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# **Samoa National Events Management Policy, 2020**

**National Policy on Managing and Hosting of National  
Events**

**MINISTRY OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET**

## 1.0 FOREWORD

Traditional wedding celebrations lasted for several days, depending on family wealth; while the end of a mourning period is usually a day's event. Samoans celebrated the birth of a child in unique ways – and praised the achievements of its warriors following a battle – once against other villages, but most recently in either a long boat race or a cricket game. We celebrated every turn of event in one's life, just as birthdays are celebrated every year, for a favorite child.

Samoa has come a long way as an independent nation. Following decades of colonialism since the early 1900s, it became the first nation to acquire independence from colonial powers in 1960. Samoa continued to lead the way in social, economic and governance reforms since Independence, in various forms and practices.

Even before Independence, nationalism and patriotism paved the way for Samoan's strive and passive resistance against colonial rules. Our culture and norms configure who we are as Samoans and arrange the essentials that identify us. The attempts by the colonial administrators to control our culture and traditions, was perceived a major challenge on the very core of our society and people. Since Independence, we continue with more and more of our culture, to celebrate our identity and commemorate our abilities and strengths in maintaining the status quo and developing Samoa for all.

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## 1.2 ACRONYMS

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
MPMC	Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
SAT	Samoan Tala
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDS	Strategy for the Development of Samoa
UN	United Nations

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

We celebrate milestones and congregate for cultural and national events. Our commemorations, festivities and assembling today, may range from regular Sunday services, family funerals and weddings to national events such as Independence Day and the Teuila Tourism Week. In one way or another, Samoa has also celebrated different International and UN sanctioned special days, such as Women's Day, International Youth Day, Disability's Day and World Health Day, to name but a few.

All celebrations vary in scope and purpose. Costing and resources including time and personnel also differ but is largely determined by the organizers, the people involved and the mood of the season.

## **2.1 PURPOSE**

This policy focuses primarily on the commemoration of National Events in Samoa and our responses in coordinating and hosting conferences and meetings. It is anticipated that this Policy will enable the MPMC and all Government sectors to deliver quality exceptional services to the nation, ensuring that our people and country are well informed, well governed and secured. In delivering these services, the Ministry as a central agency will play a leading role in the nation's collective responses to achieving the 2030 Global Agenda and realizing the Samoa 2040 Platform. The Ministry's responsibility to Government and the nation in strengthening partnerships will have persevering and enduring effects on the realization of the rest of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Samoa has a number of national events, serving different purposes that are celebrated every year. MPMC has played the coordinator and facilitator roles for most of these celebrated events, ceremonies, programs and procedures. Some of our national events are held to celebrate special historical occasions to rekindle Samoa's culture, traditions and way of life while some serve the purpose of special ceremonies conducted for government officials. Most however are ceremonial functions that usually weighted much on the responsible Government ministries' resources and capital, as well on the delivering and performing of their respective mandated functions. These events have been successfully managed and facilitated over the years by the different ministries and supporting agencies.

## **2.2 VISION**

This policy aims to ensure that Government's commitment to hosting national events and international engagements held in Samoa are manageable, well – coordinated and in compliance with Samoa's high level mandates and commitments. The Government's responses to all these events should bolster and augment connections to the (Clever Samoa 2050), Samoa 2040, the Pacific 2040 and Pacific Regionalism, the SDGs 2030 and the SDS 2017 – 2021.

## **2.3 SCOPE**

This document is designed to guide and inform decisions on best practices that will strengthen partnerships and deliver excellent services to Samoa. These services must operate to ensure that Samoa is well governed, secured and informed. Overall, this document shall

strengthen policy advice from the whole of government perspective, bolstering national security and our responses to world challenges of today. Apparently, this document will serve to advise and enable Government to strategically assess and design hosting events and managing all facets of development.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

Information for this Policy (and Strategy for MPMC) were collected from a number of secondary sources, which include Reports of past Independence Celebrations, Financial Reports and observations by the committees responsible for the different national events over the years. An analytical report prepared by the Ministry, providing information for the Prime Minister and Cabinet was instrumental in informing a strategic position with regards to the commemoration of our national events.

