



GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA

SAMOA OVERSEAS MEDICAL TREATMENT REVISED POLICY



2023

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

PREFACE

The Overseas Medical Treatment in Samoa's context is generally described as referring of Samoa citizens to overseas countries mainly in New Zealand for medical treatment services that are not available locally due to unavailability of resources, equipment and absence of expertise.

This revised policy for Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme 2023 presents the analysis conducted of Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Policy 2019 implementation for the first two financial years of this policy with particular focus on the following areas:

- (i) Eligibility and Selection Criteria of patients referred overseas under two schemes: Samoa and New Zealand Overseas Medical Treatment Schemes
- (ii) Medical Screening Committee Responsibilities
- (iii) Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme Information System
- (iv) Management and coordination of the OVT Scheme and
- (v) Financing

These focus areas are presumably responsible for the increasing costs incurred by the scheme, thus posing as a heavy financial burden to the Government of Samoa. Due to this fact, the government of Samoa and the Ministry of Health are looking at avenues to decrease this financial burden.

This revised policy for Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme 2023 will help the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance to provide policy advice to the Cabinet on how to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme for Samoa in future years.

FOREWORD



Aiono Dr. Alec Ekeroma
DIRECTOR GENERAL

The Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme is a government scheme that was established in early 1990s to provide assistance to Samoan citizens who cannot be treated locally, but they can be referred overseas for lifesaving medical treatment as they have good prognosis to live for more than five years.

The cost of the scheme is increasing annually and we need to find ways to make sure this is sustainable into the future. Referrals for heart and cancer treatment make up more than half of the referrals so it is important to focus on prevention and early detection to minimise cost. We will also need to provide defined affordable treatments locally. The establishment of a Cancer

Centre where the coordination of prevention, screening, and delivery of early cancer treatment is needed. What is also needed is the provision of palliative care to those who cannot be referred due to advanced disease.

To make sure we provide the best advice to government, new treatments need to pass through a cost cost-benefit, cost-utility and cost-comparison analysis process. Provision of treatments locally through different arrangements with overseas partners and referrals to other centres other than New Zealand is an evidence-based approach to tertiary medical care which is usually not cheap.

The government will continue to provide support for access to affordable and appropriate care for all citizens as it contributes to the achievement of the Pathway for the Development of Samoa FY2021/22-FY2025/26 vision of ***“Fostering social harmony, safety and freedom for All”*** and the aspiration for its Key Priority Area 2: Improved Public Health i.e. ***“All persons receive quality health care services”***.

This Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Revised Policy 2023 is the outcome of the review conducted through multi-sectoral approach for the Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Policy 2019. It highlights the progress of Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme implementation in the past four years, and also identifies areas that need to be improved through the implementation of this reviewed policy.

It is hoped that this policy document will contribute in enhancing overseas medical treatment scheme processes, assist in policy decision making and at the same time, contribute in proper management of government funds allocated for this scheme.

Ma le fa'aaloalo lava.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aiono', written over a horizontal line.

Aiono Dr. Alec Ekeroma
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF HEALTH

ACRONYM

ACEO	Assistant Chief Executive Officer
DDG	Deputy Director General of Health
DGoH	Director General of Health
FK	Cabinet Approval (Fa'amaoniga a le Kapeneta)
FY	Financial Year
HSP	Health Sector Plan
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health
MSC	Medical Screening Committee
NZD	New Zealand Dollars
NZMTS	New Zealand Medical Treatment Scheme
OVT	Overseas Medical Treatment
SAT	Samoa Tala
SMTS	Samoa Medical Treatment Scheme
TR	Treasury Report
UHC	Universal Health Coverage

TABLE OF CONTENT

Contents	Page No.
PREFACE	1
FOREWORD.....	2
ACRONYM	3
TABLE OF CONTENT	4
INTRODUCTION	5
Background Information:.....	5
Goal and Objectives:	5
Goal:	5
Objectives:.....	5
Goal and Objectives:	5
Situational Analysis	5
Overseas Medical Treatment Policy 2019 Overview	5
Overseas Medical Treatment Policy 2019 Implementation Progress.....	6
Challenges	13
Areas of Concern:	15
LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK.....	17
REVISED POLICY 2023 STRATEGIC AGENDA.....	18
Vision:	19
Mission:	19
Goal:	19
Guiding Principles:.....	19
Strategic Objectives:.....	20
Key Strategic Areas (KRAs):.....	20
KRA 1: Facilitation and Coordination of Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme.....	20
KRA 2: Financing of Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme	24
KRA 3: Management of Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme Information	25
KRA 4: Monitoring and Evaluation of Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme	25
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	28
ANNEXES.....	32
Annex 1: OVT Patients Registration Forms.....	32
Annex 2: Terms of Reference of OVT Coordination Unit.....	34
Annex 3: Terms of Reference of OVT Medical Screening Committee.....	36
Annex 4: Terms of Reference of OVT MOH Management Team	38
Annex 5: Terms of Reference of Overseas OVT Facilitator	40

INRODUCTION

Background Information:

The Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme was initially established in early 1990s in response to the increase in numbers of Samoan people being referred overseas for medical treatment that cannot be done in-country due to the absence of expertise and required treatments. This initiative by the government is to assist its people with lessen the burden on overseas medical treatment costs.

In realizing Key Outcome 1 of the Health Sector Plan 2019/20-2029/30 and MOH Corporate Plan FY2020/21-FY2022/23: ***Improved Health Systems Governance and Administration*** with its strategic goal to strengthen health system governance for Universal Health Coverage through effective management of Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme (Output Indicator 9), the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment (OVT) Screening Committee, Ministry of Finance and relevant stakeholders and partners reviewed Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Policy 2019, to assess the implementation progress and review the process outlined in the policy whether it had been followed or not. This is very much in line with the request by the Cabinet in its Cabinet Approval (FK (23)01 dated 18th January 2023 for the Ministry of Health to assess the scheme process and develop the Terms of Reference and Contract for the OVT Consultant in New Zealand.

Goal and Objectives:

Goal:

The overarching goal of this revised policy is to improve Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme by strengthening compliance of all to set policies and procedures.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the revised policy are to improve the management of Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme and to ensure all eligible Samoan people are accessing the scheme and at the same time the government of Samoa are utilizing resources required for the scheme efficiently and effectively.

Goal and Objectives:

This revised policy is governed by the following legislations in terms of its operations, monitoring and regulating:

- (i) Ministry of Health Act 2006 (amended in 2019)
- (ii) Public Finance and Management Act 2001
- (iii) Accident Compensation Act 1989 with amendments in 1995, 1997 and 2003.

Situational Analysis

Overseas Medical Treatment Policy 2019 Overview

The existing Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment (OVT) Policy was approved by the Cabinet on 8th May 2019 in its Cabinet Approval (FK (19)17 to use as a guiding tool for the Ministry of Health for the implementation of the scheme since 2019 till now. The

policy aims to “ensure efficient and cost effective use of resources available to government to best serve the health and people of Samoa through the scheme”¹ in order to achieve its vision of: **Improve Population Health Outcomes by Accessing Overseas specialized care that cannot be provided locally.**

The review of the 2019 Policy was held on 17th February 2023 with the OVT Medical Screening Committee, Ministry of Finance and relevant representatives from the healthcare professional associations and MOH Executive Management. The main purpose of the review was to:

- (i) Inform the relevant stakeholders and partners of the implementation progress of Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Policy 2019
- (ii) Identify gaps and challenges that need to be addressed in this revised policy; and
- (iii) Recommend ways forward to further enhance the effective implementation of the Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme for Samoa for the next five years.

