



Australia Awards

Australia Awards Exemplary Partnerships:

The South Pacific Centre
for Central Banking

February 2022



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Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
BCTL	Banco Central De Timor-Leste (Central Bank of Timor-Leste)
BPNG	Bank of Papua New Guinea
CBSI	Central Bank of the Solomon Islands
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EOI	Expression of Interest
GAI	Griffith Asia Institute
GLE	Global Education and Scholarships Section (DFAT)
GTF	Australian Awards Global Tracer Facility
IDU	International Development Unit (Griffith University)
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KSMPS	Kenya School of Monetary Policy Studies
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCP	New Colombo Plan
OASIS	Online Australia Awards Scholarships Information System
PFTAC	Pacific Financial Technical Assistant Centre
PIC	Pacific Island Countries
PNG	Papua New Guinea
REAP	Re-Entry Action Plan
RBA	Reserve Bank of Australia
RBF	Reserve Bank of Fiji
RBNZ	Reserve Bank of New Zealand
RBV	Reserve Bank of Vanuatu
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIMA	Solomon Island Monetary Authority
SPCB	South Pacific Central Banks
SPCCB	South Pacific Centre for Central Banking
SPSG	South Pacific Studies Group
UN	United Nations

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Australia Awards fellowships (2006 to 2018) were a competitive grants program designed to strengthen and deepen partnerships between Australian organisations and counterparts in developing countries through short-term study and professional development activities in priority areas. The fellowships were paused in 2018 and little is known of the long-term impact of this award modality in building and sustaining institutional linkages and partnerships.

With the relaunch of the Australian Awards Fellowship program in 2022, the following case study by the Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility (GTF) reflects on an exemplar partnership to identify the factors which enabled its ongoing engagement and contributions to development and cooperation to inform future programming. This case study examines the impact of two fellowships in broadening engagement and sustaining long-term partnerships over time.

The report explores the Australia Awards' role in cultivating institutional connections and people-to-people links between Griffith University and the Reserve Bank of Fiji. This initial partnership acted as a catalyst and led to the establishment of the South Pacific Centre for Central Banking (SPCCB), dedicated to improving the institutional capacity of central banks in the Pacific. This case study examines the use of Australia Awards fellowships by Griffith University to broaden and sustain engagement among the region's five Pacific central banks and other key economic and financial stakeholders.

The findings of this case study demonstrate the importance of embedding partnership principles in future Australia Awards fellowship iterations to enhance the long-term program outcomes at both the alumni and organisational levels.

The South Pacific Centre for Central Banking (SPCCB) 2016

SPCCB, located in the Pacific Research Hub of the Griffith Asia Institute (GAI) at Griffith University, was established in 2016. Its purpose is to strengthen local capacity 'for conducting independent, rigorous inquiry into the problems facing the management of economies in the South Pacific' through academic, evidenced-based policymaking (Griffith University, 2022c)¹. Key partners include Griffith University, the Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF), Reserve Bank of Vanuatu (RBV), Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI), Bank of Papua New Guinea (BPNG) and Central Bank of Timor-Leste (BCTL).

The formal partnership between Griffith University and the RBF was consolidated through the application for an Australia Awards fellowship grant to host the 2015 '*Developing capacity for research and policy formulation at the Reserve Bank (Fiji)*.' This led to an interest in capacity building programs by other central banks in the South Pacific and the evolution of the SPCCB following the inaugural Central Banking Symposium hosted by Griffith University in 2016 (Griffith University, 2022c). In 2018, Griffith University hosted a second capacity building Australia Awards fellowship, '*Developing Research and Policy Formulation Capacity at the Central Banks (RBF & RBV)*.'

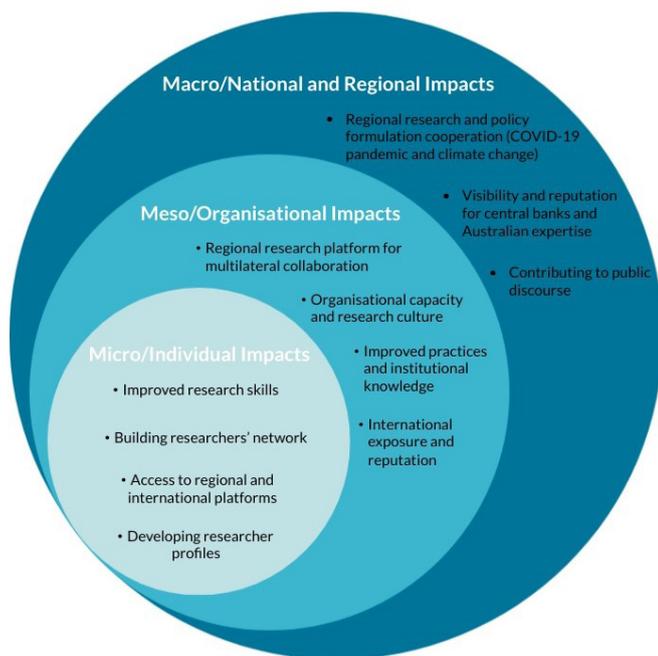
This demand-driven partnership has resulted in formal Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with RBF, RBV, CBSI, BPNG, BCTL individually and as a regional-level agreement; numerous research publications (20 working papers and seven journal articles); and a wide range of engagement activities including forums, symposia, seminars, conferences, and training workshops.

1 For more information on SPCCB's mission: <https://www.griffith.edu.au/asia-institute/our-research/south-pacific-centre-central-banking>.

SPCCB contributions to Australia Awards long-term program outcomes

In the context of the aims and outcomes of the Australia Awards (DFAT, 2022a), impacts by SPCCB are reflected across its two long-term program outcomes: contribution to development and cooperation between Australia and partner countries. The 2015 and 2018 Australia Awards fellowships are intertwined in the foundation, growth, and outcomes of SPCCB's partnership development. The figure below shows the impact of SPCCB's partnership outcomes at the individual (micro), organisational (meso), and national and regional (macro) levels.

Figure 1: Outcomes of the SPCCB partnership activities



SPCCB is strengthening the institutional capacity of the Pacific central banks to use research to advance United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through evidence-based policy formation and public dialogue. This is helping the central banks to address unique and complex regional policy challenges such as climate change, and the ongoing economic and social impacts of the COVID -19 pandemic and the Global Financial Crisis.

Conditions for SPCCB partnership success

In order to create an exemplar, multi-stakeholder partnership such as the SPCCB, it is essential for institutions to have an outward-looking 'partnering culture' (Stibbe & Prescott, 2022), alignment of shared strategic goals and values, leadership support and champions to drive and sustain the relationship, and a suite of mutually beneficial, collaborative engagement activities.

The strength and longevity of SPCCB's partnerships have been based on the strategic alignment of both Griffith University's vision to be a 'university of influence' in the Asia-Pacific region (Griffith University, 2018a) and the capacity development needs of the five central banks to respond to the complex, multilayered, economic challenges. Griffith University and the five central bank Governors have enabled the partnership to develop and evolve over time through collaboration and engagement activities based on trust, equity, and shared decision making.

Recommendations for future Australia Awards fellowship iterations

The Australia Awards GTF has found that there is a need to collect further data on the impact of short course modalities on the development and sustainability of partnerships between Australian host institutions and international partners. Evidence suggests that future iterations of Australia Awards fellowships will need to specifically generate a range of factors to strengthen the success of partnerships and enhance contribution to the Australia Awards intermediate and long-term development and cooperation outcomes.

Recommendations for future iterations of the Australia Awards fellowships:

- **Embed** long-term strategic partnering values in fellowship application criteria and program logic
- **Create** an Expression of Interest (EOI) stage in the application process
- **Demonstrate** a strategic partnership alliance in the proposal
- **Employ** a hybrid model of partnership engagement
- **Incentivise** strategic long-term partnering for further funding
- **Align** fellowship outcomes to the Global M&E framework
- **Engage** with host and partners post award.



Australia Awards

Global Tracer Facility



Australia Awards Exemplary Partnerships: The South Pacific Centre for Central Banking

The Ripple Effect of Fellowships: Organisational Change, Development and Research in the South Pacific

The SPCCB demonstrates the significant potential of partnerships cultivated by an Australia Awards fellowship to create a larger ripple effect for **organisational change** and **capacity building**. It is supporting capacity development of central bank staff through research collaboration and guidance by leading financial and economic experts in:

- **macroeconomics,**
- **financial development and stability,** and
- **economic resilience.**



The SPCCB partnership has resulted in 20 research working papers and 7 journal articles; and a wide range of engagement activities including forums, conferences and workshops which are facilitating:

- **regional dialogue,**
- **academic rigour,** and
- **independent, evidence-based policymaking.**

The SPCCB partnership is making significant contributions to development at the micro (individual), meso (organisational) and macro (national and regional) levels.

The SPCCB is helping to advance United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region with particular focus on SDGs:



1. Introduction

The Australia Awards fellowships (2006-2018) were a competitive grants program designed to strengthen and deepen linkages and partnerships between Australian organisations and counterparts in developing countries through short-term study and professional development activities. Fellowship activities focused on the exchange of expertise, skills and knowledge, and the enhancement of professional networks. They were hosted in Australia, and managed and administered by DFAT Canberra. Australian institutions applied to host fellowships in collaboration with their partners through a competitive grant process advertised bi-annually.

This case study investigates the long-term impact of the professional networks and partnerships developed by two fellowships designed to build research capacity among economists and researchers working in central bank policy formation within the Pacific. The fellowships were hosted by Griffith University in 2015 and 2018 and led to the establishment of the South Pacific Centre for Central Banking (SPCCB) in 2016. This case study examines the SPCCB as an exemplar partnership, how it developed and is sustained, and the Australia Awards' role in fostering long-term outcomes through institutional connections and people-to-people links.

This analysis of fellowship outcomes is a new approach by the GTF in its data collection and exploration of the long-term program outcomes of the Australia Awards. Rather than individual alumni, the 'unit of analysis' is the organisations participating in the fellowship partnership (the Australian host institution and the partner country organisations).

1.1 Australia Awards Fellowships

In 2015, Griffith University hosted the fellowship, 'Developing capacity for research and policy formulation at the Reserve Bank (Fiji)' at Griffith University's Nathan campus in Brisbane. The course was designed to build the capacity of staff to conduct independent research to produce working papers for dissemination to a range of audiences, including academics, government departments and the public, to improve transparency and public discourse relating to Fiji's national economic growth and development. The program ran from 29 June to 10 July 2015 and involved six staff (three females and three males) from the RBF. A series of Working Papers were produced in 2016 in response to the training.

In 2018, Griffith University hosted a second Pacific central banking fellowship, 'Developing Research and Policy Formulation Capacity at the Central Banks (Pacific)' from 8 to 26 January 2018. It focused on developing evidence-based research skills for public dissemination. It was attended by four staff (two females and two males) from the Reserve Bank of Fiji and six staff (four females and two males) from the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu. As part of the 'Return to Work Plan', the fellows produced several Working Papers supported by Griffith University academics, with alumni presenting their findings at a four day post-course event held 4 to 8 June 2018.

