

P4SP Terms of Reference¹

Assignment name	Pacific Quantitative Research Assistant
Start date	March, 2026
Completion date	December, 2026 (with an option to extend)
Number of days	<p>95 days (drawdown contract)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 5 days in March, 2026 ➤ 10 days monthly from April – December, 2026

About P4SP

The Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has commissioned the Partnerships for Social Protection program (P4SP), which is being implemented by Development Pathways.

P4SP contributes to greater coverage of quality, sustainable social protection systems in Pacific Island Countries (PICs) that reduce poverty and exclusion, address vulnerabilities through the life-course and stimulate economic growth.

The End-of-Investment Outcome is that PICs have established or strengthened formal social assistance systems to reduce gender inequality, vulnerabilities, and economic and social exclusion, while promoting stability and economic growth through increased government ownership and commitment to increasing and institutionalising formal social assistance systems.

P4SP commenced on 20 September 2021 and will operate until 19 September 2029.

Background to the assignment

The overall objective of this research stream under Phase II of P4SP is to generate and disseminate high-quality, policy-relevant quantitative evidence on social protection in the Pacific, building on the strong empirical foundations established during the initial phase of the program.

The quantitative research program will aim to deepen regional understanding of poverty, vulnerability, and inequality dynamics, as well as the role of social protection in addressing

¹ The tasks and dates specified in this Terms of Reference are subject to change and flexibility is expected to accommodate for such changes.

these challenges. The research will aim to provide governments and regional stakeholders with practical evidence to inform program design, financing, and delivery, while ensuring that issues of gender equality, disability inclusion, climate resilience, and livelihoods are central to the knowledge base. Flexible just-in-time analysis will further enable P4SP to respond to emerging priorities, strengthen policy dialogue, and support governments in making evidence-informed decisions.

Scope of the assignment

The consultant will provide technical and analytical support to the P4SP quantitative research program under Phase II, with a primary focus on:

1. **Secondary data analytics**, including the analysis of existing Pacific household and population datasets to generate policy-relevant evidence on social protection.
2. **Impact evaluation support**, particularly in relation to data preparation, descriptive analysis, power calculations, and the use of HIES or MICS data as a baseline. The role will not involve leading the impact evaluation design, but will support the technical team, as needed.
3. **Just-in-time quantitative analysis**, responding to time-sensitive analytical requests from partner governments and DFAT to inform policy design, costing, and decision-making.

The assignment will require close collaboration with P4SP technical staff, engagement with Pacific government counterparts and national statistics offices where appropriate, and a strong emphasis on producing high-quality, reproducible, and policy-focused analytical outputs.

Purpose of the role

The purpose of this role is to provide high-quality, timely quantitative analysis to inform the understanding of, design, evaluation, and policy decisions for Pacific social protection schemes.

Tasks for this role

1 Secondary data analytics

- Clean, manage, and analyse large household-level and population datasets (e.g. HIES, MICS, LFS, census microdata) from Pacific Island Countries.
- Construct and document key variables, including poverty and vulnerability indicators, demographic groupings, program receipt variables, and relevant disaggregation dimensions (e.g. gender, disability, age, geography).
- Produce descriptive and comparative analysis across countries to support regional and cross-country insights on social protection coverage, adequacy, and impacts.
- Support the preparation of analytical outputs, including tables, charts, technical annexes, and draft inputs for policy briefs, working papers, and blogs.

2 Supporting the implementation of an impact evaluation

- Prepare and analyse baseline data inputs, including the use of HIES/ MICS data for consumption, poverty, household-level, ECD and broader human development outcomes.
- Support descriptive analysis and evaluation design.
- Assist with sample size and statistical power calculations, including sensitivity testing for alternative outcome measures.
- Contribute to the preparation of technical notes, tables, and figures for internal review, stakeholder discussions, and design documentation.

3 Just-in-time quantitative analysis

- Provide rapid analytical support to time-sensitive requests from partner governments and DFAT, including ad-hoc tabulations, scenario analysis, and summary statistics.
- Support the development and updating of social protection costing and simulation tools, including background data preparation and validation.

4 Broader responsibilities

- Maintain high standards of data quality assurance, version control, and reproducibility.
- Clearly document analytical assumptions, data limitations, and methodological choices.
- Engage constructively with feedback from senior researchers and revise outputs accordingly.
- Support knowledge sharing within the team.