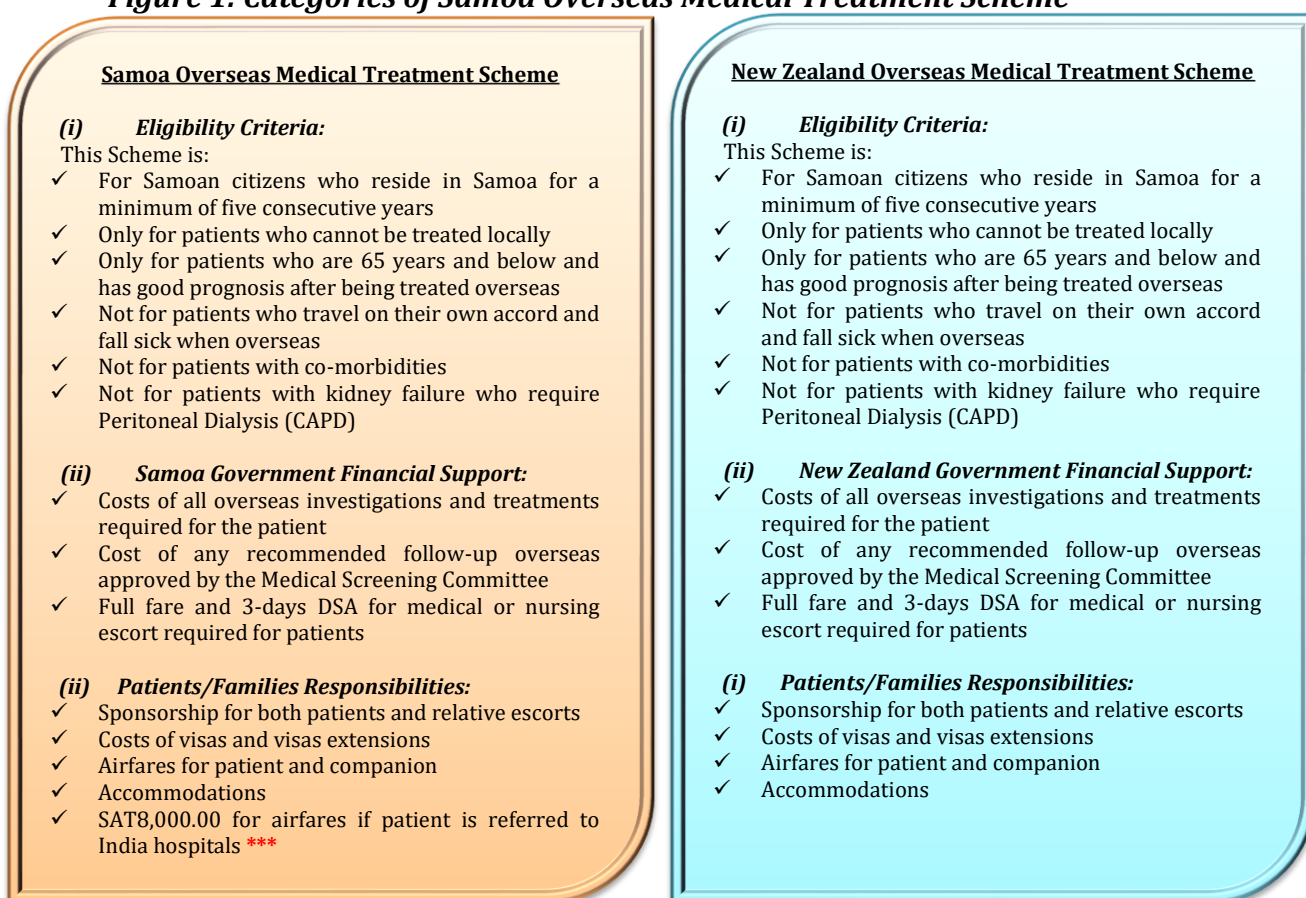
Overseas Medical Treatment Policy 2019 Implementation Progress

The update on the implementation progress of the Overseas Medical Treatment Policy 2019 is reported on main components of the policy. These include:

1. Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme Categories

The Scheme is categorized into two categories. These are detailed in the diagram below.

Figure 1: Categories of Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme



¹ MOH, 2019, Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme Policy 2019. Apia

*** SAT8, 000.00 is the contribution of patients/families for the accompanying relative's airfare if the patient is referred to India for treatment at Fortis Hospital & Apollo Hospital. Responsibilities of patients and families for patients referred to India hospitals include:

FORTIS HOSPITAL & APOLLO HOSPITAL	
✓	Accompanying relative airfares (est. SAT8,000.00)
✓	Passport fees for patients/accompanying relative
✓	Cost of overseas visas and extensions and
✓	Funds to support the patient and accompanying relatives while in India excluding the patient's accommodation (<i>patient's accommodation is funded under SMTS</i>)

Note:

- (i) *A Memorandum of Understanding must be signed by all parties involved for OVT Referrals.*
- (ii) *Babies and infants accompanying relatives (their mothers are strongly recommended) are included in the patient package for India funded under Samoa Medical Treatment Scheme except personal amenities and meals.*

Those who were not eligible to the Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme include:

- (i) Patients with more than one medical condition (co-morbidities) or multiple risk factors such as high blood pressure, smoking related illness, cancer, heart liver or kidney failure or diabetes;
- (ii) Patients with poor prognosis i.e. quality of life is not expected to significantly improve over 5 years following overseas treatment;
- (iii) Patients with kidney failure who require peritoneal dialysis (CAPD) and
- (iv) Patients who travel on their own accord and fall sick when overseas.

2. Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme Management and Coordination

(i) Overseas Medical Treatment Unit

The management and coordination of Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme is the core responsibilities of the Overseas Medical Treatment Unit which is headed by the OVT Coordinator under the supervision of the Deputy Director General of Hospital and Clinical Services.

The main functions of this unit are to:

- ✓ Ensure that each applicant has a National Health Numbers and is recorded on all documents
- ✓ Provide information to doctors and patients about the Overseas Medical Treatment programs, including policy guidelines, eligibility and selection criteria and patients and their families responsibilities to the scheme
- ✓ Serve as a key point of liaison with treatment services overseas
- ✓ Perform secretariat roles to the OVT Medical Screening Committee
- ✓ Ensure that all OVT patients' information is recorded in the OVT database and OVT database is complete, accurate and timely.
- ✓ These include referrals, MSC approvals, advices from OVT Facilitator overseas, Cabinet Approvals, details of patients' travels, treatments and discharge summary and records.

- ✓ Keep copies of relevant OVT documentations e.g. Invoices, discharge summaries
- ✓ Monitor OVT paperwork processing and follow-up payments
- ✓ Arrange OVT travel arrangements and administration logistics
- ✓ Follow patients one year after their referral to determine their health status, return to Samoa, Out of Pocket Costs, and reactions to the OVT systems
- ✓ Reconcile OVT Accounts in collaboration with the responsible personnel of the Ministry of Finance

(ii) Overseas Medical Treatment Facilitator

The Overseas Medical Treatment Facilitator, who assists with facilitation of referring patients overseas mostly in New Zealand, is resided in Auckland New Zealand. Up till now, there is no Terms of Reference and Contract set for him in order for the Ministry of Health to monitor his performance and ensure his charges are reasonable.

(iii) Overseas Medical Treatment Screening Committee

As highlighted in the 2019 Policy, all patients who are recommended by private or public doctors to be referred overseas for treatment, **MUST** be screened by the Overseas Medical Treatment Screening Committee and the decision by this committee should be respected.

This committee membership consists of:

- (i) Clinical Manager as the Chair
- (ii) Chief Surgeon as the Vice Chair
- (iii) OVT Coordinator as the Secretariat
- (iv) Other members include:
 - i. Chief Paediatrician
 - ii. Head of Medical Unit
 - iii. Head of ICU
 - iv. Head of ENT
 - v. Head of Eye Unit
 - vi. Head of Obstetric & Gynae Unit
 - vii. Head of Emergency Department
 - viii. Radiologist and
 - ix. Pathologist

This committee meets on adhoc basis based on the number of patients who are proposed to be referred overseas.

(iv) Overseas Medical Treatment Coordination Team

The Overseas Medical Treatment Coordination Team was established under the 2019 Policy to assist the Overseas Medical Treatment Unit with the overall management and coordination of the OVT Scheme implementation.

The membership of the OVT Coordination Team consists of:

- (i) Director General of Health as the Chair

- (ii) Principal Officer from the Health Sector Coordination, Resourcing and Monitoring Division as Secretary
- (iii) Other members include:
 - a. Chair of OVT Medical Screening Committee
 - b. OVT Coordinator
 - c. ACEO Strategic Planning, Policy and Research and
 - d. Legal Consultant

Since COVID-19 State of Emergency in 2020, this team was never been informed of the OVT referrals till now. This team needs to be revived to as their role will better informed recommendations submitted to the Cabinet for their endorsement.