1.2 Objectives

This case study has been undertaken to increase the evidence and knowledge around the development of an exemplar partnership between an Australian host institution and its partners. Following a pausing of the Australia Awards fellowships in 2018, the monitoring and evaluation of the long-term impact of the award in building institutional linkages is unknown. However, this pause provides an opportunity to reflect on an exemplar partnership to identify the factors which enabled its ongoing engagement and contributions to development.

The South Pacific Centre for Central Banking (SPCCB) which is a partnership between Griffith University, and five Pacific central banks was identified for its ongoing engagement following two Australia Awards fellowships. The partnership is focused on collaborating to enhance research skills for evidenced-based policy formulation in the central banks.

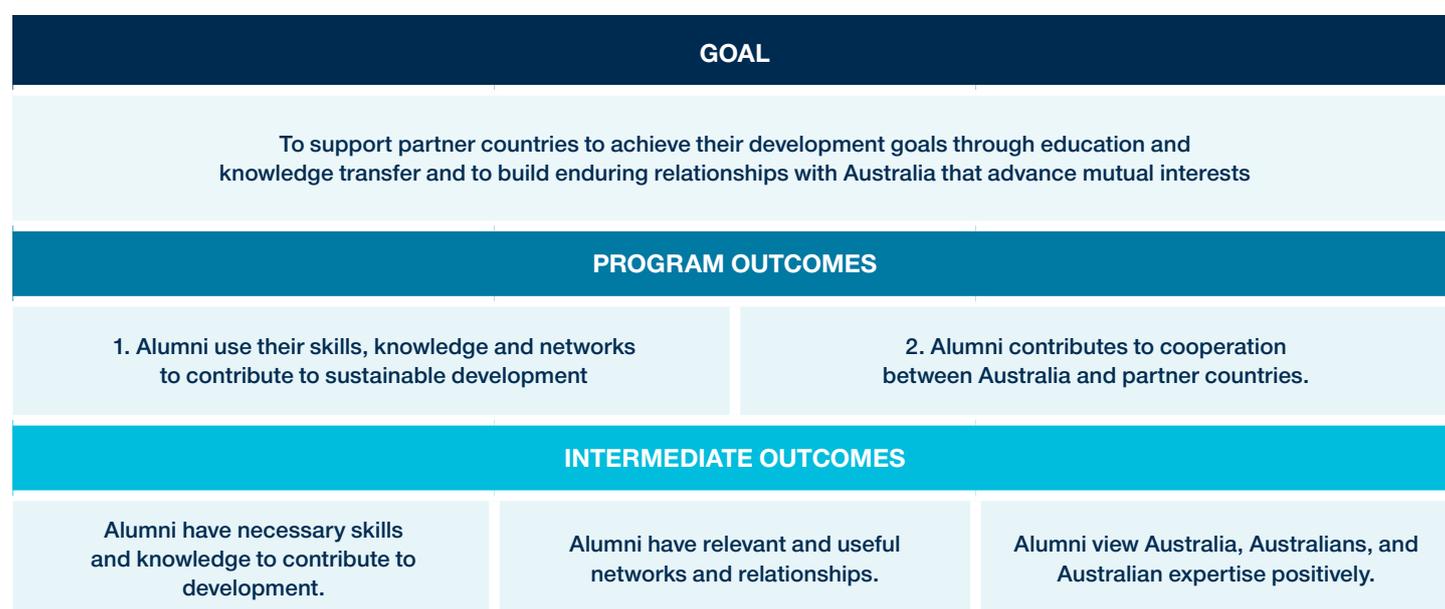
This case study examines the role of Australia Awards fellowships on the development of the SPCCB. It aims to understand the development and sustainability of SPCCB to inform DFAT about the conditions of success when building long-lasting and meaningful partnerships through short course modalities.

This case study seeks to answer three overarching research questions:

1. What were the key factors in the development of the SPCCB partnership?
2. What has been the impact of SPCCB on capacity development and cooperation for Australia and partner countries?
3. What recommendations based on the SPCCB partnership experience can help to inform future Australia Awards short course programming?

In addition to the aims specific to this case study, all research conducted by the GTF is framed within the overall objective of the Australia Awards: to ‘support partner countries to achieve their development goals through education and knowledge transfer, and to build enduring relationships with Australia that advance mutual interests.’ The two long-term program outcomes to achieve this aim are outlined in the Australia Awards Global Policy Framework 2021–2024 and Australia Awards Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. These are shown in Figure 2 below along with three Intermediate Outcomes, which are building blocks to the achievement of long-term Program Outcomes.

Figure 2: Australia Awards Program Logic



1.3 Scope

This case study examines the role of Australia Awards fellowships on the development of SPCCB. It aims to understand the development and sustainability of SPCCB to inform the Global Education and Scholarships Section (GLE) on conditions for success when building long-lasting and meaningful partnerships through short course modalities. The case study focuses on one partnership; however, the findings can be broadly applied to understanding the organisation-level outcomes of the Australia Awards fellowships. Further research on this topic will benefit understanding of the intended and unintended outcomes of these awards.

1.4 Case study participants

This case study undertook a mixture of focus groups and individual interviews. A total of ten stakeholders were interviewed about their involvement in the development and sustainability of the SPCCB. The main stakeholders include five representatives from the Australian host organisation- Griffith University, three staff from the Reserve Bank of Fiji and two staff from the Central Bank of the Solomon Islands. Additional data was collected from publicly available news items on the SPCCB, and reflections made by central bank Governors. Details relating to key SPCCB interview participants are included below.

Table 1: Australian host organisation – Griffith University participants

Name	Current position
Dr Parmendra Sharma	Program Convenor, South Pacific Centre for Central Banking (SPCCB), and Senior Lecturer, Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics, Griffith University
Professor Caitlin Byrne	Director, Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University
Dr Jen-Je Su	Leader – Research, SPCCB, and Senior Lecturer, Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics, Griffith University
Associate Professor Tarlok Singh	Leader – Policy, SPCCB, and Associate Professor of Economics, Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics, Griffith University
Ms Sharm Aboosally	Senior Commercial Projects Officer, Griffith Enterprise, former International Projects Officer/Projects Coordinator International Development, Griffith University

Table 2: Partner-country organisation participants

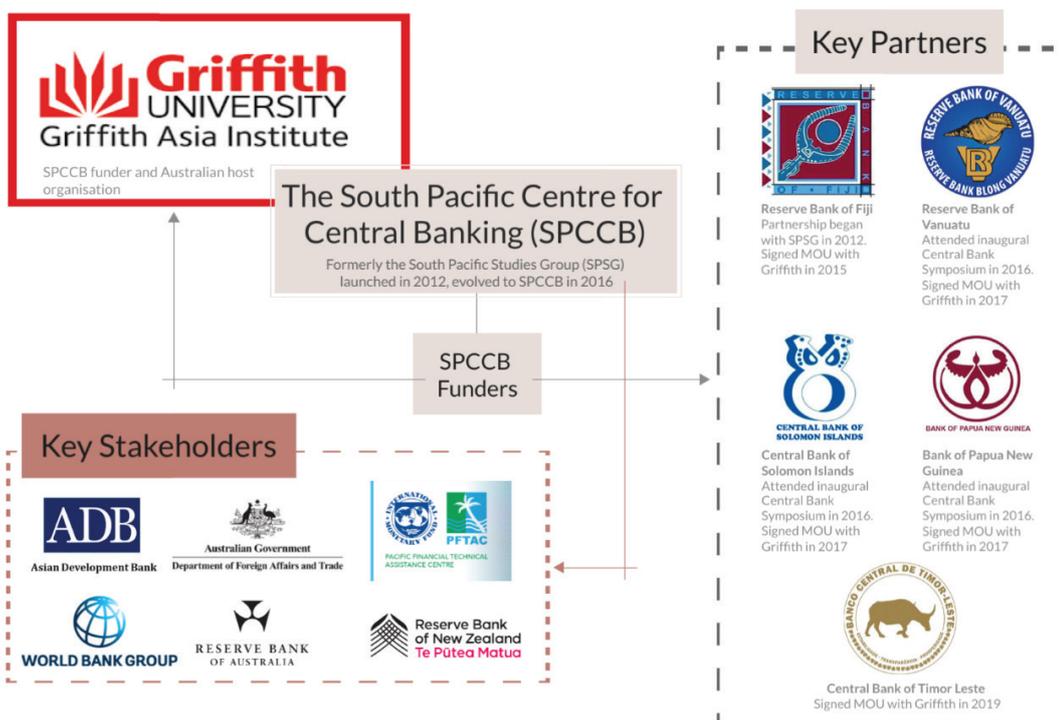
Name	Current position	Organisation	SPCCB research papers
Mr Esala Masitabua	Deputy Governor and SPCCB focal point	Reserve Bank of Fiji	
Ms Louisa Baragamu	Chief Manager, Economics, Research and Statistics Department	Central Bank of Solomon Islands	
Ms Kalolaini Ranadi	Senior Economist Alumna – 2018 Australia Awards fellowship <i>Developing Research and Policy Formulation Capacity at the Central Banks (RBF & RBV)</i>	Reserve Bank of Fiji	<i>Financial integration in open, small economies of the South Pacific: Extent, consequences and policy implications</i>
Mr Matia Tuisawau	Senior Economist	Reserve Bank of Fiji	<i>Remittances vis-à-vis bank credit and Investments in Pacific Island Countries: The case of Fiji</i>
Ms Angeline Rohoia	Senior Research Analyst, Research Unit, Monetary Policy & Research Division, Economics, Research and Statistics Department	Central Bank of Solomon Islands	<i>Do inflation expectations matter for small open economies? Empirical evidence from the Solomon Islands</i> <i>Effective marketing strategies for promoting SMEs in Pacific Island Countries: A systematic literature review</i>

2. SPCCB partnership background

2.1 SPCCB key partners and stakeholders

The SPCCB, located in the Pacific Research Hub of the Griffith Asia Institute (GAI) at Griffith University, was established in 2016 to build a platform for research and collaboration among the central banks in the Pacific (see Annex 1 for organisational profiles). The Key Partners are comprised of five central banks: the Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF), Reserve Bank of Vanuatu (RBV), Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI), Bank of Papua New Guinea (BPNG) and Central Bank of Timor-Leste (BCTL). SPCCB is co-funded by the Key Partners and Griffith University. Key stakeholders have been invited to engage and participate via research forums, conferences, and regional dialogues, and include the Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank Group, DFAT, Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA), Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ), and the International Monetary Fund Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC) (Griffith University, 2022c).

