

Scope of Work - Pacific MEL

Background

The GSMA Mobile for Humanitarian Innovation (M4H) programme envisions an inclusive digital humanitarian future, where mobile and digital solutions provide affected populations with improved access to life-enhancing mobile-enabled services across preparedness, response, and recovery. The programme acts as a convenor between mobile network operators (MNOs), humanitarian actors and national governments to promote innovation, collaboration, and impact in crisis settings.

The mobile industry plays a critical role in the reach and scale of early warning systems (EWS) that are increasingly critical with more frequent and severe disasters globally. The M4H programme plays a leading strategic and operational role in the Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative, particularly Pillar 3 (warning dissemination and communication).¹ At country level, GSMA supports enabling environments where MNOs are effectively engaged in the design, implementation, and operation of national EWS.

EWS in the Pacific region

Pacific Island countries and territories face some of the world's highest exposure to natural hazards, including tropical cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, flash floods and thunderstorms. Across the region, each country is at a different stage of developing and operationalising mobile-enabled early warning systems.

Since 2024, M4H has worked with the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA), MNOs, governments and regional partners to progress cell broadcast early warning systems, including through cell broadcast (CB) readiness work. This has included technical assistance, regional convenings, capacity building and country level implementation support. Together, this work has evolved into the largest coordinated cell broadcast effort in the Pacific.

As M4H's Pacific portfolio evolves, there is an opportunity to assess progress achieved to date and strengthen the evidence base on what a regional implementation approach of CB-enabled early warning systems looks like.

At the time of writing, additional funding opportunities are under consideration and may expand the scope of activities across the region.

¹ GSMA (2024). Mobile-Enabled Early Warning Systems: The GSMA and the Early Warnings for All Initiative

Project overview

M4H is seeking an experienced research partner to support Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) of M4H's Pacific EWS activities. The work is expected to be delivered in two phases.

- **Phase 1: A standalone learning study and development of MEL approach.** This will focus on assessing progress, contribution and implementation learning from M4H's Pacific EWS activities to date. It will examine how M4H's regional and country level approach has supported cell broadcast implementation, identify factors that have enabled or constrained progress, and generate practical lessons for future EWS programming. Phase 1 will also establish the foundations of a consistent and replicable end-to-end MEL approach for assessing progress, reach and impact across the cell broadcast implementation pathway, including developing tools, indicators, and a theoretical approach.

Geographic scope: Pacific regional activities and country level engagements delivered through the existing GSMA-PITA partnership. This includes 2025 markets (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands) and 2026 countries (Niue, Tuvalu, Nauru). Focus markets for this phase are expected to be Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Niue to reflect a diversity of implementation stages and market complexities. The final selection will be agreed during inception.

- **Phase 2 (subject to confirmation of additional funding): Testing and embedding end-to-end MEL approach.** Building directly on Phase 1, extend the research across planned regional and country level implementation activities and test and refine the MEL approach developed during Phase 1, including with local partners during test of cell broadcast and other EWS. This is expected to include generating evidence from implementation, national testing and, where feasible, community level activities.

Geographic scope: As Phase 1, plus expanded activities in Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Focus markets for MEL activities are expected to be Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Niue. The final selection will be agreed during the inception stage of Phase 2.

GSMA's intention is to retain continuity between the two phases. Subject to confirmation of funding, satisfactory performance under Phase 1, agreement on the detailed Phase 2 scope and workplan, GSMA may extend the appointed supplier's contract to undertake Phase 2.

Across the two phases, the work is intended to develop, test and refine a consistent set of MEL tools, indicators and methods overing the CB implementation journey, including:

1. Readiness assessments
2. Convenings

3. Capacity building
4. SOP and template development
5. Device testing
6. National testing
7. Public awareness and community engagement

This will support M4H to establish a consistent and replicable MEL approach for future EWS activities, with potential application by partners.

Objectives

The overarching objectives of the work are to:

Phase 1: Assess how M4H's approach in the region has supported cell broadcast implementation and identify implications for future efforts. Alongside this, establish a holistic, replicable MEL impact approach to assessing EWS reach and effectiveness.

Specific objectives include:

1. Understand progress, outcomes and lessons from M4H's Pacific EWS activities to date.
2. Explore the contribution of the different activity strands: regional coordination, capacity building, technical assistance and country level implementation support to progress across the Pacific.
3. Identify the factors that have enabled or constrained implementation
4. Identify lessons from M4H's regional approach and the extent to which regional vs country level activities have contributed to progress (and whether this applies globally vs the Pacific alone).
5. Develop practical recommendations to strengthen ongoing/planned Pacific EWS activities.
6. Establish a consistent and replicable end-to-end MEL approach for assessing the reach and impact of EWS projects.

Phase 2: To (1) understand progress, outcomes and lessons from M4H's Pacific EWS activities and (2) generate lessons on the effective operationalisation and measurement of cell broadcast-enabled EWS

Specific objectives include:

7. Test the end-to-end MEL approach for CB-enabled EWS implementation (from readiness through to community level response).
8. Create evidence from specific markets on implementation, national testing and community level outcomes.

Methodology

The indicative methodology below sets out the expected activities. Applicants are encouraged to propose refinements or alternative approaches where these would strengthen delivery against the research objectives.

