Development Pathways. • Some out of hours and weekend work may be required.

Child Protection	Development Pathways is committed to protecting the rights of children. We will require you to provide a police check(s) and reserve the right to conduct other screening procedures, if required, to ensure a child-safe environment.
Gender Equality, Disability & Social Inclusion	Development Pathways is committed to technical excellence in gender equality and our team will work closely with our partners to ensure a context-specific and consistent approach is applied to all our programs to improve the livelihoods of the world's most marginalised groups.
Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment	Development Pathways is committed to respectful workplaces and does not tolerate sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment of any kind.
Diversity Statement	Development Pathways is committed to providing equal employment opportunities and a work environment that values diversity and inclusion. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, female applicants, and people with a disability who meet the requirements of this position are strongly encouraged to apply. If you have any support or access requirements, we encourage you to advise us at the time of application.

Selection Criteria

Essential

- Masters-level degree in international development, social science, evaluation, or other relevant discipline.
- At least 10 years' experience in international development, including at least five (5) years' senior M&E experience on complex aid programs, including regional or multi-country development programs
- Working knowledge of DFAT's performance frameworks, Design and Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Standards and reporting requirements/expectations
- Demonstrated expertise with MEL-related activities including performance monitoring, methodology design, instrument design, evaluation, and field data collection oversight.
- Strong skills in both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, with experience using data to support decision-making.
- Excellent written communication skills, with the ability to distil complex technical information into clear, accessible language for diverse audiences.
- Demonstrated understanding of the challenges of achieving Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) objectives in developing contexts, and experience monitoring and evaluating GEDSI outcomes.
- Excellent facilitation skills, with experience leading learning events and engaging stakeholders with varying levels of technical understanding and from different cultural backgrounds and contexts.
- Proven relationship management skills, including working effectively across teams and with DFAT colleagues, as well as with a range of other stakeholders, including DFAT, Pacific government partners, development partners, researchers, non-government organisations and consultants.

- Experience working in Pacific Island countries, with a sound understanding of political, cultural, and institutional contexts.

Desirable

- Understanding and experience undertaking monitoring and evaluation of social protection or other sector reform/systems strengthening programs.
- Experience leading MERLA activities for regional and multi-country programs.
- Experience working effectively and maintaining effective relationships as a member of a fully remote team.
- Experience managing MEL subcontractors or specialists.

Personal Attributes

- Strong interpersonal, communication, representational and cross-cultural skills.
- Ability to apply independent judgement and influence, and develop consensus on difficult and controversial issues, balancing multiple stakeholder expectations and objectives.
- Commitment to teamwork and engaging with all relevant stakeholders.
- Ability to coach, mentor and upskill others in the field of M&E.
- Flexibility, and preparedness to work with limited resources within a challenging, developing country environment.