Figure 3: SPCCB key partners and stakeholder organisational chart



2.2 History of SPCCB partnership development

SPCCB’s mission is to strengthen local capacity ‘for conducting independent, rigorous inquiry into the problems facing the management of economies in the South Pacific’ through evidenced-based policymaking (Griffith University, 2022c). The SPCCB partnership was first seeded under its initial title, the South Pacific Studies Group (SPSG) by Griffith University academic Dr Parmendra Sharma, who initiated a connection with the Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF) to explore collaboration opportunities. Dr Sharma, a Fijian national and former staff member at RBF, understood the bank’s challenges in terms of research culture and retention of professional staff.

Following an exploratory collaboration exercise producing a joint research paper in 2014, Dr Sharma was able to strengthen the relationship further by successfully applying for and conducting the 2015 Australia Awards fellowship, ‘Developing capacity

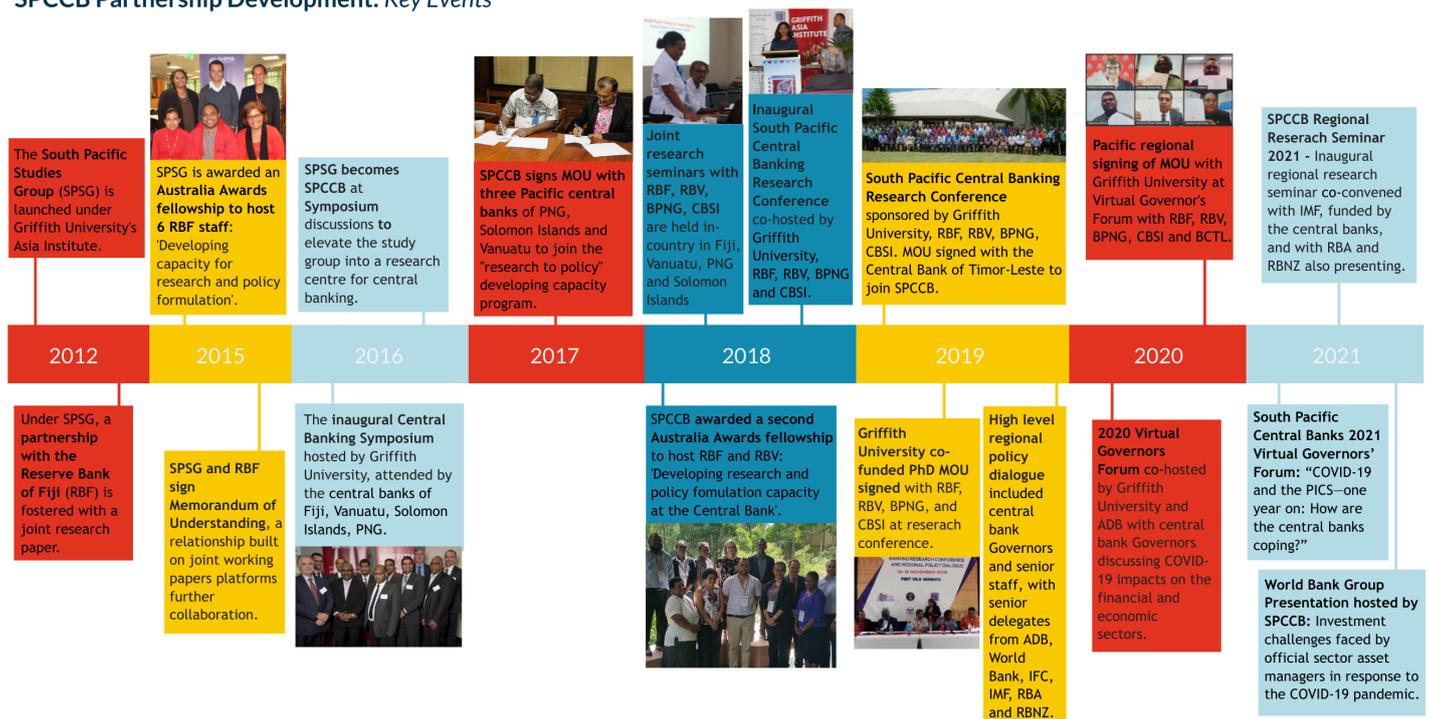
for research and policy formulation at the Reserve Bank (Fiji) (Griffith Asia Insights, 2015). Interest in capacity development activities soon spread among other central banks in the South Pacific. This led to broader engagement in the region and the evolution of the SPCCB following the inaugural Central Banking Symposium hosted by Griffith University in 2016 (Griffith News, 2016a; Griffith News 2016b). In January 2018, Griffith University hosted a second capacity building Australia Awards fellowship, ‘Developing Research and Policy Formulation Capacity at the Central Banks (RBF & RBV).’

This demand-driven partnership has resulted in formal MOUs with RBF, RBV, CBSI, BPNG, BCTL individually and as a regional-level agreement; numerous research publications (20 working papers and seven journal articles); and a wide range of engagement activities including forums, seminars, symposia, conferences and training workshops.

To learn more about the history and mission of the central banks in focus please refer to the organisational profiles in Annex 1.

Figure 4: Timeline of SPCCB partnership development

SPCCB Partnership Development: Key Events



2.3 The important role of central banks

The core functions of a central bank include monetary policy, the regulation of the nation's financial system, management of foreign reserves, and the financial and economic advisory role to government. The legal framework of central banks varies from country to country, with many nations having a legislative mandate embedded in their constitutions which supports independence of the bank to implement policies and conduct operations (Klingebiel et al., 2021). In general, a central bank supports the stability of a nation's currency, mitigating inflation and unemployment, and stimulating development and economic growth.

A key component of all central bank activities is the analysis and interpretation of a wide range of data to manage risk, inform policy formation, and the type of monetary policy tools to use to slow or accelerate the economy to achieve stability, development, and growth.

2.4 Development challenges

The South Pacific central bank partners – Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste are young, developing nations which have faced a range of political and socioeconomic challenges since gaining independence over the last five decades. Financial inclusion remains a large challenge across the South Pacific region with limited financial services and one of the highest global rates of 'unbanked' adults (individuals who do not use banks or financial institutions). Financial exclusion in the region is caused by a range of factors such as a lack of physical banking infrastructure and geographic remoteness, a lack of personal documentation, gender inequity, limited financial literacy, and a lack of affordable banking products for low-income customers, (Allen et al., 2012; Demirguc-Kunt & Klapper, 2012).

According to Mr Adrian Orr, Governor of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ), Pacific Island Countries (PIC) currently face two significant and multilayer challenges, 'climate change and the severe economic impacts of COVID-19' (Orr, 2021). These development challenges include increased frequency of natural disasters and environmental damage; rapid urbanisation and migration; geopolitics and border security, gender inequalities and family violence; high rates of youth unemployment; and a lack of financial inclusion and economic stability (Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, 2020). For PIC like those featured in this case study, the need to build capacity of their central bank staff to be able to respond independently to these challenges through evidence-based research, innovation, and risk management is critical.

2.5 Research themes

The SPCCB partnership is helping to strengthen the institutional capacity of the central banks in the Pacific through research collaboration and guidance by leading financial and economic experts in policy orientated research activities centred on three broad themes: **macroeconomics, financial development and stability**, and **economic resilience** (Griffith University, 2022d).

The partnership is equipping central bank economists and researchers with valuable skills to independently formulate evidenced-based policy in response to the challenges of climate change, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lingering economic impact of the Global Financial Crisis (Griffith News, 2016).

SPCCB's research activities are helping to advance United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SPCCB platform focuses on partnering (SDG 17) to strengthen institutional capacity (SDG 16) towards achieving SDGs with gender equality (SDG 5), decent work and economic development (SDG 8), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), and climate action (SDG 13) in the region. These activities support the Australian Government's commitment to promoting economic prosperity as part of its Pacific Step-up agenda and the Griffith Asia Institute's research focus to tackle 'global challenges around sustainable development and partnerships' (Griffith University, 2018b, Griffith News, 2018, DFAT, 2022b).



SPCCB has produced over 20 working papers and seven journal publications since collaboration began with the RBF in 2014. To view the SPCCB publications please click [here](#).

Thematic research for capacity building²

The Griffith University-South Pacific central banks' collaborative research involves conceptualising, framing, designing, and analysing key economic research questions of relevance to policymaking in the South Pacific region. The MoU partner central banks (Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu) and Griffith University have jointly adopted the following broad research themes for the capacity building program:

- 1. Macroeconomics:** topics include but are not limited to—monetary policy, foreign exchange, trade, economic growth, investments, exchange rate stability, debt sustainability
- 2. Financial development and stability:** topics include but are not limited to—financial inclusion, financial sector development, financial markets, financial regulation and supervision, remittances, microfinance, SMEs, fintech, affordable housing, economic integration
- 3. Economic resilience:** topics include but are not limited to—tourism, poverty and livelihood, climate change, agriculture, natural resources, cyber security, risk management, labour market, and income distribution.

2 Thematic research for capacity building. Griffith University (2022d).

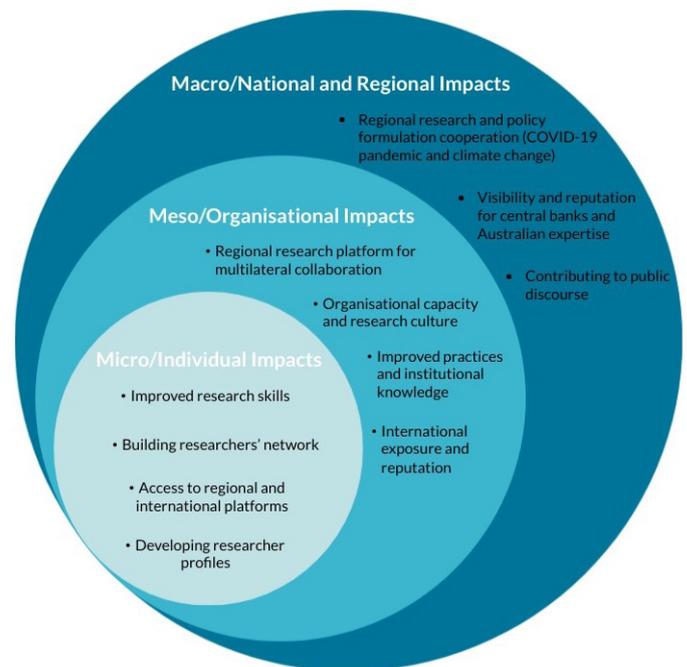
3. SPCCB contributions to Australia Awards long-term program outcomes

3.1 Introduction

The partnerships developed between Griffith University and the central banks under the auspice of SPCCB are an example of strong outcomes facilitated by the Australia Awards fellowship program. In the context of the *Australia Awards Monitoring and Evaluation Framework* (DFAT, 2022a), impacts by SPCCB are reflected across the two long-term program outcomes intended by the fellowships (contribution to development and cooperation). The 2015 and 2018 Australia Awards fellowships are significantly intertwined in the foundation, growth, and outcomes of SPCCB's partnership development. Other key facilitating factors that enabled the success of this exemplar partnership are detailed in Chapter 4 Conditions of SPCCB partnership success.