A similar paper on hosting international and regional conferences prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided the perspectives and guidelines on our responsibilities when hosting regional and international events.



## 4.0 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's involvement in ceremonial functions is predetermined and attributed to the fact that the Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers usually host a number of these occasions. However, it is not alone, as all the other central Government agencies, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Finance, and often the whole of Government are engaged to offer technical, financial and administrative support whenever Samoa hosts a world sports tournament, a world conference or a national event. The whole of Government often leads, coordinates, participates or assists in the preparations, coordination and implementation of these ceremonial, national, regional and international events. Some of the national events in particular include the following:

- i. Prayer and Fasting Week;
- ii. Independence Celebrations;
- iii. Swearing in ceremonies (Government, Head of States, Member of Council of Deputies, CEOs of Government);
- iv. Conferral of Honors and Awards;
- v. State Funerals;
- vi. Conferral of Samoan Citizenships;
- vii. Fuataga o le Ie Samoa;
- viii. National Agriculture Fair/Show
- ix. Teuila Festival and National Tourism Week

From a quick analysis of limited resources and information available, the following presents key determinants of the evaluation that informs the policy statement and directions presented in this Policy. The information seeks to provide guidance on coordinating and hosting of national, regional and international events. Further clarification on Government's commitment to the above mentioned are provided in the strategy and plan for this Policy.

### A. Financial and Economic Impacts

All the events and activities have drained Government funding and resources over the years. For the Samoa Independence celebration, up to \$5 million Tala was spent on the commemoration of its 50 years anniversary. Every other year, SAT\$500,000 is spent to celebrate Independence Day. Other national celebrations and events such as those mentioned above cost Government up to SAT\$700,000.00 a year. The Ie Samoa program, which

rewarded fine mat weavers with cash prices increased to SAT\$690,000.00 in 2018. Reforms in the last two years led to a huge drop to SAT\$370, 000.00. Parliament however, in 2020 approved the allocation of SAT\$1 million to support this initiative. From critics' point of view, all money spent on national events and programs could have made a huge difference in our quest to keep Samoa healthier, secured, informed, innovative and resourceful. Government on the other hand has usually advocated for wise management and careful spending – within financial policies.

### **B. Social and Environmental Impacts**

Any added pressure on our resources creates tremendous effects on our social and environmental sustainability and development. The economic impact therefore of the hosting and coordinating of these national/international events is only the tip of the iceberg. Every celebration requires social interaction, participation and transportation. Every celebration demands food and drinks. Every commemoration seeks space and platforms – all in one way or another diminishing the environment, resources and funds.

### **C. Health and Security Challenges**

Celebration, commemoration and conferences are not complete without people making sacrifices, either as participants, volunteers, organizers or implementers of the events. Hence, demand is often placed on our health systems, our border control systems, our national security systems, the essential service providers and the support of our local people and communities. Social distancing as required for COVID – 19 will be a huge challenge to our people. The frequency and prominence of similar health related challenges in the future will continue to create social concerns for Samoans.

After years and several recommendations from Government reforms and in light of the challenge and impacts mentioned above, it is timely and crucial that a policy is designed on hosting and managing of all events and ceremonies for Samoa.

## 4.1 POLICY PRINCIPLES

The foundation of the Events Management Policy is rooted in the following rudiments:

### A. Sustainability

Most Government projects and activities rely on donor funding to drive implementation. It is crucial that when celebrating and commemorating events, we also consider life after the availability of donor funds. It is important that we manage our resources wisely for tomorrow's generation.