3. Overseas Medical Treatment Referrals

(i) **Overall OVT Referrals**

In Financial Year 2020/21, a total of 156 patients were submitted to the OVT Unit to be tabled to OVT Medical Screening Committee to screen. The number of OVT cases in this financial year had been dropped due to COVID-19 pandemic State of Emergencies.

In Financial Year 2021/22, the total number of patients submitted for screening had been increased to 186 as borders were re-opened. The detailed information of patients being screened for OVT and those that had been approved to be referred overseas is well presented in Table 1 below.

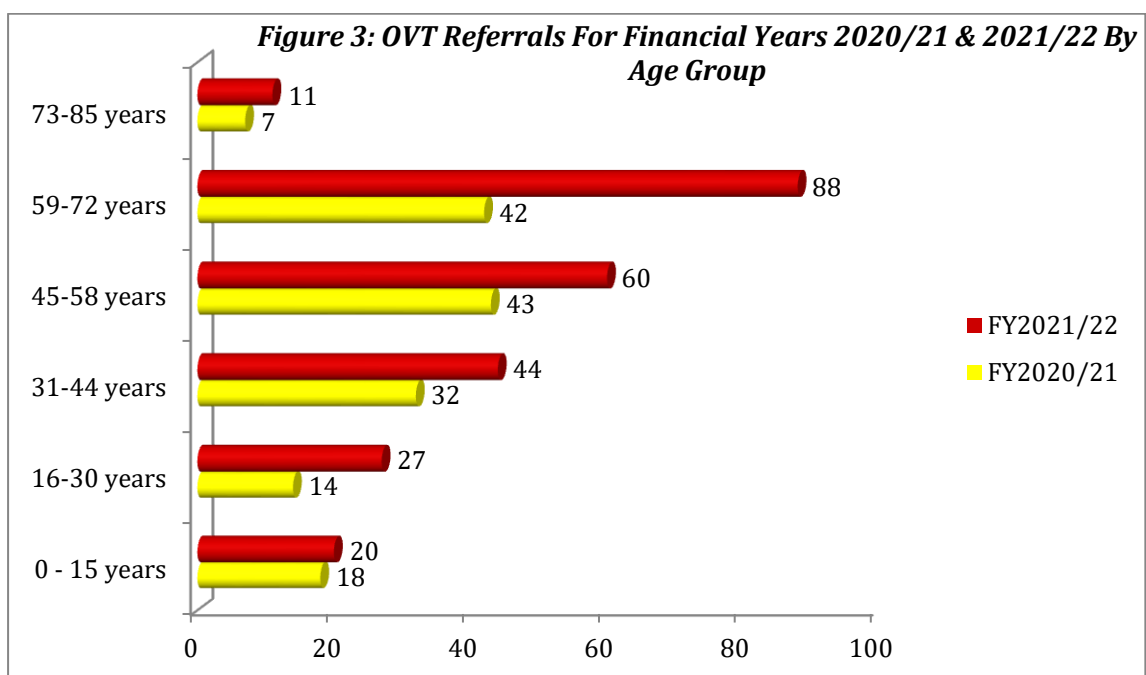
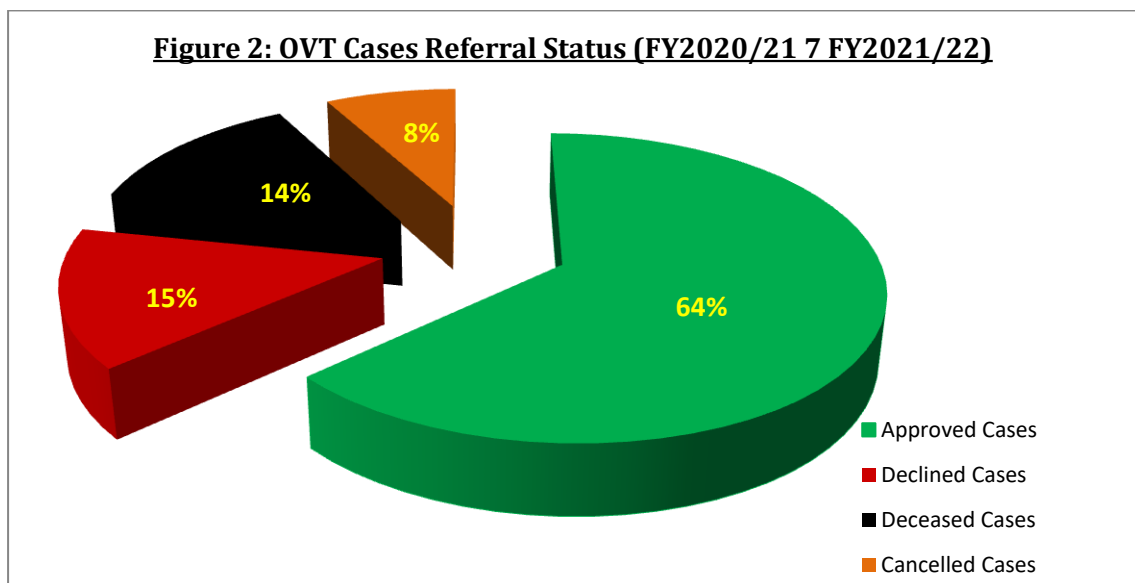
Table 1: Patients Submitted to OVT Unit for Screening & Approved for Overseas Referral

Diagnosis	FY2020/21	FY2021/22	Total Number of OVT Cases
Cardiac	12	42	54
Medical	14	36	50
Ophthalmology	14	19	33
Oncology	13	25	38
Surgical	12	14	26
Urology	3	17	20
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	5	11	16
Orthopaedic	1	15	16
Obstetric & Gynae	5	6	11
Oro-Maxillofacial	0	1	1
TOTAL	79	186	265
OVT Patients by Referral Status			
Approved	36	134	170
Declined	18	21	39
Deceased	12	24	36
Cancelled	13	6	19
Approved but did not go	0	1	1
TOTAL	79	186	265
OVT Patients by Sources of Funds			

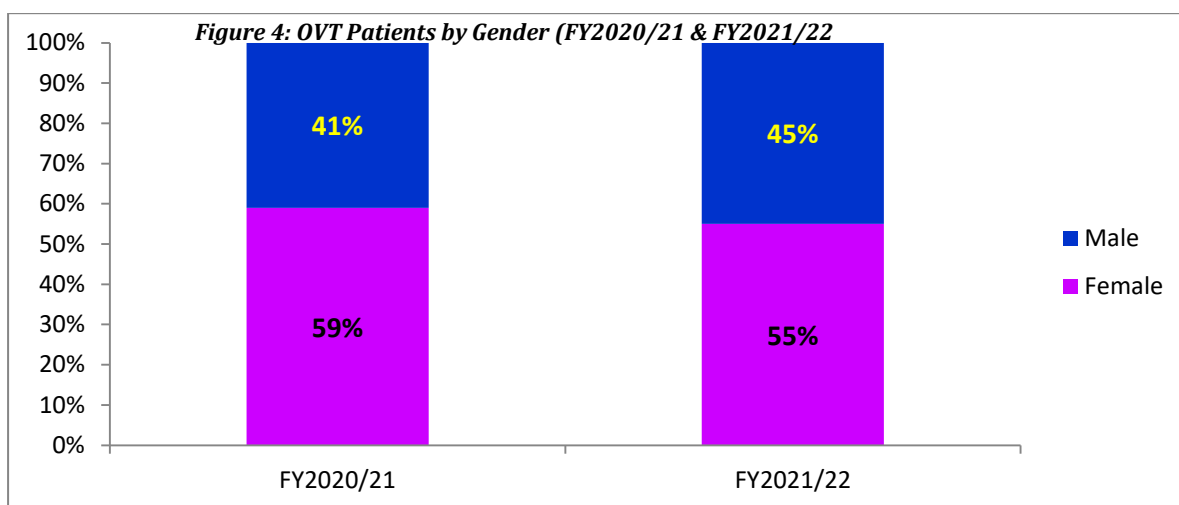
Source: OVT Unit, 2022

As shown in the Table above, the total number of patients submitted in the past two financial years to be screened for overseas referrals was 265.