This chapter details the key examples identified through interviews, focus group discussions and news reports of SPCCB outcomes that contribute to sustainable development and Australia's cooperation with the Pacific Island region across the three levels of impact: micro, meso and macro. Figure 5 below shows the impacts resulting from SPCCB from a 'magnitudes of impact' framework (Mawer, 2018), applied to the Australia Awards long-term program outcomes. This approach involves examining evidence about the partnership outcomes based on three levels of impact: micro (individual), meso (organisational), and macro (national and regional).

Figure 5: SPCCB contributions to the Australia Awards long-term Outcomes



3.2 Contributions to development

As a result of SPCCB activities, impact and contributions to development can be traced to the participant (micro), organisation (meso) and community (macro) levels. These impacts are evident from the breadth of SPCCB activities, including hosting two rounds of the Australia Awards fellowships in 2015 and 2018.

The examples of SPCCB’s contributions to development and capacity building demonstrate the ripple effect Australia Awards fellowships can have on organisations. The fellowships were an opportunity for SPCCB to build on its partnership development with the central banks by hosting a rigorous research training program at Griffith University. Then coupled with ongoing engagement, SPCCB has reached more change agents with a shared purpose and influenced the organisational research culture within the central banks.

The following impacts identified through the focus group discussions highlight the long-term effects of a partnership focussed on peer-driven engagement for capacity development.



RBF Economist, Ms Kalolaini Ranadi speaking at the RBF-RBV DFAT Fellowship Program, Brisbane, Australia, January 2018. Photo: Griffith University

3.2.1 Micro/Individual impacts

Achieved outcome	Evidence of outcome
Improved research skills	<p>The researchers participating in the SPCCB activities have benefitted, with the fellowships improving their research skills. Ms Kalolaini Ranadi, a Senior Economist with RBF, and Ms Angeline Rohoia, a Senior Research Analyst with CBSI similarly stated SPCCB has ‘enhanced’ their research skills and gained confidence in conducting research.</p> <p>RBF Deputy Governor, Mr Masitabua stated that SPCCB improves the capacity of their researchers, ‘We have really good researchers, I think the main gap is doing things with an academic rigour’. An example of the described academic rigour, Mr Tuisawau, a Senior Economist with RBF noted:</p> <p><i>It’s helped with improving research skills, trying to get recognition from journals; you get exposed to the type of research and high standards that are required.</i></p>
Developing researcher profiles	<p>Through co-authoring working papers, the researchers from the central banks have also built their own international research profiles, further developing the working papers for publication in peer-reviewed journals and presenting at conferences. A highlighted example of this is Ms Ranadi (RBF), who’s co-authored paper <i>Financial Integration in Open, Small Pacific Island Countries: Extent, Consequences, and Policy Implications</i>, which was selected for the 2019 INFINITI Conference at the University of Glasgow. Ms Ranadi was also invited to act as discussant for another paper presented. Overall, Ms Ranadi indicated, ‘the exposure, knowledge sharing and discussions with researchers at this conference was truly rewarding. Referring to this international recognition, RBF Deputy Governor Mr Masitabua stated, ‘That’s something that in my 25 years here had never been achieved’.</p>

3.2.2 Meso/organisational impacts

Achieved outcome	Evidence of outcome
Improved practices and institutional knowledge	<p>The central bank researchers in this case study have shared examples of the ways in which their research has improved practices in their institutions, including providing ‘guidance for our policy and decisions making’ (Ms Rohoia, CBSI), and identifying data gaps in census surveys with a macroeconomic impact (Mr Tuisawau, RBF).</p> <p>Ms Rohoia highlighted that an outcome of her SPCCB working paper, ‘It has provided guidance for our policy and decision making’:</p> <p><i>We [the paper authors] found that inflation expectations do matter, and so now our department, our real sector unit, they are sending out surveys to find out business expectations as part of data collecting. From that data collecting, our analysts are able to do forecasting for inflation. That’s a benefit from our research.</i></p> <p>Another paper Ms Rohoia is working on, is examining the financial development of the Solomon Islands since the 1980s; a ‘first’ for CBSI. Ms Rohoia stated this paper ‘will be the basis for future research where we’re identifying how we’ve evolved and what are the gaps and what are the areas where we could further research so that we could inform our policies in the banking sector’.</p>
International exposure and reputation	<p>The SPCCB network has helped the central banks gain exposure to wider opportunities. RBF Deputy Governor, Mr Masitabua stated that their bank has benefited from this exposure by achieving publication in peer-reviewed journals:</p> <p><i>By involving with Griffith, as one of the premier universities globally, we are able to look at opportunities in terms of elevating some of our research and papers...we’ve had a few papers that have been published in recognised academic journals, and again, that’s been a first for the Reserve Bank. It’s not that we’ve never produced anything worthy, it’s just that we’ve leveraged off this partnership that has opened these pathways for us. Central Banks don’t like to beat their chest, but for us, it gives comfort to the people knowing that this is the calibre of people you have in your reserve bank. They are able to present papers, so likewise, the other policies and public discourse within this institution must be quite robust for them to churn out some of these pieces of research.</i></p> <p>For Griffith University, the significant outputs of the working papers and research forums has jointly increased its exposure to other organisations in the region. “It also opens the door to significant opportunity for other institutions to work together in key partnerships,” stated Professor O’Connor. “We have a deep belief in this University that we have a shared future” (Griffith News, 2016).</p>

3.2.3 Macro/national and regional impacts

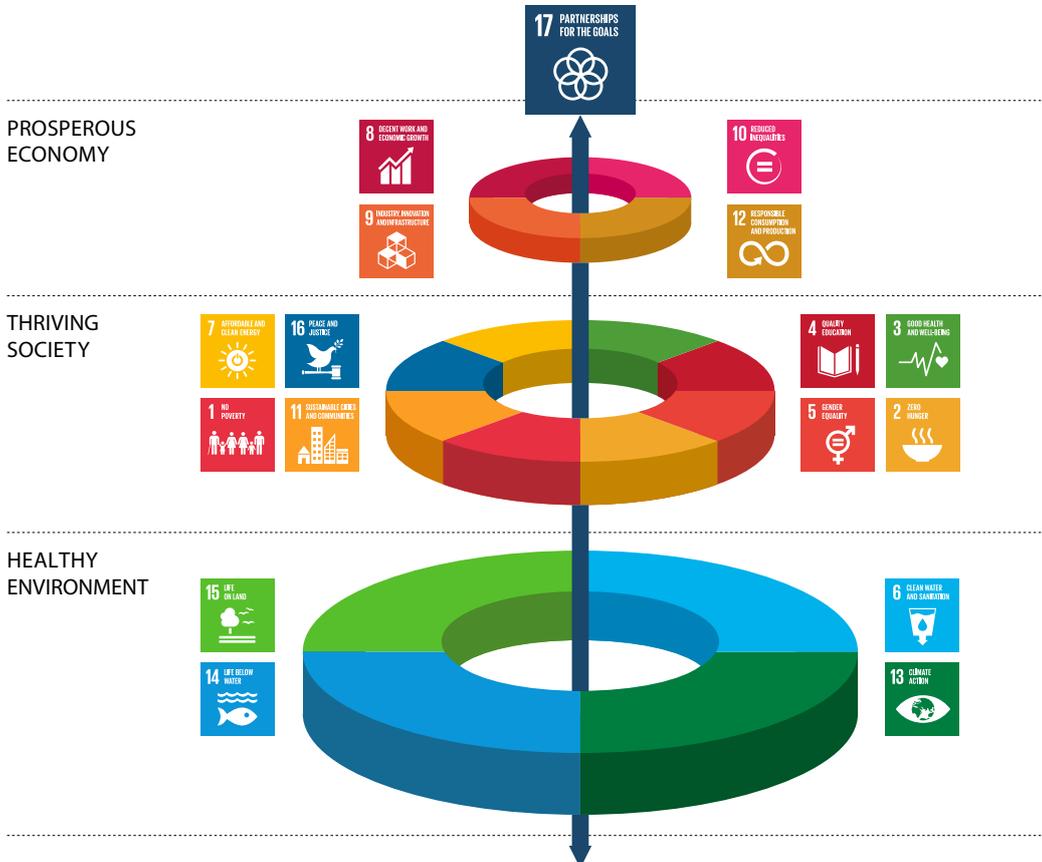
Achieved outcome	Evidence of outcome
Regional cooperation of research and policy formulation	<p>As a result of the research dissemination activities run by SPCCB, discussions and engagement amongst the central banks have evolved to begin exploring regional-level collaboration on research and policy formulation. Dr Sharma shared insight from the last round table discussion of Governors and stakeholders held in 2021, noting:</p> <p><i>We have been thinking about forming a policy committee for the region comprising at least the Deputy Governors. So, what we have in mind is that those papers that have transparent clear implications for policy might go to this committee for concentration.</i></p> <p>At this discussion, two research papers were ‘identified that had clear policy outcomes, and so they were going to be taken up to the next level, and how to transform them from those papers’ recommendations into policies. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, progression in this regional cooperation has paused.</p>

3.3 Contributions to bilateral cooperation

The contributions by the SPCCB network to bilateral cooperation range from extending the researchers' professional networks to enhancing the visibility and reputation of the central banks and Australian expertise. The partnerships developed through SPCCB also demonstrate a ripple effect in the ways in which these cross-organisational collaborations can enable other development outcomes. The figure below by The Partnering Initiative (Stibbe and Prescott, 2020, p.10), shows how the 'SDGs are the result of – and a call for – a new collaborative way of working', with partnerships flowing through each category layer of the other 16 goals. Bilateral cooperation undertaken with partnership principles can lead to impact with mutual benefit in the relationship objectives it achieves.