### B. Consistency

It is important that we exercise consistency in all programs and that some equilibrium is provided to maintain the balance in benefits to all recipients of Government supported and funded national programs. To do this, it is important that evidence – based, statistical data driven information are available and that resolute and purposeful analytical assessment are executed. Key elements to consider in this formula are (1) correlational; (2) relevancy to national goals; (3) participants; (4) costs; and (5) time. With these key elements, a predetermined ratio of 1:1 shall apply across all the determinants, while a range is decided also for correlational, relevancy and our national goals and objectives.

For example, for participants, at least 1:2 for gender shall be the limit; a significant relation of up to 1 percent is considered for 1 in a range also of 1 to 1, on both sides of a bell curve. A set budget based on key elements identified as 1, 2 and 3 above, within a given time frame, shall provide a significant data analysis to inform any plan for hosting and coordinating events.

### C. Cost Effectiveness

Budgeting within our means also calls for our people to be satisfied with what they have and at their disposal. Innovative and fresh ideas shall be encouraged. Millions have been committed over the years to celebrate our national events and international commitments. This Policy shall consider that we produce and deliver quality programs that also save costs for other development projects.

### D. Accessibility

Paramount in this policy is the availability easily accessible of all information to the general public, stakeholders and partners. At the same time, we vow to ensure that no one is left behind and that Samoa is well informed.

#### **E. Collaboration and Partnerships**

Collaboration and partnership are crucial policies that will contribute and enable the implementation of any program or event we lead, coordinate or participate in. Collaboration and partnerships are outlined as key drivers of the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs 2030.

#### **F. Equality**

All people are to be treated equally irrespective of race, gender, ability and status. The policy seeks to address our collective response and attitude so we continue to champion the principles of good governance.

#### **G. Whole of Government**

The whole of Government approach is considered a key principle in realizing this Policy.

## **4.2 POLICY STATEMENTS**

The theme of the 2019/2020 budget presented by the Ministry of Finance is further supported in this policy, in which we are advised to **live within our means**. The economic development of Samoa is receptive to natural disasters, which are no longer limited to cyclones, droughts and tsunamis. It now includes health related issues such as the prevention against COVID – 19 pandemic and disease outbreak such as the measles from December 2019 to January 2020. It is therefore crucial that our country adopts policies to guide its involvement in international celebrations and Government’s responsibilities in commemorating national events.

#### **A. Lufiliufi Lima Lelei - Live within our Means**

Controlling our economy calls on the collective actions of all sectors, in working together as the whole of Government. This policy will require good planning, strategic budgeting and reforms to ensure that Government is able to maintain the momentum created over the years, while continuing to produce exceptional results, irrespective of the envelope they receive from Government or donors.

The Government through Cabinet Decisions has already instructed the reduction and minimizing of costs and spending. These have been with regards to travels, refreshment

for any Ministry activity and most recently limiting any Government function to only an hour. Policies are also in place to stop the abusing of Government vehicles and resources, limiting overtime payment to only a few essential service providers and reducing number of board members of all Government entities. Government will continue to drive this policy position, to live within our means.

The coronavirus COVID 19 has been the practical platform for our people to spend within our means. Government has been encouraging our people to reduce spending and change our attitude towards our basic needs and wants. With the economic challenges in New Zealand and Australia, Samoans have been advised to look inward and develop our own resources including our land. This means that we become more dependent on our own skills, resources and people to drive our economy. Samoa therefore should observe and steer with cautious the utilization and exploitation of our resources. In addition, our Government needs to be considerate of our spending when hosting an event or coordinating a national celebration so they do not exceed budgets, while producing the same results. This policy statement seeks to engage all government entities in resource sharing, program integration and collaborative planning, implementing and monitoring.

To realize this policy, the following objectives are to be considered.

1. Ensure activities for national events are in line with Government policies on spending; and
2. Ensure collaboration and resource sharing are maximized for utmost benefit to the nation.