Out of 265 OVT patients, 170 patients were approved and able to be referred overseas for medical treatment while 39 (15%) were declined to be referred due to their poor prognosis, 36 (14%) cases were approved to refer but they died before referral, and 20 (8%) cases were cancelled and did not go, because they cannot afford airfares and accommodation costs which are the patients and families' responsibilities as articulated in the policy. Hence, only 64% of OVT patients were referred for overseas medical treatment while 36% did not make it as detailed in Figure 2.



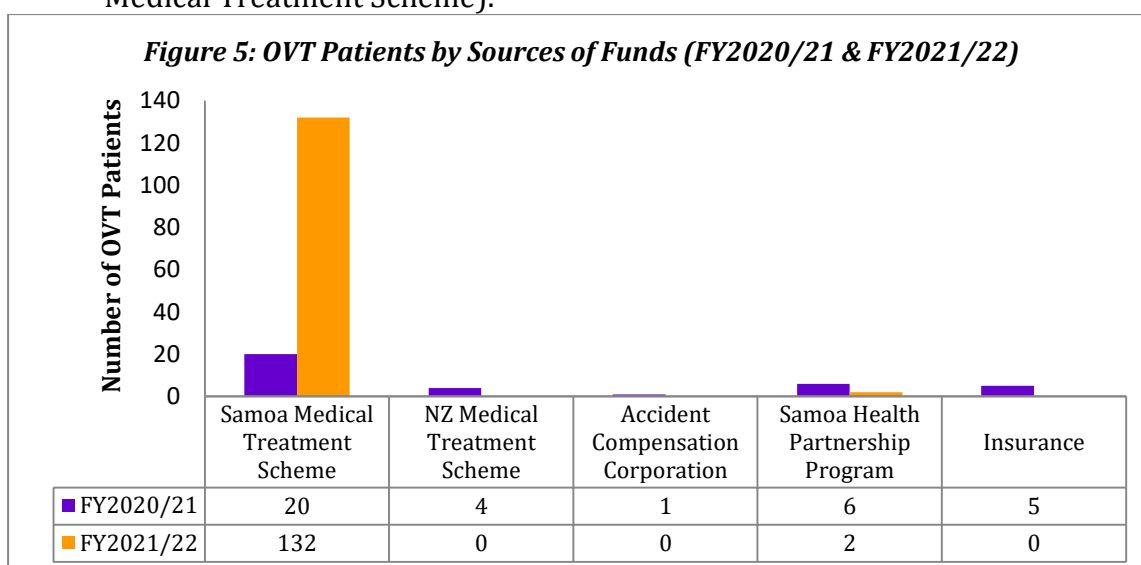
The majority of OVT referrals fall under the age groups of 31-44 years to 59-72 years. Gender wise, most of patients being referred overseas for medical treatment for both financial years were female. This is detailed in Figure 4 below.



4. Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme Financing

(i) Overseas Medical Treatment Patients Sources of Funds

The financing of Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme are funded by the Government of Samoa (for Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme) and Government of New Zealand (for New Zealand Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme).



Source: OVT Unit, 2022

Figure 3 above shows the sources of funds for patients referred overseas for treatment. Within the reporting financial years (FY2020/21 & FY2021/22), the majority of referrals were funded under the Samoa Medical Treatment Scheme, followed by the New Zealand Medical Treatment Scheme. There were overseas referrals that were covered by Insurance and Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), and these are patients with serious injuries that need to be referred overseas for surgery. Some patients were funded under the Samoa Health Partnership Program (SHPP).

(ii) OVT Patients by Diagnosis and Expenditures (FY2020/21 & FY2021/22)

Table 2 below presents OVT patients with their diagnosis and expenditures.

Table 2: OVT Patients by Diagnosis & Expenditures

Types of Diagnosis	Financial Year 2020/21		Financial Year 2021/22		Actual Number of OVT Referrals	Total Expenditure
	Approved Patients	Costing NZD	Approved Patients	Costing NZD		
Cardiac	12	255,201.55	42	1,713,744.41	54	1,968,945.96
Oncology	13	294,097.33	25	1,020,947.55	38	1,315,044.88
Surgical	12	87,372.54	14	933,340.68	26	1,020,713.22
Medical	14	165,307.02	36	831,624.94	50	1,080,740.14
ENT	5	130,518.58	11	381,870.80	16	512,389.38
Urology	3	32,323.05	17	474,020.55	20	506,343.60
Ophthalmology	14	27,117.90	19	444,020.55	20	506,343.60
Orthopaedic	1	745.00	15	290,853.21	16	291,598.21
Obstetric & Gynae	5	45,245.50	6	242,040.47	11	287,285.97
Pro-Maxillofacial	0	0	1	141,101.46	1	141,101.46
Total	79	1,037,928.47	186	6,558,320.48	265	7,596,248.95

Source: OVT Unit, 2022

From 156 patients that were submitted for screening in Financial Year 2020/21, only 79 patients were approved to be referred overseas for medical treatment, funded under the Samoa Medical Treatment Scheme. As highlighted in Table 2 above, the highest OVT expenditure was on cancer cases with the total cost of SAT294, 097.33, followed by cardiac cases and then medical cases.

In Financial Year 2021/22, a total of 186 patients were approved to refer overseas for treatment. The highest expenditure for this financial year was the significant increase in cardiac, medical and oncology cases referred overseas for treatment as depicted in Table 2 above. These diseases accounted for NZD3.6 million of OVT expenditures in this financial year.

(iii) Overall Costing of Overseas Referrals (FY2020/21 & FY2021/22)

In the reporting financial years, the total amount of Overseas Medical Treatment Expenditure was NZD9,288,085.37 excluding expenditures for airfares and allowances of escorts which totalled up to SAT89,295.85.

The overall expenditures are detailed in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Overall Costing of OVT Scheme (FY2020/21-FY2021/22)

Descriptions	FY 2020 - 2021	FY 2021 - 2022	Total
Monthly Account Payment	\$ 1,037,928.47	\$ 6,558,320.48	\$7,596,248.95
Administration Fee	\$ 6,600.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$26,600.00
Individual Payment	\$ 1,310,342.44	\$ 185,172.18	\$1,495,514.62
MIQ (Managed Isolation Quarantine -NZ)	\$ -	\$ 137,510.00	\$137,510.00
Entitlement for Deceased Patients in NZ	\$ -	\$ 6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Escorts from NZ -	\$ -	\$ 26,211.80	\$26,211.80
Total - NZ Dollar	\$2,354,870.91	\$6,933,214.46	\$9,288,085.37
Total Samoan Tala : Airfares & Allowance	WS\$83,032.75	WS\$6,263.20	WS\$89,295.95

Source: OVT Unit, 2022

As depicted in Table 3 above, a decline in OVT costing was observed in Financial Year 2020/21 (NZD2, 354,870.91788) due to COVID-19 pandemic lockdown and State of Emergency. The significant increase was observed in Financial Year 2021/22 when borders were re-opened; hence the OVT costs doubled the previous financial year's cost (NZD6, 933,214.46).

Challenges

Challenges and problems are believed as important parts of our working lives. These give us experiences, make us learn and help to be improved, become wiser and stronger.

With the implementation of the Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme in Financial Years 2020/21 & FY2021/22, these are some of the challenges and issues that occurred, which the Ministry of Health as the leading agency for Samoa's health sector believed, would help with enhancing the implementation of this scheme for the health and well-being of our people.

1. Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme Eligibility

The set eligibility criteria in the existing Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Policy 2019 are believed as vague and they contradicted the "efficiency" and "equitable" guiding principles of the policy. For instance, patients with dual citizenship are not entitled under the scheme, so as patients at the age of 65 years and above. These criteria contradicted Samoa's commitment to Universal Health Coverage goal which is: ***No one is left behind in provision of health services.***

2. Implementation of Medical Screening Committee's Responsibilities

In accordance with the endorsed Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Policy 2019, the Medical Screening Committee is responsible in screening all patients requested for overseas referrals, and screening and selection of patients should be in line with the set eligibility articulated in the policy. The importance of this Committee's role is to ensure that the decision is **fair and just for all** and at the same time, manage and control unnecessary utilization of government resources including the OVT budget. This Committee's final decision on patients being referred overseas depends heavily on the technical and clinical advices from the OVT Facilitator who is currently residing in New Zealand.