Figure 6: The UN SDGs in an interconnected economy, society and environment (Stibbe and Prescott, 2020, p.10)

The 2030 Agenda is based on an interconnected economy, society and environment



3.3.1 Micro/individual impacts

Achieved outcome	Evidence of outcome
Access to regional and international platforms	<p>The regional central banking research platform that SPCCB offers is a forum for the researchers to share their practices and knowledge as well as exposure to other international organisations. Mr Tuisawau, perceived their invitation to attend in broader seminars was a result of involvement in SPCCB by external stakeholders:</p> <p><i>[The World Bank] were there at the conference in 2018 or '19. It was because of this particular conference, because there were presentations that we did, and because they knew the field that we were working in, we were able to be included as well in the other seminars... So, it's not only the strengthening of strong collaboration with other central banks but also the international organisations and institutions.</i></p> <p>Another researcher, Ms Angeline Rohoia, highlighted that 'the most valuable outcome of participation in SPCCB is how we are able to pull together resources from the region and being able to come together to one platform where we can share knowledge and skills in research especially is a real boost for us.'</p>

3.3.2 Meso/organisational impacts

Achieved outcome	Evidence of outcome
Regional research platform for multilateral collaboration	<p>All case study participants highlighted the benefit to their organisations to engage in central banking research and policy formulation with Griffith University and other central banks in the region. Ms Baragamu, a Chief Manager within the Economics, Research and Statistics Department at CBSI, stated the SPCCB platform increased the capacity of their one-person research unit: 'collaboration with all central banks helps us push things forward in terms of help and the assistance in coordination...this platform really supports us in terms of the capacity we have'.</p> <p>Deputy-Governor of RBF, Mr Esala Masitabua, similarly described SPCCB as a 'collaborative platform' that has strengthened the existing regional central bank networks:</p> <p><i>This platform that Griffith has created has enabled that collaboration on developing [research] skills. Like Australia's RBA has come on board, RBNZ, so we are able to learn from them too.</i></p> <p>Professor Caitlin Byrne, Director of the Griffith Asia Institute, added, the SPCCB platform is 'an opportunity for us to understand more about the central banking issues, the unique experiences of Pacific Island nations and to really build on that, not just in terms of our dialogue with each other but also more broadly as we're working with others in the region.'</p> <p>The SPCCB platform also offers the central banks a unique opportunity to share the learning platform when engaging with other organisations. Mr Tuisawau noted their experience including their local Bureau of Statistics as a co-author on a paper, 'I think when it's Griffith co-authoring...it has the potential to strengthen partnerships with all the other government departments.'</p> <p>Under SPCCB, Griffith University and the partner central banks have signed individual and regional MOUs, firming the commitment to collaborate on capacity development for research and policy formulation. These commitments include a regional MOU to provide 'cost-sharing scholarships' for South Pacific central bankers to undertake PhD-level studies, (Griffith News, 2020) this has been paused due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.</p>



Virtual signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, between Griffith University and five central bank partners, 11 November 2020. Photo: Griffith University.

3.3.3 Macro/national and regional impacts

Achieved outcome	Evidence of outcome
<p>Visibility and reputation for central banks and Australian expertise</p>	<p>The evolution of the SPCCB network and the MOUs developed between Griffith University and the central banks communicate the value of this engagement at a public level. Dr Parmendra Sharma stated the MOUs to conduct research and provide PhD scholarships demonstrates the ‘visibility’ of the relationships: ‘I think it’s important for the public or at least the government sector and the business sector to know, to be aware that Australia is in the [Pacific] region, not only for aid purposes.’</p> <p>The reputation and visibility of Griffith University and the participating central banks has grown over time, enhancing the profile of SPCCB as a respected research platform in the region, Dr Sharma highlighted:</p> <p><i>When we have an event, there’s something in the news...we have these things captured by the newspapers and TVs as well and people talk about it. But also, because the Governors are involved and they’re so supportive of this, they talk to, as you can imagine, the Ministers and the Prime Ministers and their board...so the word is spreading.</i></p>

4. Conditions that have built SPCCB partnership success

4.1 Introduction

In order to create an exemplar, multi-stakeholder partnership such as the SPCCB, it is essential for institutions to have an outward looking ‘partnering culture’ (Stibbe & Prescott, 2022), alignment of shared strategic goals and values, leadership support, champions to drive and sustain the relationship, and a suite of mutually beneficial, collaborative, engagement activities.

4.2 Factors enabling SPCCB partnership success

The strength, scope, and longevity of the SPCCB partnership has been based on the strategic alignment of both Griffith University’s vision to be a ‘university of influence’ in the Asia-Pacific region (Griffith University, 2018a), and the capacity development needs of the five central banks. SPCCB is helping to strengthen institutional capacity to deal with ongoing development challenges through building a strong collaborative research culture.

Institutional support for partnership development has been essential in the evolution of SPCCB. Griffith University’s Internationalisation Strategy (2018-2020) and support from the International Development Unit (grant opportunities and administration support) and the Griffith Asia Institute (GAI) have enabled the academic linkages between Dr Sharma and RBF to develop and evolve into formal partnerships and the SPCCB platform. Among the central banks, the Governors played a critical role in leading their organisations towards formal engagement with Griffith University under the banner of SPCCB. The Governors have worked closely with Dr Sharma and his team to formalise collaboration and participate in knowledge sharing and capacity building activities based on trust, equity, and shared decision making.

To explore the development of the partnership over time the GTF draws on the four stages of the partnering lifecycle by The Partnering Initiative (2022), to examine the factors which have enabled the success of SPCCB.

Figure 7: The partnering lifecycle (The Partnering Initiative, 2022, p. 38)



Stage 1 Enabling factors: Partnership scoping and building

Enabling factor	Evidence of factor
Griffith's partnering culture	<p>Griffith's Internationalisation Strategy (2018–2020) promotes a 'partnering culture'(Stibbe & Prescott, 2022) throughout the university. It is strategic and has a strong focus on the Asia-Pacific region. The policy encourages a 'multipronged approach' to engagement through collaboration on shared research expertise, and capacity building activities. It is aligned with Griffith's 'vision to be a university of influence in the Asia-Pacific' (Griffith University, 2018a) and the Griffith Asia Institute's (GAI) mission to 'cultivate the knowledge, capabilities and connections that will inform and enrich Australia's Asia-Pacific future' (Griffith University, 2022a).</p>
Academic champion – driving engagement	<p>Dr Sharma has been a passionate, academic champion, and the driving force behind the development of partnerships with the Pacific central banks. He has unique, contextual understanding of the organisational challenges and an affinity to the region which have enabled him to facilitate research activities which mentor and build research capacity and collaboration, while strengthening Griffith's profile and research reputation in the region.</p> <p><i>Parmendra is a former staff member of the Reserve Bank. I think this is probably one of the reasons why, from my perspective, the success of this is due to that connection because he has had to persist and drive this, and because he came from Fiji and he worked for the Reserve Bank and he understood the needs here, that is what has fuelled his drive for this.'</i></p> <p>Mr. Esala Masitabua, Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of Fiji</p>
Role of the central bank Governors	<p>The support of the Governors has been 'critical' in the development of SPCCB and is aligned to the strategic goals and human resource needs of the central banks. Having access to the decision makers and leaders of the central banks has enabled Griffith University to be able to establish formal MOUs and collaborate on a range of research activities.</p> <p><i>'The role of governors has been very critical in all of this. Without the support of governors, of course, we wouldn't have been able to even start these relationships, these partnerships'</i></p> <p>Dr Parmendra Sharma, Program Convenor, SPCCB</p>
Seed funding	<p>The use of the Australia Awards fellowship grants as a mechanism to strengthen and 'cement' engagement with the RBF and RBV through tailored capacity building has led to greater engagement in the region.</p> <p><i>'Because we were just starting the relationships, the collaborations and the engagement, the timing of the fellowship was great because we were able to bring them over and give them an experience of research firsthand, and they got excited about everything. In some cases, in some of the central banks, the research was almost non-existent, so they had not published any working papers, just making policy through other means. So, the DFAT fellowship was great in terms of getting that interest back for the central bankers.'</i></p> <p>Dr Parmendra Sharma, Program Convenor, SPCCB</p>

Stage 2 Enabling factors: Managing and maintaining the partnership

Enabling factor	Evidence of factor
<p>Research activities</p>	<p>Working papers and journal articles have facilitated real collaboration and engagement among participants, improving professional practices and research skills at the organisational level. They have also lessened the impact of 'staff drift' and retention by expanding the researcher pool within the central banks. Participation in industry-based conferences, seminars, and workshops with stakeholders such as the IMF, World Bank, ADB and the RBA and the RBNZ has strengthen the participating central banks' academic rigour, contributing to region dialogue and networks. These activities have built positive views of Australian education and expertise.</p>
<p>Strategically investing in emerging leaders</p>	<p>Working with researchers and emerging leaders from the central banks is helping to strengthen Australia's research reputation, while also building strategic and long-lasting bilateral relations (soft power) with future leaders in the region.</p> <p><i>'If we can build up relationships with the junior colleagues, in 5 years, 10 years later, they may climb up to be the top policy maker, and because we have built up this relationship with them, then the government has more weight in the Pacific. I think it's easier to communicate. I think supporting this kind of long-term, sustainable theme is a very important thing. And because the investment cannot be just random, cannot be shooting at too many targets, we need to be focused.'</i></p> <p>Dr Jen-Je Su, Leader – Research, SPCCB</p>



SPCB Virtual Governors Forum 2021, 30 June 2021 Photo: Griffith University

Stage 3 Enabling factors: Reviewing and revising the partnership

Enabling factor	Evidence of factor
Hybrid approach to engagement	<p>A mixture of face-to-face and online engagement activities have allowed for greater inclusion of central bank staff in-country, ensuring greater impact at the organisational level. This approach has also aided the pivot to online engagement activities due to COVID-19 disruptions (South Pacific Central Banks (SPCB) Virtual Governors Forum in 2020 and 2021, SPCB Regional Research Seminar 2021)</p> <p><i>'Definitely agility, in thinking about [engagement]: it's not just face-to-face, it's not just blended or online. There is a blended component, there's a hybridity to the kind of training and engagement we need to do [post COVID], and we really need to think about that. I think we've also got to think differently about the resourcing of big projects. We're not so much in a position anymore to just fly in, fly out. We've got to think about the timing and the resourcing and who can be part of that.'</i></p> <p>Professor Caitlyn Byrne, Director, Griffith Asia Institute</p>

Stage 4 Enabling factors: Moving on, renegotiating and sustaining the partnership over time

Enabling factor	Evidence of factor
Continual engagement activities	<p>SPCCB have a calendar of annual events and knowledge sharing activities which sustain the relationships that have been fostered over the past eight years. These include regional research seminars, conferences and dialogue; Governor Forums; industry presentations; annual work schedule of joint research papers; and capacity building activities and workshops. PhD opportunities for up to four suitable central bank staff members per year (yet to begin due to COVID-19).</p>

4.3 Challenges to partnering

The following challenges identified by the Australian host organisation, Griffith University, and the partner organisations, the Pacific region central banks, are factors which they have identified as barriers that need to be overcome when developing partnerships such as the one detailed in this case study.