These objectives can be realized through the following:

Objectives	Strategies	Expected Outcomes	Policy focal point(s) or Responsible Agency
<b>Budgets for national events are aligned with policies and guidelines</b>	Encourage and strengthen observance of all relevant Government policies and strategies	Enhanced compliance and enforcement of policies;	All Government Ministries
	Develop guidelines for national events budgeting	Manageable spending on national events; and Complete utilization of funding as budgeted.	MOF
<b>Maximize resource sharing and</b>	Develop whole of government engagement strategy	Collegial culture developed and strengthened amongst Government entities; &	MPMC and all Government

<b>whole of government.</b>		Open and transparent Government	
	Encourage whole of government perspective on shared resource mobilization	Cost savings and resource sharing strengthened.	Public Administration sector

## **B. Seu le Manu ae Tagai i le Galu – Steer with Care**

This policy statement calls for careful and conscious consideration of all factors, when hosting and participating in national or international celebrated events. It is strikingly important that as we strive to become more interdependent, independent and sustainable, we maintain our reputation as a nation founded in God and never lose vision of a better future for Samoa. Control and planning are therefore crucial determinants on any proposed and given plan and budget for national events, international celebrations and hosting of conferences and meetings. Along the same line, this policy statement encourages our people to consider more productive and practical ways to utilize funding that are often committed to national celebrations and events. Hence wise decisions on how we celebrate any event and activity, must consider the time, cost, and impacts it will have in the short term and the next five years.

In this statement, we consider all the events affecting policy and strategic directions of the world, in the interest of Samoa’s foundation in God, national security, cultural and social means and most importantly, economic challenges. In commemorating and celebrating therefore, we must be more mindful of the waves than the wealth of birds available in the air to assist our development. Thus, the policy statement advises that we reflect and contemplate the effects and consequences of any decision relating to the coordinating and managing of events – be ready and steer with utmost care.

Evidence based decisions should be prioritized so factual and research driven advises are pronounced in hosting, attending or coordinating an event. In the same pace, we stride to train and build our people’s capacity to be better fishermen and farmers, entrepreneurs and analysts – and live within our means. This policy also touches on the need to ensure that Samoa is well secured in light of any national event.

The following objectives guide the successful implementation of this policy statement.

1. Ensure that the national interest and security of Samoa is considered and protected in all events it is engaged in;
2. Ensure that national events provide succession sustainable plans for Samoa; and
3. Ensure that thorough researches are conducted to support any policy advice to Government relating to Samoa's engagement and commitment to national events.

These objectives are realized when guided by the following strategies, and the whole of Government as the focal points and responsible agencies continue with their deliverance of relevant outcomes as expected.

Objectives	Strategies	Expected Outcomes	Policy focal point(s) or Responsible Agency
<b>National Interest and security are protected</b>	Implement and activate the national security policy/strategy.	Successful national event with minimal interruptions.	National Security Committee
	Collaborate closely with the intelligence and compliance community for any national event.	Security maximized for all participants of national events.	All of Government, especially leading Ministries and entities.
<b>Succession sustainable plans for National events</b>	Develop and implement for any national event a succession sustainable development plan.	Sustainability measures are prioritized in the utilization of funding for national events; Increased scale of beneficiary coverage.	Leading ministry and stakeholders.
	Enforce capacity building mechanism in national events to guarantee value for money.	Clever and well capacitated society on sustainable measures and championing money for value programs.	Public Sector and relevant stakeholders.
<b>Evidence based researches to inform policy advise</b>	Develop and carry out research plan for any national event.	Information presented and advised are based on documented evidence based researches.	Leading ministry and/or entity.
	Develop well researched and factual policy advice to Cabinet on any national event.	Informative information used to inform policies for the Prime Minister and Cabinet.	Leading ministry and entities.

### **C. E Mamae le Tava'e i ona Fulu – We are who we are as Samoans**

Simplifying does not undermine values and recognition. Our people's attitude and receptiveness to any proposed change will rise with the proposed strategies minimizing costs, time and resources committed to national, regional and international celebrations. Samoans will require time to deliberate, explore and anticipate changes to our national celebrations especially the Independence Day.