Unfortunately, within the reporting period, the OVT Medical Screening Committee members had raised their concern with regards to their decisions being superseded by the higher level, which resulted in approving referrals of patients with poor prognosis to overseas for treatment. Some of these patients were either died before referral or died upon referral. This had contributed to OVT unavoidable spending which can lessen financial burden to the government.

3. Management and Coordination (Administration Process)

The coordination of the OVT scheme is the mandated role of the OVT Coordination Unit of the Ministry of Health and their core function is to source high quality, value-for-money medical treatment for our people.

The Overseas Treatment Facilitator which is currently based in Auckland, New Zealand continuously assists the Ministry of Health in organizing the transfer of patients administratively. However, it had been noted that his fees to arrange overseas referrals are very costly. Since the establishment of this scheme, it had been noted that the OVT Facilitator overseas does not work under a formal contract and Terms of Reference. Hence, this needs to be formalized.

4. OVT Referrals

The referral of patients overseas for medical treatment is categorized into 3 categories. These include:

(i) Regular or Standard Referrals

This refers to OVT referrals originating from a Head of Clinical Unit or Private General Practitioner approved by the OVT Medical Screening Committee. To elaborate this more, a candidate for OVT is usually put forward by a Head of Unit at TTM Hospital or a Private General Practitioner. The submission is made to the Chairman of the OVT Medical Screening Committee, who in turn will take the following options:

- Approval is given to a patient who meets all selection/eligibility criteria; and
- If the patient does not meet all criteria, patient's information will be passed to the Medical Screening Committee for their comments and approval.

(ii) Special Referrals

This refers to special arrangements for overseas treatment granted to members of the Civil List highlighted in the endorsed Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Policy 2019. These include civil list medical check-ups whilst overseas for duty travel.

The civil list includes the following:

- ✓ Head of State and Spouse
- ✓ Cabinet Minister and Spouse
- ✓ Members of the Council of Deputies and their Spouses
- ✓ Chief Justice and Spouse and
- ✓ Speaker of the House and Spouse.

Financing of medical check-ups of the Civil List is funded under the Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme.

(iii) Social Referrals

This refers to referral of patients overseas for treatment using political power to influence and overturn the Medical Screening Committee's advice/decision.

The main challenges experienced with referrals of OVT patients are to do with **social referrals** whereby the Cabinet supersedes the OVT Medical Screening Committee and the overseas medical officer's decision to decline the referral of patients' with poor prognosis, which then contributed to increase in OVT spending and families expenses in terms of returning the dead bodies of patients who either did not make the treatment or died during the treatment.

5. Follow-Up Procedures for returning OVT Patients

Despite the clear signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with referred patients, there are patients who are notably recorded tend not to report back to the OVT Coordination Unit for follow-up procedures and managing their cases with the referral doctor.

6. Financing

The government of Samoa remains the major funder for the Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme since its establishment in early 1990s. The cost of financing this scheme has continued to escalate dramatically since the implementation of the scheme, thus continuing to put a lot of strain and pressure on the government through the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance, in order to provide what the scheme aims to achieve, which is the best healthcare services to the people of Samoa to access.

As noted above, the government spending on the Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme on treatment alone has increased from NZD2.4 million in FY2020/21 to a staggering NZD6.9 million in FY2021/22. The drop of OVT budget utilization for the scheme in FY2020/21 contemplated the reduction of patients referred overseas for treatment due to COVID-19 global pandemic travel restrictions.

It is also noted in the OVT budget that the overseas medical check-ups for the civil lists are funded under the OVT scheme. It is believed that this defeat the purpose of the scheme for treatment that cannot be done locally. Hence, it is kindly recommended to consider medical check-ups for the civil lists to be reflected under their respective Ministries' budget or the Legislative Assembly's budget if necessary.

Areas of Concern:

Going abroad for treatment is not something that appeals to everyone, but Samoan people in comparison to other Pacific Islanders and the world as well, are very fortunate to have the Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme in place for patients that cannot be treated locally, which is very much contributed to improving Samoan people's health and promoting their wellbeing which is much aligned with the vision of the Pathway for the Development of Samoa FY2021/22-FY2026/27: ***Fostering Social Harmony, Safety***

and Freedom for All and the Samoa Health Sector Vision of: **A Healthy Samoa**. Moreover, the Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme is in place to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the scheme is existed.

Evidently, the establishment of the Samoa National Kidney Foundation in 2005, installation of the CT scan at TTM Hospital, and increased numbers of medical specialists' visits in Samoa, presumably contributed to lessen the government of Samoa's expenditure for OVT scheme.

However, there are areas of concern that need to be taken into consideration for the improvement of the scheme and need to be integrated in the revised OVT Policy. These include but not limited to:

1. Eligibility and Selection Criteria

(i) Patients with dual citizenship are not eligible to OVT Scheme

As earlier mentioned, dual citizen are not eligible to OVT Scheme in the existing OVT Policy 2019. This criterion needs to be revisited taking into consideration those with dual citizenship (excluding NZ dual citizenship) who serve and works for the government for many years.

(ii) Patients aged 65 years and above are not eligible to OVT Scheme

It had been noted that there were patients screened by the Medical Screening Committee who were 65 years and above that can be referred overseas for treatment due to their good prognosis, but this eligibility criterion contradicts the committee's decision. There should be no age limit for patients referred overseas; as long as they have good prognosis after treatment overseas, they are all eligible.

2. Medical Screening for OVT Patients

As highlighted earlier in this document, there were 36 OVT patients declined by the Medical Screening Committee based on the recommendation given by the OVT Facilitator overseas and overseas medical specialists due to very poor prognosis, but they were approved under social referrals.

The cost of returning dead bodies from New Zealand or other countries after unsuccessful treatment is one of the financial burden on families, which are already being burdened by the cost of patient and escorts' airfares and accommodation overseas.

For transparency and accountability, the recommendations by the Medical Screening Committee for OVT referrals, should be supported by the Ministry of Health, before submission to Cabinet for approval. Hence, to minimize the financial burden upon both the government and the families, the decision by the Medical Screening Committee should be kindly respected.

The OVT Medical Screening membership should be visited and should have a representative of private General Practitioners in the committee.

3. OVT Information Management System

The need to capture and integrate all information of the scheme including financial reports and patients records should be the top priority for the Ministry

of Health. The establishment of an information system for the scheme or linking these records to the current information system, is a step forward for the Ministry of Health to be taken, and will assist greatly in the OVT referral process and flow of information to easily trace and track patients for follow-up procedure.

4. OVT Scheme Management and Coordination (Overseas OVT Facilitator)

(i) OVT Coordination Unit

There is a need to increase the staff at the OVT Coordination Unit of the Ministry of Health to man the scheme coordination and implementation. Currently, there are only 3 staff and the demand of responsibilities required to be done in order for the scheme implementation to be effectively is very high. Hence, the hiring of additional staff for the OVT Unit will lessen the burden carried by doctors while focusing on preparing prognosis report of referred patients.

(ii) Overseas OVT Facilitator

The existing Overseas Facilitator is employed without a formal contract and Terms of Reference. This was a long outstanding policy issue since the revision of the OVT policy in 2005. Thus, recommend to either develop a Terms of Reference and Contract for the Overseas OVT Facilitator or sign MOUs with New Zealand hospitals as similar practice with India hospitals.

5. Financing

Since the Overseas Treatment Scheme poses as a heavy financial burden to the government of Samoa, it is highly recommended to encourage bringing in-country medical specialists visiting teams. This will not only contribute to reduction of government spending on OVT, but it is advantageous for vulnerable patients and their families who are eligible to the scheme, but cannot afford to pay visas, airfares and overseas living expenses.