The assignment is expected to be delivered in two phases. Phase 1 forms the initial commissioned scope. Phase 2 is an anticipated extension, subject to confirmation of additional funding and associated Pacific EWS workplan

Phase 1

- Review existing programme evidence, where it exists from the project. This will be complemented with available research from the region.
- Design the foundations of an end-to-end MEL approach for assessing and capturing impact of EWS.
- Stakeholder interviews and deep dives in selected markets to identify progress, M4H's contribution and implementation lessons.
 - *Note: It is yet to be confirmed whether these will take place in person or remotely, or a blended approach. A planned project workshop in the Pacific in Q1 2027 will be the target for a 'Lessons Learned' dedicated session to test and validate findings.*
- A minimum of 3 x case studies, alongside regional lessons, are produced in a standalone report.

Phase 2

- Building on the approach under Phase 1, test and embed MEL across the planned 2027-8 regional and country level activities.
- Refine tools for assessing the progress of: readiness assessments, convenings, capacity building efforts, SOP development, device testing, national testing and public awareness approaches to support rollout.
- Where possible, undertake local research to assess community level reach and response.

Research Questions

The overarching research questions for both Phases 1 and 2 would be:

1. What progress has been achieved towards the implementation and operationalisation of cell broadcast in the Pacific?
 - Where is progress visible? Where do gaps remain?
 - How does this vary across the different country contexts M4H has supported?
2. What has contributed most to progress and what have been the key challenges?
 - Which approaches or specific activities appear to be the most effective? Why?
 - What has accelerated or limited implementation the most?
 - How have stakeholder relationships influenced progress? Which stakeholders have been most influential?

- How have different tiers of partners influenced progress including: (1) thematic support: PITA/ETC & WFP, (2) technical support: MNOs like Digicel Pacific & Vodafone, (3) sustainability and financing: SPREP)
3. What lessons emerge from M4H's regional implementation model in the Pacific?
- What value has the regional approach created so far?
 - Where has country level support been most important?
 - What have we learned in terms of financing this work and its ongoing sustainability?
 - What is unique to the Pacific vs could be applied to other regions?
 - What implications does this have for future EWS programming in the Pacific or other regional approaches?
4. What can the Pacific work teach us about end-to-end EWS implementation?
- What lessons emerge from across the full CB implementation pathway?
 - What outcomes are most meaningful to track? How is this best captured on the ground (and when is it best to gather this data during the process)?
 - How can this inform future M4H/partner EWS approaches?

Experience and capabilities

Required

- Presence in the Pacific region, or be based in Australia or New Zealand with strong experience in leading research or MEL studies across Pacific Island countries and territories.
- Relevant MEL and applied research experience, including designing MEL frameworks, indicators, data collection tools and learning approaches that are relevant to the region.
- Knowledge of early warning systems, disaster preparedness or humanitarian preparedness and response.
- Experience conducting qualitative research and stakeholder engagement across different Pacific Island countries and territories.
- The ability to translate research and MEL data into practical findings, recommendations and accessible learning outputs.
- If not based in the Pacific, capacity to travel as needed for the project.

Desirable

- Prior experience of working on early warning systems directly in the Pacific region.
- Experience working on mobile-enabled alerting systems.
- Experience of working on regional programmes.

- Existing relationships with, or experience engaging, Pacific governments, regional organisations, mobile network operators or humanitarian organisations.

Deliverables and Timelines

The consultant will undertake the activities above and deliver the following:

Phase 1: Q4 2026-Q1 2027

- Deliverable 1: Inception deck/report, including refined methodology, country selection, stakeholder engagement approach, detailed workplan, roles and responsibilities, dependencies and risks.
- Deliverable 2: Evidence review and draft end-to-end MEL approach, including a synthesis of existing evidence, identified evidence gaps, proposed indicators and methods for assessing progress, reach and impact across relevant stages of CB implementation.
- Deliverable 3: Country and regional findings, including a minimum of 3 case studies and emerging lessons.
- Deliverable 4: Validation/lessons learned session.
- Deliverable 5: Final Phase 1 report and finalised initial MEL approach, including practical findings, lessons and recommendations for ongoing Pacific EWS implementation and for Phase 2.

Phase 2: 2027 TBC*

The following are indicative outputs and are subject to change:

- Refined MEL tools, indicators and data collection approaches.
- Evidence and learning from selected implementation activities and markets.
- Findings from national testing and, where feasible, community level assessments.
- Interim learning products at relevant programme milestones.
- A final consolidated end-to-end MEL approach for CB-enabled EWS implementation.
- Final learning and recommendations for future Pacific and wider M4H EWS programming.

*Note: *Specific timings will depend on the confirmed additional funding, Pacific workplan and country activity schedules. Phase 2 activities may commence while Phase 1 is being finalised.*

Expressions of interest

Interested individuals or organisations are invited to submit a short summary (1-2 pages) outlining their experience, skills and interest in this study.

This should include a brief overview of the individual consultant or proposed team, examples of relevant expertise, regional experience and availability to partner on this project.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to a briefing call with the GSMA team to inform the development of a more detailed proposal.

The selected supplier/s will be contracted separately for Phase 1 and Phase 2. As such, a short proposal will be required for each phase, reflecting the different project activities and deliverables.

Clarifications or questions can be sent to Anna Colquhoun acolquhoun@gsma.com and Sheila Moa smoa@gsma.com.