This policy statement serves to address that simplifying an event does not take away any of its importance and significance. As we mature as an independent country, we become older and wiser also not only in years, but most importantly in seniority in the political arena. Such seniority has informed our stability as a nation and driven our recognition in the region and the world.

Therefore, our reputation as a country with outstanding stability, demonstrating significant progress and improvements in all sectors, will remain the determining factor winning approval and acquiring respect from the regional and international communities. Hence, it will no longer be the cost, time and resources that we spent on our celebration, but the commitment, effort and support of our people. Changes and reforms introduced over the last few years will serve to inform changes in attitude, acceptance and consideration of changes this policy introduces to national events, celebration and commemorations.

The challenges of pandemics and other natural phenomenon have changed the nature of commemoration and celebration. It is important that Samoa continues with its commemoration and celebration utilising platforms available as we pride ourselves in what and who we are as Samoans. The policy statement calls on well informing the nation and engaging them at all levels of discussion, in strategic ways that will garnish their support.

The following objectives serve to guide the implementation of this policy statement.

1. Ensure that the nation is thoroughly consulted and informed of national events;
2. Encourage and build nationalism and patriotism amongst our people; and
3. Encourage the using of online platforms and digital technological advances to commemorate national events if required.



Objectives	Strategies	Expected Outcomes	Policy focal point(s) or Responsible Agency
<b>Include all of Samoa in National events</b>	Conduct national consultations where possible to collect public views and gather support for national events	Relevant information are collected from a wider range of perspectives; Increase representation of the nation in planning and implementing	Leading partner or ministry with whole of government support
	Increase media communication using mass media	Well informed Samoa of all developments in national events commemoration.	MPMC, Whole of Government and Mass Media
<b>Strengthen nationalism and patriotism</b>	Increase inclusion of national leaders, village and community leaders and role models in national events from planning and implementing	Wider representation and inclusion developing sense of belonging and loyalty to Samoa.	Samoa Diaspora Unit, MFAT, MWCSA, MPMC and all sectors of Government
	Decentralise national programs and implement in the rural areas	Nationalism strengthened and wider appreciation of national programs.	All Government and communities.
<b>Increase remote participation and online celebration</b>	Coordinate online filming and production for remote celebration.	Continuous coverage in spite of emergencies and disasters	MPMC, mass media & all government.
	Utilise advanced media platforms for information sharing and dissemination.	Increased awareness and response from wider coverage.	All of Government led by MPMC and mass media.

Coordinating and hosting national events are amongst the responsibilities of the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, which synchronizes roles that are executed and played by other government Ministries, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Finance, Samoa Tourism Authority and others during national events. The Strategy designed for managing national events clearly articulated the MPMC's responsibilities to this Policy.

## 5.0 REVIEW, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This Policy shall be reviewed on a biannual basis by the MPMC, while Ministries and Corporations hosting annual events should conduct review in line of debriefings and analysis after any celebration and commemoration.

