



How the Pacific Island of Samoa leads the way in Public-Private-Partnerships

Fogapoa Samoa, the ACEO, and August Ah Yen, the principal privatization analyst, of the PPP and Privatization Division of the Ministry for Public Enterprises, are the first in Samoa and Pacific to have passed all examination levels and received the Certified PPP Professional certification.

INTRODUCTION

The Independent State of Samoa, better known as Samoa, is a group of islands in the middle of the Pacific. With a population of around 200,000, Samoa has a strong focus on economic and social development, which is accomplished by Public Bodies that deliver quality services.

By cabinet appointment, the Ministry of Public Enterprises (MPE) was established in August 2015. The MPE aims to make a significant contribution to Samoa's economic growth by exercising a strategic leadership and oversight role for the Public Bodies. At the moment, there are 28 Public Bodies under the management of the MPE, ranging from the Electric Power Corporation to the Samoa Ports Authority.

The Ministry plays a vital role in ensuring that all Government Public Bodies comply with the Public Bodies (Performance and Accountability) Act 2001. The establishment of the Ministry has imposed specific focus to improve financial performance and compliance of all Public Bodies to improve and enhance the service to the public. The Ministry strives to achieve the best workforce, sufficient resources, and an enabling working environment. The Ministry will no doubt face challenges in the future given the nature of work it deals with but it will overcome such challenges by having the required legislations, policies, procedures and capacity to ensure the Ministry achieves its objectives.

BACKGROUND

Samoa has a PPP framework approved by Cabinet in 2014, and it was revised and simplified in 2017. As a result, the first Corporate Plan 2017 – 2020 was published by Hon. Lautafi Fio Selafi Purcell, the Minister for Public Enterprise which outlines the strategic goals and objectives for the period until 2020.



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Goal 4 of the Corporate Plan 2017 – 2020 is the effective identification, implementation and monitoring of PPP and Privatization programs.

The identification of Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP) has been identified as long-term goal to establish strategic development goals and strengthen the participation of private involvement and investment in Samoan companies. Samoa has in place various successful PPPs such as the Pacific Forum Line Group (PPP between Government of Samoa and the Neptune Pacific Line), the Samoa Submarine Cable company (PPP between three financial SOEs and three private telecom companies), as well as various Independent Power Producers for the generation of electricity. The plan was to continue identifying and look for appropriate potential PPPs to strengthen existing public services and operations, and to keep developing private sector, hence, we have the Goal 4 to be broken down into the following:

- Develop guidelines to reflect a PPP framework
- Roll-out manual to appropriate SOEs and Ministries
- Review PPP policies and SOEs relevant documents, to identify potential PPP candidates for advance planning
- Develop and implement options for approved PPP candidates

In order to meet these objectives, a careful plan needed to be constructed that would increase knowledge and implement ‘best practices’ with regards to Public-Private-Partnerships.

EVALUATION OF THE CASE

The first step towards meeting the objectives of the Corporate Plan 2017 – 2020 was to increase the MPE’s knowledge about Public-Private-Partnerships. Since the MPE had little prior experience with PPPs, a knowledge partner was identified that could establish PPP Practices and transfer knowledge to the MPE. Fogapoa Samoa, Head of PPP and Privatization Division of the MPE, explains it as follows:

“ When we started our PPP program, the first priority was to established best practices and learn from the lessons other countries have experienced. By using established best practices, we would not have to re-invent the wheel. We quickly identified the PPP Guide, a publication from the World Bank, as suitable reference materials. We decided to build upon this experience. ”



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The MPE identified a number of specialists that had experience with the World Bank PPP program, and contracted a PPP specialist, Dr. Ronny Carbonell, and Accredited Training Organization (ATO) Cybiant to help with the implementation of the PPP Best Practices. The primary target was to transfer knowledge about the structure and set-up of Public-Private-Partnerships, and identify good process and procedures that enable the government of Samoa to identify and appraises PPP projects. Dr. Ronny Carbonell provides context:

“ The Public-Private-Partnership program is an innovation of the World Bank with vision of enhancing the PPP performance globally. The resources and guides offer tremendous value to every government, no matter whether they have worked with PPPs for years, or whether they are still in the early phases. For Samoa, this program offers a way to quick-start the development of a PPP framework.”

The MPE decided to move forward with the realization of Goal 4 and, with support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) develop a training program for MPE employees in Samoa.

SOLUTION

Over the course of 12 months, a series of three training weeks were conducted in Samoa, using the certification program that has been developed by APMG-International. First, 30 people participated in the 3-day PPP Foundation program in 2018. A selected group of subsequently embarked on the ‘Practitioner’ courses, which provide in-depth and specialist knowledge. Both the PPP Preparation and PPP Execution courses were conducted in Samoa in 2019, with support of the Asian Development Bank.

The courses were hosted by Cybiant, the first training organization in Asia that embraced the Public-Private-Partnership program, and who became an Accredited Training Organization (ATO). Jan-Willem Middelburg, Director at Cybiant, explains the APMG-International certification program:

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“ The Public-Private-Partnership program from APMG-International and the World Bank is, without doubt, the leading standard in PPPs. I am still very proud that I was the first accredited PPP trainer in Asia. The collaboration with the Samoan MPE really shows the strength of the program. In just 3 weeks, we transferred knowledge about global Best Practices in PPPs, which would otherwise have taken years to build up. ”

The PPP certification program was concluded in August 2019. The MPE training candidates were the first in the Pacific Region to be awarded the “Certified PPP Professional” designation.

RESULTS

The MPE of Samoa is still on track to achieve the objectives that were outlined in the Corporate Plan 2017 – 2020. In the process, Samoa has become a leading example in the Pacific Region to showcase the value and benefits of Public Private Partnerships.

Samoa has been the first Pacific country that has introduced a structural program that transfers knowledge about Public-Private-Partnerships based on the APMG-International and World Bank program. Because of the success program, the development of the PPP Framework is well underway, and the first PPP projects have been identified, using methodology outlined in the PPP guide.

Fogapoa Samoa and August Ah Yen were the first delegates to receive their “Certified PPP Professional” certification. Fogapoa Samoa summarized the collaboration as follows:

“ I still can't believe this is over, what a journey through and efforts we put through. It was a dream from the beginning to get full pass on the three stages, as it will make us more comfortable in doing our jobs and feeling good wherever we go in the world. Even though we are small island, we can be big in new ideas... ”

For more information or questions about the PPP program, please contact us at: info@cybiant.com