

Date: June 16 2022

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a significant socio-economic challenge to all countries around the world. Nations globally have struggled to adjust to the demands of both responding to the health needs of the pandemic as well as adapting their economies to absorb the impact to various vulnerable sectors. Though governments have introduced a broad range of policy responses to mitigate the immediate adverse impacts of the pandemic, questions remain as to how to go beyond the immediate and address the need for long-term sustained economic resilience and recovery.

Though initially one of the few countries without community transmission of COVID-19, the pandemic has nonetheless severely impacted Samoa's economy which experiences fragilities similar to other small island nations due to size and remoteness of location. This is reflected in the nation's progress on its SDGs, where aside from in provision of quality of education and climate action, challenges remain. Recent experiences with community transmission have also added to concerns regarding sustainable recovery.

Sustainably continuing the process of recovery requires local solutions, as well as an understanding of how to create fiscal space to finance economic recovery without burdening the public at large. There is also a need to build fiscal capacity to ensure that mitigation efforts (e.g., integrating response activities with the UN's Socio-economic Response Framework) can transition into long-term channels for holistic growth. To this end, studies of the current fiscal requirements and evidence-based analysis of different policy packages have been conducted. Building on the recently-developed UNESCAP Macroeconomic Model, the studies seek to:

- Assess the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 in Samoa, and corresponding fiscal policy responses to mitigate these impacts.
- Appraise the sufficiency of these fiscal policy responses to support the economic recovery in respective economies
- Estimate fiscal needs to finance the economic recovery and assess existing fiscal space to meet the fiscal needs.
- Propose possible options to enhance fiscal space and policy measures to align fiscal stimulus to the agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The studies can help build a clear guiding framework for future fiscally sustainable recovery efforts. Alignment with national development goals and the existing support mechanisms of relevant UN Development System agencies can help ensure a sustainable, inclusive, and long-term recovery.

Objective of the Workshop

The objective of the capacity building workshop is to introduce relevant public sector officials and UN Development System agency representatives to the pertinent information from the recent studies. More specifically:

1. To present the findings of the UNESCAP study on assessing the fiscal space and requirements for fiscal economic recovery in Samoa
2. To highlight the potential paths to recovery and discuss different considered scenarios based on the results of ESCAP's macroeconomic model, and discuss how the model can be integrated into Samoa's fiscal policy planning
3. To discuss the potential scenarios and paths necessary to aid Samoa in “building forward better”

Workshop Mode:

The workshop is intended to be hybrid (in-person and online) on June 16, 2022, at Level 6 CBS Conference Room, Ministry of Finance

Proposed List of Speakers:

1. Dr Shuvojit Banerjee – Economic Affairs Officer, Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division, UNESCAP
2. Dr Jaromir Hurnik, Macroeconomic Modelling Consultant – UNESCAP
3. Dr Simona Marinescu – UN Resident Coordinator, Samoa
4. Nobuko Kajiura, Economic Affairs Officer, UNESCAP Subregional Office for the Pacific
5. Leasiosio Oscar Malielegaoi , KVA Consult
6. Deputy CEO Leiataua Henry Ah Ching, Ministry of Finance

Agenda

Date: June 16, 2022

Event organised by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and KVA Consult in Hybrid Mode at Level 6 CBS Conference Room, Ministry of Finance

Language of Communication: English

Timings as per Apia, Samoa

Registration link: https://teams.microsoft.com/registration/2zWeD09UYE-9zF6kFubccA,7bOVnF7iLkWYI8XZLYqMhw,DIaX19wY063zhrbMojMtw,8O_vTfHi0U2ak1092WIEQA,obiuHTcDLkW-ta0kpEjlfgrzoxe-Mbtk-5Avxzvl3LaQ?mode=read&tenantId=0f9e35db-544f-4f60-bdcc-5ea416e6dc70&skipauthstrap=1

Registration	
9:00-9:30 AM	Registration of in-person participants and dissemination of documents
Session Timings	
9:30AM – 9:40AM	Opening Remarks from Nobuko Kajiura, Economic Affairs Officer, UNESCAP Subregional Office for the Pacific, introducing the workshop agenda on the need for a long-term sustainable recovery in Samoa and the role of evidence-based policy frameworks, including the UNESCAP Macroeconomic Model
9:40AM-9:50AM	Remarks by Dr Simona Marinescu – UN Resident Coordinator, Samoa
9:50 AM-10:10AM	Remarks by Representative from the Ministry of Finance (Deputy CEO Leiataua Henry Ah Ching) - remarks on the Pathway for the Development of Samoa (PDS)
10:10AM-10:30AM	Presentation by Dr Shuvojit Banerjee on the regional context of the pandemic and fiscal responses based on UNESCAP's recent work
10:30AM-11:30AM	Presentation by Jaromir Hurnik, on the macroeconomic model, its functioning, and how to interpret and utilise it in the context of Samoa's long-term recovery (followed by Question-Answer session)
11:30AM–12:30PM	Presentation by KVA Consult on the findings of the ESCAP analytical studies on Samoa in relation to fiscal space and socio-economic issues ((Leasiosio Oscar Malielegaoi - Budget/Finance Specialist)
1:00PM	Vote of thanks, way forward, and closing remarks