### A. Implementation Plan

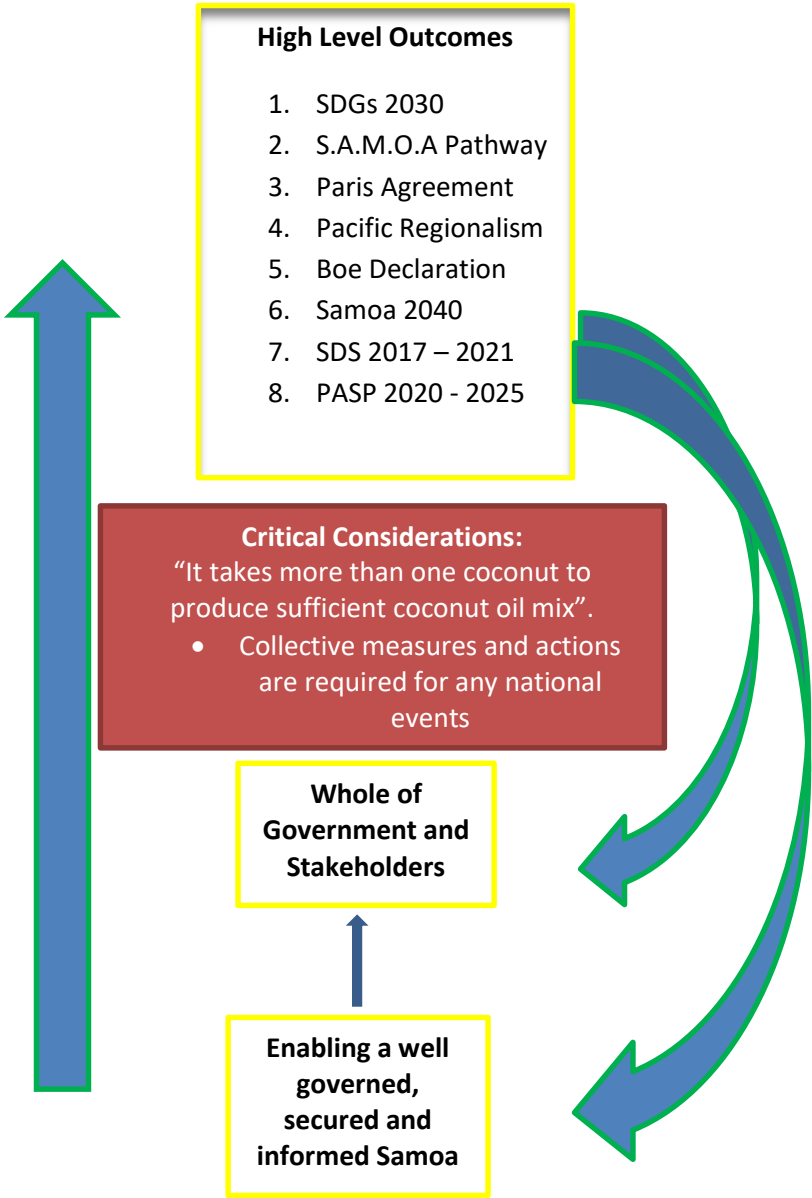
The following table presents the Review, Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the National Events Policy at a high level and recognizes that many different stakeholders are required to work together in order to achieve results for this Policy.

**Table 2. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

Indicators	Outcome	Output	Baseline	Target	Responsible
Percentage of Budgets for national events complying with national policies	Improved compliance with national policies on spending and budgeting.	Increased in savings from costs to national events.	50%	100%	All of Government
Protection measures fully engaged for national security of national events	Compliance with national security policy activated and sustained.	Secured national events from threats and civil disruptions.	n/a	100	TCU, Ministry of Police, National Security Taskforce
Number of national events with long term succession plans	Sustainability plans for the utilization and distribution of resources encouraged.	Wider scale of beneficiary coverage from national events; Proactive measures and responses to national events.	0	10 events	Leading/Hosting Agency
Number of researches conducted for any national event	Evidence based policy advises provided to Government on national events.	Factual outcomes delivering decisions on national events	5	10	All of Government and leading agency
Percentage of Samoans consulted and included in national events	Nationalism and patriotism strengthened through inclusion from the start	Successful appreciation of national events and changes	n/a	10 percent	All of Government and leading agency with assistance of Press Secretariat
Percentage of national events	Increased community	Demarcation of events to engage civil society saving	n/a	25 percent	Leading agency and all of government

conducted in rural areas Number of national events accessed remotely using online platforms	participation and awareness	costs to government			
	Increased awareness and access to national events even in times of emergencies	Samoans are not left out of any program even our diaspora	1	10	Leading agency with Press Secretariat

The effective monitoring of this policy should inform our responses to all the high level outcomes. Of utmost importance is collaboration and collectively supporting one another especially amongst government and community agencies.



## 6.0 REFERENCES

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