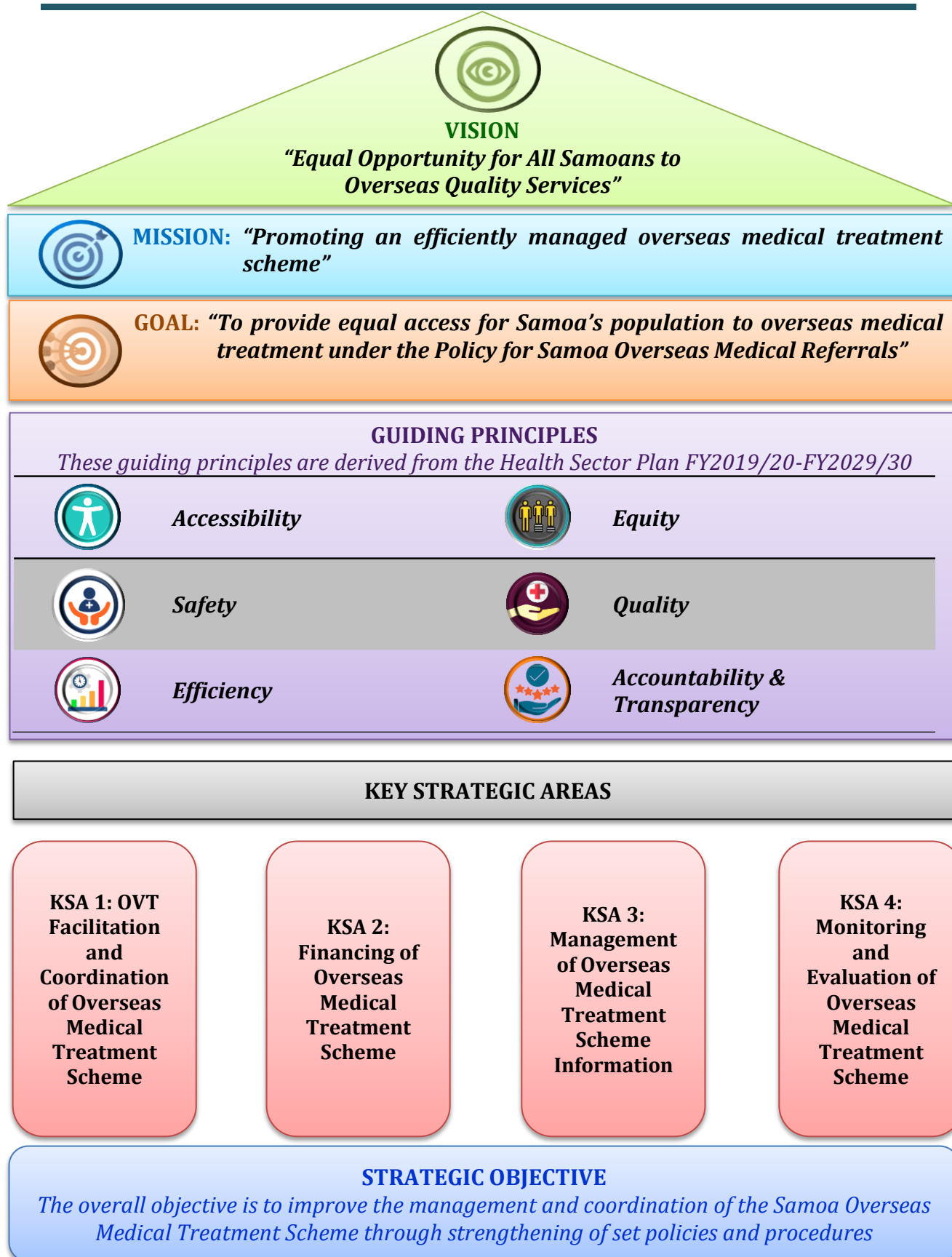
In addition, the government of Samoa should consider looking at nearby countries who can offer the same treatments as New Zealand and India such as Fiji or Australia as other options for overseas referrals.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This revised policy is governed by the following legislations in terms of its operations, monitoring and regulating:

- (i) Ministry of Health Act 2006 (amended in 2019)
- (ii) Public Finance and Management Act 2001
- (iii) Accident Compensation Act 1989 with amendments in 1995, 1997 and 2003

REVISED POLICY 2023 STRATEGIC AGENDA



Vision:

The vision of this revised policy is ***“Equal Opportunity for all Samoans to Overseas Quality Health Services”***. This aims at improving the health and wellbeing of Samoa Population through accessing overseas medical treatment under the Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme.

Mission:

This policy document calls for ***“Promoting an efficiently managed overseas medical treatment scheme”***, which is in line with national health priorities articulated in the Pathway for the Development of Samoa (PDS) FY2021/22-FY2025/26: Improved Public Health.

Goal:

The main goal of the policy is to provide equal access for Samoa’s population to overseas medical treatment under the Policy for Samoa’s Overseas Medical Referrals.

Guiding Principles:

In achieving the vision and mission of this policy, the following are guiding principles which will guide the implementation.



Accessibility

This requires access of eligible Samoa population to the Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme.



Equity

This requires that selection of the population entitled to the Scheme is fair, just and unbiased.



Quality

This requires demonstration of high quality services provided overseas for referred patients.



Accountability and Transparency

This requires improvement, transparent and accountable capacity of government to provide support for vulnerable population who are approved to be referred overseas for treatment, but cannot afford their financial commitments under the scheme.



Safety:

This requires utmost care to be performed and demonstrated in the care of the referred patients at all times.



Efficiency:

This requires the demonstration of allocated financial resources for OVT Scheme to where they will have the greatest result and impact.

Strategic Objectives:

The Revised Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme 2023 builds on the momentum, progress made and lessons learnt from the review of the 2019 policy document. It is intended to contribute towards pursuing the Pathway for the Development of Samoa FY2021/22-FY2025/26 focus on health and health Sector Plan FY2019/20-2029/30's vision of "*A Healthy Samoa*".

The following strategic objectives aimed to contribute to the achievement of the aforementioned vision and mission of this policy.

1. Improve the coordination and management of Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme and
2. Effectively manage and monitor the utilization of Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme funds

Key Strategic Areas (KSAs):

There are four Key Strategic Areas that are identified to effectively address areas of concern highlighted in the aforementioned Situational Analysis of the 2019 OVT Policy.

These include:

- (i) Facilitation and Coordination of Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme
- (ii) Financing of Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme
- (iii) Managing of Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme Information and
- (iv) Monitoring and Evaluation of the Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme.

KSA 1: Facilitation and Coordination of Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme

(i) Eligibility and Selection

The following administrative and medical eligibility criteria must be satisfied by a patient requesting overseas referral for medical treatment under Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme.

Administrative Eligibility:

To qualify for assessment under Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme:

- a) The patient must be a Samoan citizen or a dual citizen (excluding those with NZ citizenship) who resides in Samoa for at least five years, and must be suffering from a life-threatening condition.
- b) The patient's application for overseas referral must be supported by his/her responsible medical officer
- c) The patient must present proposed overseas treatment plan and
- d) Sufficient medical and clinical information are provided to support the application.

Medical Eligibility:

To be eligible to receive financial assistance under the scheme, the patient and his/her family will need to provide evidence from his/her medical doctor that:

- a) the proposed treatment for the patient is not available in Samoa in time to benefit the patient
- b) the proposed treatment overseas must be significantly life extending and potentially curative
- c) there must be a real prospect of success for the patient and
- d) the treatment must be accepted by the local medical profession as a standard form of treatment for the applicant's condition.

Civil List Eligibility:

The Civil List as approved by the former Cabinet on 25th July 2018 through FK (18) 25 consist of:

- a) Head of State and Spouse
- b) Members of the Council of Deputies and their spouses
- c) Prime Minister and Spouse
- d) Cabinet Ministers and their spouses
- e) Chief Justice and Spouse and
- f) Speaker of the House and Spouse.

