



Australian Government



Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific



FACT SHEET

Upgrading Tonga's international port

Project Name: Nuku'alofa Port Upgrade

AIFFP INVESTMENT

GRANT: AUD28.6 million

PARTNERS

Government of the Kingdom of Tonga
Asian Development Bank (ADB)

CONSTRUCTION

2022 onwards

COMPLETION

2026

About the project

Australia, through the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP), provided a grant package to the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga alongside support from the Asian Development Bank for upgrades to the Queen Salote International Wharf of Nuku'alofa Port. The works involved rehabilitating existing port infrastructure across four wharves and expanding shipping capabilities to facilitate increased international operations. The project's climate-resilience measures included building a concrete seawall and strengthening existing rock walls to protect against sea level rise;

upgrading port access roads including installation of solar powered lighting; upgrading rainwater harvesting systems; and improving stormwater drainage. In the event of emergency, the upgrades enable Tonga to continue trading and quickly deploy lifesaving products and services to communities. In addition, the project included institutional strengthening support for the Ports Authority of Tonga to improve its operational practices, develop an asset maintenance plan and through training on port operations, environmental sustainability, health, and safety and security.

Map



Infrastructure highlights

In partnership with governments and private sector firms in the Pacific, the AIFFP facilitates the delivery of high quality, resilient infrastructure. The project's infrastructure footprint includes:



4 WHARVES
UPGRADED



**50 METRE
EXTENSION**
OF WHARF 2 WITH
NEW NAVIGATION
MARKERS, MOORINGS
AND BUOYS



**NEW
CONCRETE
SEAWALL**
AND
STRENGTHENED
ROCK REVETMENT



**CONTAINER
YARD HARD
STAND AREA**
RECONSTRUCTED



**PORT
ACCESS
ROAD**
UPGRADED



**AUXILIARY
PORTS
FACILITIES**
REPAIRED

Impact at a glance

Across all its projects, the AIFFP prioritises lasting development and economic outcomes for people and communities. Its approach is guided by five impact areas: local content; climate resilience; social and environmental safeguards; gender equality, disability and social inclusion; and quality and integrity.

The project aimed to promote safer, more reliable and more affordable transport infrastructure and services in Tonga through improving the capacity and operations of the Nuku'alofa Port. Its impact includes:

GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION



With a gender action plan in place the project is **exceeded its commitment of employing women in at least 10% of construction roles and training course placements** and the project delivered gender awareness training across its workforce. In addition, **women led efforts in several of the project's work areas**, including non-traditional areas for female workers in Tonga. **67 per cent of project management roles were held by women** and one female engineer was mentored on the job to lead the quality control testing of the project's concrete batching plant.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

With Tonga being one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to the impacts of climate change, the port upgrades were designed carefully to be **climate-resilient**. Allowances were made for increases in precipitation and temperature, sea level rises, storms, wind speeds, earthquakes and tsunamis, ensuring **minimal disruption to Tongans' livelihoods** in the event of an emergency.



LOCAL CONTENT



In line with the AIFFP's approach to local content, the project is **contributed significantly to local employment**, with **Tongans making up an average of 80 per cent of the local workforce**. Locally sourced materials and equipment were also prioritised, leading to **innovative technical solutions** such as the use of rock waste bags for the port's revetment. The onsite concrete batching plant and precast yard was **100 per cent** operated and managed by the local workforce.

To build the skills of the project's workforce, **on-the-job training** for local staff focused on topics including occupational health and safety. To encourage workers to be proactive about safety, 'see-say-do' reporting was implemented, with more than **900 reports completed**.



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