Stage 1 Challenging factors: Partnership scoping and building

Challenging factor	Evidence of factor
Australia Awards application process	<p>The open-call nature of the Australia Awards fellowships allowed for a broader scope of development activities for DFAT to support. However, this also required a significant amount of resourcing of staff time to complete the fellowship applications for a selective number of grants. While manageable pre-COVID-19, the resourcing landscape has become more constrained. Building new partnerships and applying for supporting grants will require strategic selection.</p> <p><i>[There is] a lot of burden of paperwork, because for each application we need CVs and applications from every single member; it's a huge time-consuming drain of time...So, having that sort of open call is great, but you could probably merge it with what works for the country programs. If you're successful at EOI stage, then you may have more interaction with the High Commissioner or the Embassy, provided they have time, of course, to build out a proposal that would more likely hit everyone's outcomes.'</i></p> <p>Ms Aboosally, Senior Commercial Projects Officer, Griffith Enterprise</p>

Stage 2 Challenging factors: Managing and maintaining the partnership

Challenging factor	Evidence of factor
<p>Ongoing funding and resources</p>	<p>Available funding and resources for the SPCCB partnership have been impacted by two distinct factors, the pausing of the Australia Awards fellowship program and COVID-19. The unexpected pausing of the Australia Awards fellowships has left a gap in capacity development training funding in the donor landscape. Further, COVID-19 has limited the resourcing for time to commit to the partnership's ongoing engagement and maintenance. Dr Sharma stated with adjusted time allocations, engagement time for external partnerships allocation is limited; 'It's mainly driven by our passion...But it has to be done within the constraints like time.'</p> <p><i>The region has benefited immensely from the program, from the research training... When they come here, they can feel ... Australia really is behind this. They don't look at it as Griffith doing all this. They say, "The Australian Government is behind this. They are giving us money to do all this." And the in-person engagement is quite important, so there's a risk of losing that. So, we would really want the program to restart.</i></p> <p>Dr Sharma, Program Convenor, SPCCB</p>
<p>Face-to-face interaction</p>	<p>COVID-19 has impacted the growth and depth of the SPCCB network with travel restrictions ceasing face-to-face engagements. MOUs such as the jointly funded PhD scholarships have been unable to be activated.</p> <p>While the network has pivoted to online platforms, reliability of technology and limitation of impromptu interactions affects the quality of engagements and relationship building. Associate Professor Tarlok Singh highlighted that in-person connection builds deeper relationships which result in more effective communication and research outcomes.</p> <p><i>We could not do anything except the online communication, online workshops. It interrupted it, but because we went [online], we continued the activity to sustain that but there's nothing like in-person...if one has the in-person and connection, that builds deeper relationships with the colleagues overseas and it also is more effective in terms of our communication and research.</i></p> <p>Associate Professor Singh, Leader – Policy, SPCCB</p>

Stage 4 Challenging factors: Moving on, renegotiating and sustaining the partnership over time

Challenging factor	Evidence of factor
<p>Long-term sustainability</p>	<p>There is an acknowledged challenge in building long-term sustainability into the future direction of SPCCB. With a strong foundation of committed partnership managers and stakeholders, the opportunity for growth beyond the current COVID-19 limitations is likely. However, the initial boost by the Australia Awards fellowship which elevated the platform of SPCCB to other central banks has left a gap in capacity development training funding options.</p> <p><i>Our challenge is trying to build that sustainable system that's there because the underlying reasons are solid. It should be able to just fund itself...but we understand that we really need to build the sustainable framework that will enable it to sustain itself and become a permanent fixture...it becomes a chicken and an egg. Do you run something, and they [development partners] will come in and help you or do you give us that boost and then we can run off on our own? So that's the big challenge.</i></p> <p>Mr Masitabua, Deputy Governor RBF</p>
<p>Maturing the collaboration</p>	<p>The challenge for the SPCCB, over the long-term is to take the partnership and engagement activities to the next level and 'mature' the collaboration among the group and invite additional stakeholders to join so that the centre expands and evolves into a much larger capacity building hub in the Pacific region. Mr Luke Forau, CBSI Governor, stated 'SPCCB has the potential to become a "research and policy formulation" capacity building hub for the PIC central banks, much like Kenya School of Monetary Policy Studies (KSMPS)' (Forau, 2020).</p> <p><i>To accomplish that vision and goal, however, a much greater, multi-lateral effort and partnership would be required. SPCCB's key stakeholders include Asian Development Bank, the World Bank Group/International Financial Cooperation, International Monetary Fund/Pacific Financial Technical Centre, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and central banks of Australia and New Zealand. A collaborative approach among these stakeholders, the central banks and SPCCB would be required.</i>Mr Luke Forau, Governor CBSI (Forau, 2020)</p>

4.4 High level perspective from the SPCCB Governors

Due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic during the writing of this report, the GTF were unable to interview a wide range of stakeholders for this case study (see Annex 2: Methodology section for further details). Working closely with Dr Sharma, the GTF sort insight from the central bank Governors on the impact of the SPCCB from their perspectives. The following quotes were provided to the GTF from the Governors from the RBF, RBV and CBSI after reading the draft report.



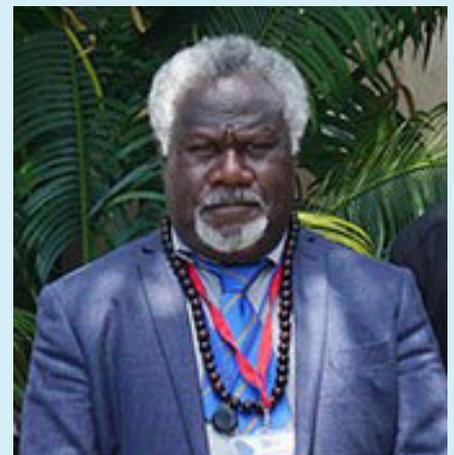
**Dr Luke Forau,
Governor of the Central Bank
of Solomon Islands:**

The engagement with Griffith Business School and SPCCB is having a tangible impact on the research environment and culture at CBSI. There's more conversation on research in the corridors and meetings, with the Bank providing incentives for the culture to keep evolving. Research seminars and conferences are becoming more familiar and welcoming notions at the Bank. Research-based policies too are finally becoming a real prospect. Impact is also evolving in terms of greater regional collaborations and cooperation, including at the Governors level—a very welcoming feat indeed. Again, SPCCB, Dr. Sharma and his team are facilitating these significant accomplishments. And, in the process, Griffith University is steadily becoming an Australasian university of influence in the region.



**Mr Ariff Ali, Governor,
Reserve Bank of Fiji:**

The collaborative research-related program of the SPCCB go beyond capacity building for the region's central banks. It is also an effective apolitical means of engagement and partnership between the region and Australia, which I believe has never been more critical. Moreover, the program provides a natural pathway for greater collaboration and cooperation among the region's central banks, including at the Governors level. The regional conference and prospects for regional projects are indeed most welcoming endeavours.



**Mr Simeon Athy, Governor,
Reserve Bank of Vanuatu:**

The SPCCB activities are broad and wide, including joint working papers, journal articles, seminars, symposiums, conferences, scientific research training, etc. All of these activities are having a profound effect on RBV's research environment and culture—which RBV has desired for a long time. For the first time too, there's very concrete and positive hope for the Bank's policies relating to the financial and private sectors to be finally grounded in scientific research. RBV is grateful to Dr. Sharma, his colleagues and Griffith Business School for initiating all of the foregoing joint research activities and for the profound transformation that is taking place at the Bank.

Images of the three Governors above (CBS, RBF and RBV), taken from a group photo at the SPCB Research Conference and Regional Policy Dialogue, Port Vila, November 2019. Photo: Griffith University

5. Conclusion and recommendations for partnerships for development

This case study provides insight into the benefits of the Australia Awards fellowships in building partnerships for the Australian host and partner country organisations. This is an unexplored area of research in the outcomes of the Australia Awards and is the first time the GTF has examined the outcomes from the perspective of partner organisations (previously, the focus has been on alumni). In examining an exemplar partnership that has received Australia Awards fellowships, this study demonstrates how this funding has contributed to building a dynamic partnership with longevity that is addressing development challenges in partner countries.

The South Pacific Centre for Central Banking (SPCCB) demonstrates the significant potential of the Australia Awards fellowships in building organisational partnerships for capacity development. This case study has shown how the Australia Awards fellowships contributed to a ripple effect for organisational change by developing the required capabilities to equip partners with a common purpose to achieve their development goals. The impacts from SPCCB's capacity building activities are a model for future fellowship iterations where strong partnership principles are embedded and use direct organisation-to-organisation training approaches to achieve the intended long-term program outcomes of the Australia Awards.

5.1 Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility recommendations for future Australia Awards fellowship iterations

Drawing on insights from the case study participants and analysis of the enabling and challenging factors to SPCCB’s partnership development, the table below outlines the opportunities to strengthen organisational and alumni outcomes for future Australia Awards fellowship iterations.

Table 3: Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility Recommendations for future Australia Awards fellowship iterations

Australia Awards Phase	Recommendation
<p>Application</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embed long-term strategic partnering values in fellowship application criteria and program logic to strengthen the Australia Awards intermediate and long-term development and cooperation outcomes. 2. Create an Expression of Interest (EOI) stage in the application process to reduce the burden of paperwork for applicants and DFAT. A pre-proposal stage will enable DFAT to shortlist host organisations that are able to demonstrate existing or developing relationships with a partnering organisation/s that has a strategic purpose aligning with three key pillars for enabling long-term development and cooperation outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. DFAT aid investment priorities or UN Sustainable Development Goals, ii. the partner organisation’s capacity development needs, iii. the host institution’s internationalisation strategy. 3. Demonstrate a strategic partnership alliance in the proposal. With a shortlist of host organisation partnerships, greater focus can be placed on developing detailed grant applications demonstrating how the fellowship will lead to program outcomes and enhance the partnership. <p>Successful proposals should include post-award strategic engagement plan outlining alumni and institutional engagement activities over a set period (e.g., up to at least 3 years when Australia Awards long-term program outcomes are expected to be emerging, as per the <i>Australia Awards Monitoring and Evaluation Framework</i>).</p> <p>Support from Posts to review relevant shortlisted proposals should also be encouraged as this will assist in ensuring alignment or complimentary to aid program priorities.</p>
<p>On-award engagement</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Employ a hybrid model of partnership engagement. Programs should embed agile, hybrid models of engagement; a mixture of face-to-face and online training and engagement activities to reduce costs while increasing the engagement period of the Australia Awards fellowship. <p>For example, following SPCCB’s 2015 fellowship, the research skills were directly applied by developing co-authored working papers. Embedding the previous post-fellowship activities such as Re-entry Action Plans (REAP) projects into the structure of the fellowship activities will allow for learning to be directly applied and supported on return to the home country.</p>
<p>Monitoring and Evaluation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Incentivise strategic long-term partnering for further funding. A voluntary post-fellowship partnership and outcomes evaluation for eligibility for further Australia Awards fellowship funding could be introduced to incentivise the strategic partnership building between host and partner organisations. <p>This approach to be self-nominated at 1 to 3 years post award for further funding which could enhance the longevity and impact of outcomes. A limit could be set for a maximum of three fellowship grants per partnership within 10 years to allow for time to demonstrate achievement of intermediate and long-term outcomes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Align fellowship outcomes to Global M&E Framework. Monitoring and evaluation of Australia Awards fellowships should align with other Australia Awards short course awards in the <i>Australia Awards Monitoring and Evaluation Framework</i>. As outlined in the updated framework, a global system (like OASIS) bringing together data on short courses will also benefit the monitoring of fellowship partnerships. Indicators for outputs, intermediate and long-term outcomes should be developed and included in Global M&E Framework. Tracking long-term outcomes (3 years +) of the program can be facilitated through the collection of GTF impact data – surveys, case studies, evaluations etc.