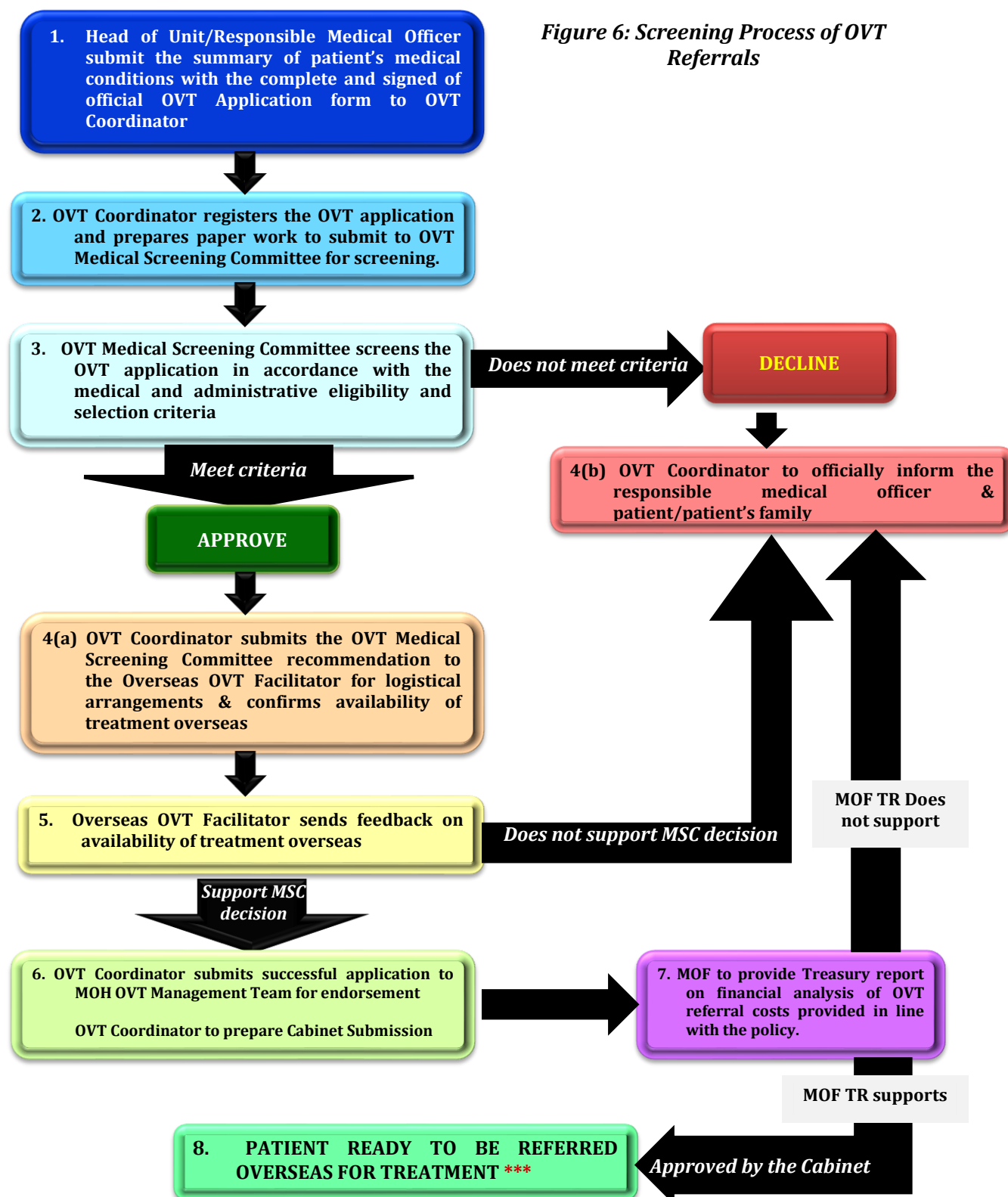
The Civil List is eligible for two (2) regular medical checks per financial year. One (1) medical check-up will be conducted overseas when they go overseas for duty travel. The second medical check is to be conducted in Samoa. **These should be paid from the respective output budget of the related Ministry including DSA and airfares.**

(ii) Overseas Medical Treatment Application Procedures

1. OVT applications must be submitted on the **Official Overseas Medical Treatment Application Form**
2. The application should be received by the OVT Coordinator/Secretariat of the OVT Medical Screening Committee and the OVT MSC Committee should be notified within 48 hours since the application receive.
3. The application must be completely filled and signed by the responsible medical officer.
4. The OVT Medical Screening Committee assesses the application/s and submits their recommendations to the MOH OVT Management Team through the Committee Secretariat/OVT Coordinator.
5. The MOH OVT Management team's decision based on OVT MSC recommendations must be used by the OVT Coordinator to support Cabinet Submission of approved patients for overseas referrals. This process will take 3 weeks to proceed.

(iii) Overseas Medical Treatment Screening

The screening of all applications for Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme follows the following screening process.



*** MOH to process payment for patient's medical assessment and treatments overseas while patient and family is responsible for travel and overseas accommodation costs.

(iv) Overseas Medical Treatment Logistical Arrangements

Once the Ministry of Health receives the Cabinet Approval for OVT patients, the Overseas Medical Treatment Coordination Unit in collaboration with the MOH Finance and Procurement Division is responsible for logistical arrangements such as confirming approved OVT patients appointment schedules, payment of travels and settlements of OVT medical treatment bills.

(v) Confidentiality

The OVT Medical Screening Committee and MOH OVT Management Team must not discuss the specific details of OVT application with anyone, unless they have received written authorization from the application to do so. This includes parents or guardians of applicants over 18 years of age.

Confidentiality of all OVT patients' information is maintained at all times. All relevant information should be disclosed when completing the application form and during the ongoing treatment process.

It is requested that patients keep the OVT Coordinator fully informed if there is any media involvement in their circumstances.

If a patient's case is the subject of a media report or inquiry, the Ministry of Health or the Minister of Health may respond publicly to correct or to confirm the content of such a report or inquiry.

(vi) Unsuccessful/Deceased Cases

Costs associated with the repatriation of the remains or unsuccessful/deceased OVT patients are considered as follow:

- (i) A lump sum of NZD1, 000.00 is given to the family of the patient referred to New Zealand to assist with the returning of the body.

(vii) Response to Emergency Case/s

In case of patients that require immediate referral overseas for medical treatment, the provision of an air ambulance should be considered, if they meet the aforementioned medical eligibility criteria.

(viii) Overseas OVT Facilitation

The Ministry of Health should look at avenues that will enhance the facilitation of the Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme overseas. The two proposed strategies are:

- i. **Contract Overseas OVT Facilitator**
This is to ensure the appropriateness of overseas referrals for all patients referred under the scheme, and that all patient referrals remain within the OVT policies and guidelines; and to serve as an adviser to the Government of Samoa and the Overseas Referral Committee/Scheme with regards to alternate cost effective treatment options for patients referred within the Scheme.

Its scope of work is clearly detailed in Annex 5 of this policy document; or

- ii. Considering signing Memorandum of Agreements with New Zealand hospitals as per practice with the India hospitals.

KSA 2: Financing of Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme

(i) Sources of OVT Scheme Funds

There are two funding schemes for Samoa's Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme. These include:

- Samoa Medical Treatment Scheme and
- New Zealand Medical Treatment Scheme.

The following diagram presents detailed information of patients' eligibility to these funding schemes, as well as the patients and families responsibilities.

Figure 7: OVT Funding Schemes Eligibility Criteria

SAMOA MEDICAL TREATMENT SCHEME	NEW ZEALAND MEDICAL TREATMENT SCHEME
Eligibility Criteria:	Eligibility Criteria:
This scheme is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For Samoan citizens and dual citizen (excluding New Zealand) who reside in Samoa for more than five years ✓ For patients who cannot be treated locally ✓ For patients who has good prognosis after being treated overseas ✓ Not for patients who travel on their own accord and falls sick when overseas ✓ Not for patients with co-morbidities ✓ Not for patients with kidney failure who require Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD) 	This scheme is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For Samoan citizens and dual citizen (excluding New Zealand) who reside in Samoa for more than five years ✓ For patients who cannot be treated locally ✓ For patients who has good prognosis after being treated overseas ✓ Not for patients who travel on their own accord and falls sick when overseas ✓ Not for patients with co-morbidities ✓ Not for patients with kidney failure who require Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD)
Samoa Government Financial Support:	New Zealand Government Financial Support:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Costs of all overseas investigations and treatments required for the patient ✓ Cost of any recommended follow-up overseas approved by the Medical Screening Committee and Cabinet ✓ Full fare and 3-days DSA for medical or nursing escort required for patients (<i>funded under TTM Hospital Budget</i>) ✓ Full fare and accommodation for India referred patients only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Costs of all overseas investigations and treatments required for the patient ✓ Cost of any recommended follow-up overseas approved by the Medical Screening Committee and Cabinet. ✓ Full fare and 3-days DSA for medical or nursing escort required for patients ✓ Airfare, visa and accommodation of patients with low income status (approved by OVT Management Team & Cabinet)
Patients/Families Responsibilities	Patients/Families Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sponsorship for both patients and relative escorts ✓ Costs of visas and visas extensions ✓ Airfares for patient and companion for NZ referred patients ✓ Accommodation ✓ SAT\$8,000.00 for patient's companion airfare (only for India referred patients) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sponsorship for both patients and relative escorts ✓ Costs of visas and extensions

(ii) Treasury Reports

All Cabinet Submissions for overseas referrals must be supported by Treasury Reports from the Ministry of Finance before submitting for Cabinet endorsement.