Deliverables

The core deliverables anticipated as a part of this assignment include the following:

No.	Deliverables	Maximum input days	Timeline for delivery
1.	<p>Workplan Work with P4SP's Senior Social Protection Specialist (Economist) to deliver a workplan for approval detailing the breakdown of days across the remainder of 2026.</p>	Up to a maximum of 1 day	Within one week of contract execution
2.	<p>Secondary Data Analytics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cleaned, harmonised and analysis-ready datasets for 5 Pacific Island countries (prioritising HIES and MICS datasets, but also incorporating Census and LFS datasets, where feasible). ➤ Harmonized variable list across these datasets, including a technical note on definitions and comparability. ➤ Cross-country diagnostics and figures covering <i>inter-alia</i>: 	To be confirmed via the approved workplan (Deliverable 1)	To be confirmed via the approved workplan (Deliverable 1)

No.	Deliverables	Maximum input days	Timeline for delivery
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coverage of SP programs ○ Beneficiary profiles (by age, gender, disability, geography, hardship and vulnerability status) ○ Benefit levels relative to poverty lines and consumption ○ Share of household income from transfers ○ Core expenditure items for those households receiving transfers ○ Role of SP programs in shock response. <p>➤ Inputs based on the above analysis for policy briefs and presentations.</p>		
3.	<p>Impact Evaluation support</p> <p>➤ Initial analysis of HIES/ MICS datasets, including mapping variables of interest for impact evaluation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note assessing suitability of HIES/ MICS datasets as a potential baseline for an impact evaluation <p>➤ Inputs into design of impact evaluation, including supporting power calculations</p>	To be confirmed via the approved workplan (Deliverable 1)	To be confirmed via the approved workplan (Deliverable 1)
4.	<p>Just-in-time quantitative analysis</p> <p>➤ Given the demand-driven nature of these deliverables, they will be determined with the P4SP team as the assignment progresses.</p>	To be confirmed via the approved workplan (Deliverable 1)	To be confirmed via the approved workplan (Deliverable 1)
5.	Draw-down contract funds for services approved through the workplan, or as tasked by the	Up to a maximum of 94 days	By December, 2026

No.	Deliverables	Maximum input days	Timeline for delivery
	Senior Social Protection Specialist (Economist)		

Selection Criteria

Essential criteria

- Advanced degree in development economics, statistics or a related field
- Demonstrated ability to work with household-level survey data (e.g. HIES or similar), including data cleaning, variable construction, and descriptive analysis.
- Experience managing large and complex datasets, including merging multiple data sources and documenting assumptions.
- Practical experience using statistical software, such as Stata, R or Python for applied policy research.
- Ability to write clear, well-commented, and reproducible code.
- Sound understanding of weighting, sampling design, means/ proportions, confidence intervals, and cross-tabulation.
- Ability to translate quantitative findings into clear tables, charts, and short analytical notes for non-technical audiences.
- Capacity to work to deadlines and respond to iterative analytical requests from the P4SP team.
- Commitment to respectful and ethical research practices.

Desirable Criteria

- Experience working in the Pacific or across Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
- Experience working with, or alongside, Pacific national statistics offices, line ministries or regional organisation, such as SPC.
- Knowledge of social protection sector.

Reporting

The consultant will report to the Senior Social Protection Specialist (Economist) within P4SP.

It is expected that the consultant will report back fortnightly on progress and be available for check-in meetings with the P4SP team as requested.

Place of work

This work will be undertaken remotely with no expectation of in-country travel. However, there will be an expectation for the consultant to be available during Australian (AEST) working hours to join for meetings.

Invoicing schedule

The consultant will invoice based on inputs on a monthly basis, providing supporting timesheets.

Child protection

P4SP is committed to protecting the rights of children. We may 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 and social inclusion

P4SP 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

P4SP is committed to respectful workplaces and does not tolerate sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment of any kind. P4SP is committed to ensuring the safety of everyone who interacts with our program.

Submission Requirements

Please submit a Curriculum Vitae and a brief one-page cover letter demonstrating how you meet the selection criteria.

All submissions are to be submitted via email to admin@p4sp.org with the subject line "TOR:– P4SP Pacific Quantitative Research Assistant".

Applications must be submitted by no later than February 20th, 2026.

Assistance completing application

Please contact Jesse Doyle (jdoyle@p4sp.org) if you have any questions and/or should you require assistance with completing this application. Please tell us as much as you feel comfortable for us to work with you about the appropriate adjustments that you might need.