Australia Awards Phase	Recommendation
<p>Alumni/ Partnership engagement</p>	<p>7. Engage with host and partners post award. The focus of Australia Awards fellowships includes both alumni and partner organisations as key change makers to engage with post award to strengthen long-term outcomes and ongoing bilateral engagement. The partnerships themselves which have been invested in are visible demonstrations of linkages between Australia and partner countries supported by DFAT. As such, Australia Awards and DFAT post-award engagement should include both fellowship alumni and the liaising representatives from the partner organisations. Both DFAT, and host and partner organisations should include the following funding and engagement elements into the fellowship lifecycle:</p> <p>DFAT funding and engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posts should include the partnership organisations where relevant into existing engagement activities and forums, and support developing linkages with other development partners working in the relevant field to support broadening the partnerships networks and cohesion across the aid program; • co-funded grants (DFAT, host and partner organisations) for partnership extension activities, such as jointly hosted conferences or forums should be considered. <p>Host and partner organisation/s funding and engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure sufficient time allocation and resources for staff to sustain relationships with partners; • encourage and support research collaboration, co-authored academic publications, conference participation, cross-institutional staff exchanges and workshops to ensure capacity development outcomes and sharing of knowledge; • embed partnerships into institutional frameworks through MOUs, including agreements for PhD and Masters opportunities at the host organisation for suitable candidates from the partner organisations (if applicable); and • engage in New Colombo Plan (NCP) placement opportunities with partner organisation/s to deepen the two-way exchange of knowledge sharing.

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Annex 1: Organisational Profiles

Griffith University

Griffith University was founded in 1971 and began operations in 1975. Located in South-eastern Queensland, it has four campuses across the Greater Brisbane area (Nathan, South Bank, Logan, and Mt Gravatt), one in the Gold Coast, and a digital campus online. Since its inception, Griffith University has cultivated engagement with the Asia-Pacific region through its research and academic programs and was the first Australian university to offer degrees in Asian studies.

The Griffith Asia Institute

The Griffith Asia Institute (GAI) is an ‘internationally recognised research centre within the Griffith Business School,’ specialising in Asia-Pacific focused research to ‘inform and enrich Australia’s future’ in the region (Griffith Asia Institute, n.d.). GAI has three strategic research hubs: the Pacific Hub, the Collaborative Australia-Indonesia Program for Sustainable Development and Climate Change, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Study Centre. GAI’s research focuses on contributing to regional cooperation and development through tackling key challenges such as regional security, governance, business and trade, economic development, and growth. It has a strong commitment using research to advance United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region with particular focus on SDGs 5, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17 (Griffith Asia Institute, n.d.).



The South Pacific Centre for Central Banking

A key part of GAI’s Pacific Research program is the South Pacific Centre for Central Banking (SPCCB) which aims to build capacity for independent research and policy formation among the South Pacific Central Banks. SPCCB was founded in 2016, following the inaugural Central Banking Symposium hosted by Griffith University, to build a platform for research and collaboration in the region. Key partners include the Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF), Reserve bank of Vanuatu (RBV), Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI), The Bank of Papua New Guinea (BPNG) and the Central Bank of Timor-Leste (BCTL).

The SPCCB was formed to bring together world class economic and finance experts, with a clear aim to help build capacity for research and policy formulation and is committed to developing capacity for research and policy formulation at the South Pacific Central Bank.

(South Pacific Centre for Central Banking, n.d.)

The Reserve Bank of Fiji

The Republic of Fiji achieved independence from United Kingdom in 1970. As part of the transition towards self-government, the Central Monetary Authority (CMA) was established in 1973 to act as a fledging central bank. The role of the CMA was to regulate and issue currency, control monetary supply, international monetary exchange, and provide fiscal advice to the Fijian Government to foster economic development. In 1983, the Reserve Bank of Fiji Act was passed, and the CMA transformed into the Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF). The RBF’s core mandate is to ‘conduct monetary policy to foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth’ to support and enhance the ‘economic and financial welfare of Fijians’ (RBF, 2020). The recruitment and training of talented staff is a key priority of the RBF’s Strategic Plan 2019-2024 (RBF, 2019). The RBF is currently collaborating with Griffith University through the SPCCB, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Pacific Financial Technical Assistant Centre (PFTAC) to improve its research capacity and has published a series of RBF working papers and journal articles as part of the capacity building activities.

The Reserve Bank of Vanuatu

After gaining independence from France and the United Kingdom, the Republic of Vanuatu was established on the 30 July 1980. In October 1980, the Central Bank of Vanuatu Act was passed by the new Parliament of Vanuatu, and the bank began a process of monetary reform including the transition to Vatu currency in 1983. In 1989, the Central Bank of Vanuatu Act was amended to give the bank greater powers over the growing banking system and strengthen its advisory role to Government. It changed its name to the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu (RBV). The RBV key functions include the regulation and issue of currency, international exchange of money, regulation of the banking system, formulation and implementation of monetary policy, and advice to the Vanuatu Government to promote financial stability and economic development. The RBV's vision is to provide the 'conditions for Vanuatu to build a strong economy by ensuring confidence and stability' in the financial system (RBV, 2019). RBV has a strong commitment to recruitment, training, and development of professional staff to best meet the needs of bank.

The Central Bank of the Solomon Islands

Established during the transition to self-government in 1976, the Solomon Island Monetary Authority (SIMA) was responsible for currency and exchange regulations and for the introduction of the Solomon Islands dollar in 1977. After independence from the United Kingdom in 1978, the SIMA's role and powers evolved, and the authority officially became a Central Bank of the Solomon Islands (CBSI) in 1983. The new powers included monetary policy, setting interest rates, financial regulations and issuing currency, and providing economic support to the Government (CBSI, 2022). A key role of CBSI is to improve financial inclusion across the Solomon Islands with a strong focus on increasing access to women and young people. The current Financial Inclusion Strategy 3 (2021-2025) is helping to improve access to quality, affordable financial services across the Solomon Islands and promote financial literacy and consumer protection among the community (Central Bank of Solomon Islands, n.d.).

The Bank of Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea gained independence from Australia in 1975. Prior to 1973, the central bank of Papua New Guinea (PNG) was a branch of the Reserve Bank of Australia and was involved in currency exchange. As part of the transition to self-government, The Bank of Papua New Guinea was first established as part of the Central Banking Act Chapter 138 in 1973. Over the years the Act has been amended as the Bank's role developed. In 2000, the Act was replaced by the Central Banking Act to ensure the bank remained independent and to take on additional responsibilities. The BNPNG mission is to 'promote macro-economic stability' and 'help foster economic growth' (BNPNG, 2022). Recruitment, retention, and training of professional staff is seen as a key to the ability of the BNPNG to strengthen its professional standards, manage risk, and to respond to both domestic and international economic and political challenges.

Banco Central De Timor-Leste

The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste gained its independence on the 20th of May 2002. During the transition to self-government as part of the United Nations Transitional Administration of East Timor (UNTAET), central bank activities were run by the Timor-Leste's Banking and Payments Authority (BPA) (2001-2011), and the Central Payments Office (CPO) (2000-2001). The Central Bank of Timor-Leste (BCTL) was established in September 2011 and now oversees all monetary policies, and the regulation of the financial sector under the 'Organic Law of the Central Bank'. It has a government advisory role and administers Timor-Leste's sovereign wealth – known as the Petroleum Fund. In late 2013, the BCTL released the Master Plan for Financial Sector Development 2014-2025 to aid the fledgling development of the financial sector in Timor-Leste in line with the country's larger Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 (BCTL, 2022).

Annex 2: Methodology

This is the 26th case study undertaken by the GTF. It examined an exemplar partnership between an Australian host and partner country organisations, how it was developed and sustained, and the role Australia Awards played in cultivating long-term outcomes through supporting institutional connections and people-to-people links for capacity development.

This is a new approach for the GTF in its data collection and exploration of the long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards because its 'unit of analysis' is organisations (those in Australia and in other countries) rather than individual alumni.

The research was conducted by the Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility (GTF). This research facility commenced in 2016 and is funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Research by the GTF helps DFAT to assess the development contributions and public and economic diplomacy outcomes of Australia's investment in the Australia Awards. This case study forms one of the key research outputs of the sixth year of the GTF.

Objectives

As discussed in the introduction of this report, this study has been undertaken to increase the evidence and knowledge around the development of a successful partnerships between an Australian host organisation – Griffith University, and five central banks as part of the South Pacific Centre for Central Banking (SPCCB). Following a pausing of the Australia Awards fellowships in 2018, the monitoring and evaluation of the long-term impact of the award in building institutional linkages is unknown. However, this pause provides an opportunity to reflect on an exemplar partnership to identify the factors which enabled its ongoing engagement and contributions to development.

SPCCB was identified for its ongoing engagement following two Australia Awards fellowships. The partnership is focussed on collaborating to enhance research skills for evidenced-based policy formulation in the central banks.

This case study examines the role of Australia Awards fellowships on the development of SPCCB. It aims to understand the development and sustainability of the SPCCB partnership to inform Australia Awards Section on the conditions of success when building long-lasting and meaningful partnerships through short course modalities.

This case study seeks to answer three overarching research questions:

1. What were the key factors in the development of the SPCCB partnership?
2. What has been the impact of SPCCB on capacity development and cooperation for Australia and partner countries?
3. What recommendations based on the SPCCB partnership experience can help to inform future Australia Awards short course programming?

Approach

The data collection method used for the interviews in this case study was a mixture of individual interviews, and small focus groups. These were conducted online using the Microsoft Teams online video-conferencing platform. A set of questions were developed for the various groups which included representatives from the host organisation – Griffith University, senior leaders of the central banks – the Deputy-Governor of the Reserve Bank of Fiji and focal point for SPCCB, and central banking researchers and economists involved in the research outputs.

Questions in the interview were tailored to each stakeholder's level of participation in SPCCB and align with the research propositions (located at Annex 2) and long-term program outcomes of the Australia Awards. This ensures that data collected relates to the key questions the case studies are seeking to answer and that there is consistency across each case study.

Sample definition and selection

The research of the GTF focuses on alumni of DFAT's Australia Awards and previous Australian Government-funded scholarships and awards (these include programs dating back to the Colombo Plan, which commence in the 1950s). For each case study undertaken by the GTF, this focus is further refined to a specific cohort of alumni, or theme.

This case study focuses the development of an exemplar partnership from the connections made with the Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF) during the 2015 Australia Awards fellowship, '*Developing capacity for research and policy formulation at the Reserve Bank (Fiji)*' hosted by Griffith University from the 29th of June to the 10th of July 2015. The partnership led to broader engagement in the South Pacific Region and the creation of the South Pacific Centre for Central Banks in 2016, which now sits within the Pacific Hub of the Griffith Asia Institute. The partnership also led to formal MOUs with RBF, Reserve Bank of Vanuatu (RBV), Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI), Bank of Papua New Guinea (BPNG) and Central Bank of Timor-Leste (BCTL), and numerous research publications and engagement activities. In 2018, Griffith University also hosted a second capacity building Australia Awards fellowship, '*Developing Research and Policy Formulation Capacity at the Central Banks (RBF & RBV)*' from the 8th to 26th of January 2018.

The focus of the interview sample was to interview stakeholders from the three main stakeholder groups involved with SPCCB. These include representatives from the host university involved in the development of the partnership and delivery of the two fellowships, representatives from the senior leadership team involved in SPCCB, and the researchers and economists involved in the production of working papers. Initial contact with external stakeholders from the central banks was conducted by the host, with follow up emails by the GTF.

Details relating to the interview participants are included in the table overleaf.

Table 4: SPCCB stakeholders from Griffith University, the Reserve Bank of Fiji, and the Central Bank of the Solomon Islands

Gender	Name	Current Position	Date
M	Dr Parmendra Sharma	Program Convenor, South Pacific Centre for Central Banking (SPCCB), and Senior Lecturer, Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics, Griffith University	Interview: 15/11/2021
M	Dr Jen-Je Su	Leader – Research, SPCCB, and Senior Lecturer, Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics, Griffith University	Focus Group-Griffith University 9/11/2021
M	Associate Professor Tarlok Singh	Leader – Policy, SPCCB, Associate Professor of Economics, Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics, Griffith University	Focus Group-Griffith University: 9/11/2021
F	Professor Caitlin Byrne	Director, Griffith Asia Institute	Focus Group-Griffith University: 9/11/2021
F	Ms Sharm Aboosally	Senior Commercial Projects Officer, Griffith Enterprise, former International Projects Officer/Projects Coordinator International Development	Focus Group-Griffith University: 9/11/2021 & Interview: 16/11/2021
M	Mr Esala Masitabua	Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of Fiji, and SPCCB focal point	Focus Group-Senior Leaders: 1/02/2022
F	Ms Louisa Baragamu	Chief Manager Economics, Research and Statistics Department, Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI)	Focus Group-Researchers & Economists: 2/02/22
F	Ms Kalolaini Ranadi	Senior Economist, Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF), and 2018 Australia Awards fellowship 'Developing Research and Policy Formulation Capacity at the Central Banks (RBF & RBV)' alumni	Focus Group-Researchers & Economists: 2/02/22
M	Mr Matia Tuisawau	Senior Economist, Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF)	Focus Group-Researchers & Economists: 2/02/22
F	Ms Angeline Rohoia	Senior Research Analyst, Research Unit Monetary Policy & Research Division, Economics Research and Statistics Department, Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI)	Focus Group-Researchers & Economists: 2/02/22

Data management and reporting

Interviews were voice recorded (with approval granted to do so). In addition, the researchers annotated responses during the interview. A transcription specialist transcribed all interview recordings. After the completion of the interview and transcription process, the researchers consolidated the written and oral recordings into a single near-verbatim transcript (with restarting of sentences and fillers excluded).

Coding and review

Interview scripts were subsequently coded using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, NVivo. This enabled emerging themes to be identified and links to be made between participants that supported or refuted the research propositions, as aligned with the long-term program outcomes of the Australia Awards.

Analysis of the case study data involved a strategy that was guided by the theoretical proposition developed under the conceptual framework for the case study and by the techniques identified in the GTF's Case Study Approach document.

Where requested case study participants were sent segments of the report where clarification or review and approval were necessary.

Limitations

There are several limitations of this research that were inherent to both the nature of the research and the research process, as discussed below.

Recruitment of a range of central bank participants

A key limitation of this case study was a lack of representation from across the five central banks in SPCCB, reflecting a difficulty of an online-based case study in engaging with participants in locations with COVID-19 restrictions (limited internet connectivity and immediate priorities to address). The GTF worked closely with the Program Convenor of the SPCCB, Dr Parmendra Sharma, to recruit both senior leaders and researchers for the two focus group sessions held on the 1st of February (central bank senior managers) and 2nd of February (SPCCB researchers and economists). Invitations went out in late November 2021, however, due to a range of factors including the impact of COVID-19 on the availability of members, staff away on summer holiday break, three staff from RBF, and two staff from the CBSI were able to participate. To balance representation from the key central bank partners, the GTF used secondary data collected from media articles and promotional materials from key stakeholders involved in the SPCCB partnership (websites, press releases, news articles and reports) in the analysis of the partnership outcomes.

The GTF shared the first draft of the report with Dr Sharma for comment from Griffith University. He approached the five central bank Governors for comment. Three Governors provided statements which are included in a break out section in the report. Please see section 4.4 High level perspective from the SPCCB Governors.

Positive response bias

It is likely that the stakeholders from the central banks in this case study had a positive bias towards their experience, outcomes, and views of Australia. The GTF has developed interview questions and analyses approaches to reduce the impact of this bias—these are applied consistently across all case studies. Through this approach, leading questions are avoided, and participants are offered opportunities to reflect on their outcomes at the beginning and at the end of the interview without specific questions to guide their answers. Participants were also made aware of the strict research capacity of the GTF and its role in providing evidence of outcomes to DFAT.

Annex 3: Interview Guides

Host/Program Convenor – In-depth Interview

Thinking back to the beginning when the group was referred to as the South Pacific Studies Group, we're interested to hear how the network began and the role of the 2015 Australia Awards fellowship.

- 1) How did SPSG begin and who was involved?
- 2) What was the motivation behind applying to host an Australia Awards fellowship in 2015?
 - a. Who initiated applying for the fellowship?
 - b. Were there any intended outcomes for the SPSG as a group in undertaking the Australia Awards fellowship and were these realised?
 - c. Were there any unexpected outcomes or challenges for SPSG from the fellowship?
- 3) To what extent did the 2015 Australia Awards fellowship contribute to the partnership development of the SPSG network?

These next questions are about the evolution of SPSG into the South Pacific Centre for Central Banking and the role of the 2018 Australia Awards fellowship.

- 4) How did the South Pacific Centre for Central Banking come to fruition?
- 5) What was the purpose or motivation for applying to host another Australia Awards fellowship in 2017?
 - a. To what extent did the 2018 Australia Awards fellowship with the Fiji and Vanuatu Central Banks contribute to the goals of SPCCB?
- 6) To what extent did the 2018 Australia Awards fellowship contribute to the partnership development of the SPCCB network?
- 7) Was there any impact to SPCCB when the Australia Awards fellowships ended?
 - a. If there were challenges or negatives – was the network able to find a solution to this/these impacts?

In these next questions, we'd like to understand more about the organisations contributing to SPCCB.

- 8) What has been the process in identifying a partner central bank and building a relationship?
- 9) Are there any factors that have challenged developing partnerships with these or other central banks?
- 10) How have the other key stakeholders joined and supported the network? (e.g. the Reserve Banks of Australia and NZ, WB, ADB)
 - a. What is the role of these organisations as key stakeholders in SPCCB?
 - b. Are there other capacity development/training programs provided by other stakeholders?
 - c. If yes; have these other programs filled the gap left by the ending of Australia Awards fellowships?
- 11) What factors have enabled the ongoing sustainability of SPCCB? (e.g. funding sources, policy)
- 12) What are the risks and challenges to being able to maintain the SPCCB network?

In this last set of questions, we'd like to explore the impact of the SPCCB network to development and building links with Australia

- 13) How is the SPCCB network contributing to sustainable development in the region?
 - a. Can you provide examples?
- 14) How has the SPCCB network contributed to Australia's bilateral relationships across the South Pacific?
 - a. Can you provide examples?
- 15) What recommendations would you make to DFAT, and the Australia Awards Section in particular, to help host organisations develop and sustain successful partnerships with institutions in developing countries?

Griffith International – In-depth Interview

Topic 1: Australia Awards fellowships and SPCCB

1. Could you provide any background information on Griffith University's strategy behind the application of the 2015 Australia Awards fellowship with the fledging connection with the Reserve Bank of Fiji?
2. What was the impetus behind the 2018 Australia Awards fellowship application with the three separate central banks in the SPCCB network?

Topic 2: Australia Awards fellowships and Griffith International

3. Broadly, what was the impact of the Australia Award fellowship modality on the development and strengthening of partnerships in the Asia Pacific region for Griffith International?
4. In general, have partnerships awarded an Australia Awards fellowship been sustainable in the long-term post award?
 - a. From your observations, what is needed in a partnership to be sustainable after an Australia Awards fellowship?
5. How did the cessation of the Australia Award fellowships impact Griffith International's strategy?
6. What resources does Griffith use to build sustainable partnerships with organisations in developing regions? How does the funding mechanism of the Australia Awards fellowships sit in the Griffith's international strategy?
7. In the current COVID-19 recovery climate, would the Australia Awards fellowships have been enough to develop and maintain partnerships?

Topic 3: Recommendations for future Australia Awards fellowships

8. In order to improve the resourcing burden for universities and DFAT, what recommendations would you make if the Australia Awards fellowships were re-started?

Griffith, Host Organisation – Focus Group Discussion

Topic 1: Griffith's approach to international engagement

1. Broadly describing, can you explain Griffith University's international strategy in the Asia Pacific region?
2. In what ways do awards like the Australia Awards fellowships contribute to Griffith University's international strategy?

Topic 2: SPCCB and Griffith University

3. How does SPCCB support achieving Griffith Asia Institute's objectives?
4. In what ways has COVID-19 impacted on Griffith University and Griffith Asia Institute's role in the SPCCB network?
5. What types of supports are needed now for the long-term sustainability of partnerships like SPCCB?

Topic 3: Recommendations

6. If DFAT was to re-start a program like the Australia Awards fellowships, what recommendations would you make to ensure this modality supports building meaningful partnerships for capacity development?

Central Bank Partners, Senior Management – Focus Group Discussion

Introductory question:

Please state your name and role in your bank?

Topic 1: The central banks' approaches to international engagement

1. How does participation in SPCCB fit into your central bank's strategic plan or mission?

Topic 2: Technical skills needs of the central banks

2. Across your central bank, what are the gaps in skills or expertise, and to what extent are these needs met through participating in SPCCB?

Topic 3: Partnership with Griffith University through SPCCB

3. In addition to capacity development of research skills, what other benefits are there to your bank's participation in SPCCB?
4. In what ways has participation in SPCCB impacted your regional networks?
5. What do you see is the most valuable outcome of your bank's participation in SPCCB?

Central Bank Partners, Fellowship Alumni and Researchers – Focus Group Discussion

Introductory question:

Please state your name, role and how you became involved in the SPCCB?

Topic 1: Research outcomes

1. How has your participation in SPCCB impacted your work or role in your organisation?
2. What has been the impact of the research papers you have been involved in? Please provide examples (*i.e. policy formation, economic growth or stability, inclusion, and gender empowerment*)
3. In what ways has participation in SPCCB impacted your professional networks in the region?
4. What do you see is the most valuable outcome of your bank's participation in SPCCB?