(iii) OVT payments processes

The Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme Coordinator is responsible for ensuring OVT bills are received on timely manner, and verify invoices received with MOH

Finance and Procurement Divisions before submission to the Ministry of Finance for transfer of funds into relevant overseas service provider's account.

(iv) Travel Insurance for patients

The travel insurance for approved OVT patients is the responsibility of the patient's family.

(v) Alternative OVT Scheme Funding Mechanisms

The Ministry of Health will look at alternative cost-effective funding sources for the OVT scheme to ease the financial burden by the government of Samoa. These include but not limited to:

- i. Medical Insurance and
- ii. Establishment of Samoa's Health Specialist Centre.

KSA 3: Management of Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme Information

Information remains very crucial in making evidence-based decisions. Hence, the proper analysis of how the OVT scheme is progressing requires a variety of information so that analysis is evidence-based.

(i) OVT Patients Register

All OVT patients should be registered in the OVT Scheme using their National Health Number, as this will be the identifier to link all aspects of the data collection process for the scheme.

(ii) Overseas Medical Treatment Database

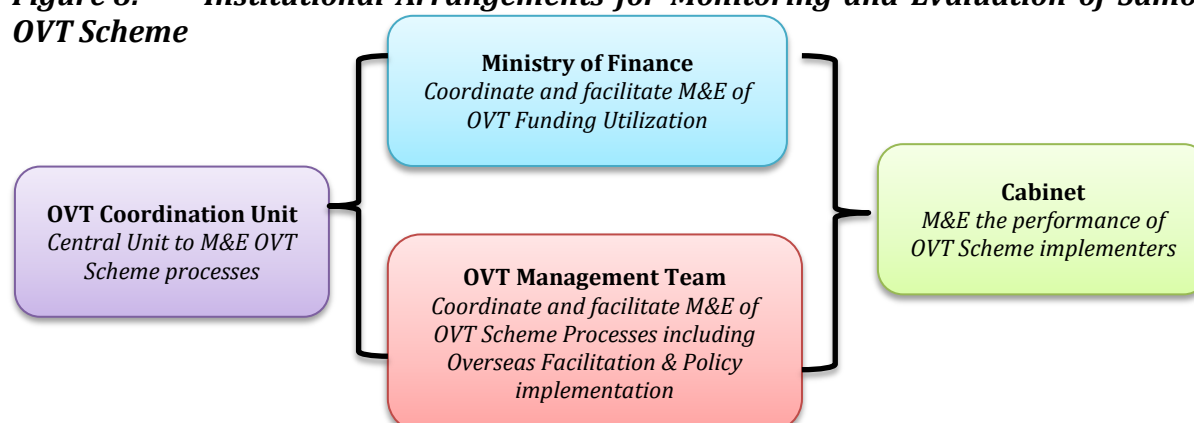
The OVT Database needs to be well established and integrated in the e-health project implementation to provide sound basis for monitoring and reporting of OVT activities and costing. This database should be linked to the single patient's medical record.

KSA 4: Monitoring and Evaluation of Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme

The monitoring and evaluation of Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme determines the effectiveness of the scheme's implementation and be able to identify challenges and gaps that need to be addressed and bridged.

The diagram below (Figure 8) illustrates the Institutional Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluation of Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme.

Figure 8: Institutional Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluation of Samoa OVT Scheme



The Overseas Medical Treatment Coordination Unit monitor and evaluates the scheme's process including the screening processes by Medical Screening Committee, patients' compliance with set requirements of the scheme and is liable in producing of the scheme's monthly reports on patients' treatments, costs and scheme implementation and submit for Cabinet's information and decision making. The detailed terms of reference of this Unit is in Annex 2 of this policy document.

The Overseas Medical Treatment Management Team (refer to Annex 4) monitors and evaluates both the scheme process and implementation of this revised policy; whereas the Ministry of Finance monitors and evaluates the utilization of OVT funds.

The respective Cabinet monitors and evaluates the performance of OVT implementers including the OVT coordination, management and facilitations teams and relevant government ministries involved.

The success of this policy implementation will be determined by using the following M&E indicators.

Key Strategic Areas	M&E Indicators	Targets	Sources of Information/Verification
1. Facilitation and Coordination of OVT Scheme	% of OVT referrals approved by Cabinet based on MSC recommendations	100%	OVT Progress Reports MOH Annual Reports
	% of OVT referrals went through proper screening and referrals procedures	At least 90%	OVT Progress Reports MOH Annual Reports
	New OVT sites for overseas referrals	At least 1	OVT Progress Reports MOH Annual Reports
	Number of overseas medical specialists visiting teams facilitated and coordinated	At least 2 per financial year	OVT Progress Reports MOH Annual Reports
	Formal Contract and ToR developed for Overseas OVT Facilitator	asap	OVT Progress Reports MOH Annual Reports
2. Financing of Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme	Travel Insurance for approved OVT patients established and activated	By end of FY2023/24	OVT Progress Reports MOH Annual Reports
	Number of OVT referrals funded by: -SMTS -NZMTS -ACC	Ongoing	OVT Progress Reports MOH Annual Reports

Key Strategic Areas	M&E Indicators	Targets	Sources of Information/Verification
	-Insurance -Individual		
	Number of approved OVT referrals did not go	Ongoing	OVT Progress Reports MOH Annual Reports
	Evidence of support provided for vulnerable OVT patients	Ongoing	OVT Progress Reports MOH Annual Reports
3. Managing of Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme Information	OVT Referrals Registry established and updated	Ongoing	OVT Progress Reports MOH Annual Reports
	OVT Patients Information System established	By FY2023/24	OVT Progress Reports MOH Annual Reports
4. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme	Number of OVT scheme audits conducted and reported	Financial yearly	MOH Internal Audit
	Overseas Coordination Reports on patients' treatments, costs and settlements of accounts	Monthly	OVT Coordinator
	Number of OVT scheme implementation periodic reviews conducted and reported	Financial yearly	OVT progress reports
	Production of OVT Scheme Implementation M&E Reports and submission to Cabinet	Quarterly	OVT Coordinator Health Information Services and Monitoring and Evaluation Strategic Planning, Policy and Research Division

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following implementation plan of Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Revised Policy 2023 is categorized under the aforementioned four (4) main Key Strategic Areas.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA	SPECIFIC FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE IMPLEMENTER/S
KSA 1: OVT Management and Coordination	<i>1.1 Eligibility and Selection Criteria</i>	All patients requested overseas referrals should meet eligibility and selection criteria of the scheme as per Annex 1 of the policy	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local OVT Coordinator OVT Medical Screening Committee Overseas OVT Facilitator OVT Management Team
	<i>1.2 OVT Patients Screening and Referrals</i>	Screening of all OVT patients should follow the Screening and Referrals Procedures outlined in Annex 2 of the policy.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local OVT Coordinator OVT Medical Screening Committee Overseas OVT Facilitator OVT Management Team
	<i>1.3 Exploring OVT referrals in other countries</i>	Explore other neighbouring countries who can treat our patients at the cheaper cost and submit proposal to the Cabinet for consideration	asap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOH MOF
	<i>1.4 Overseas Medical Specialists Visiting Team</i>	Consider bringing in overseas medical specialists visiting teams for treatments that can be done in-country using our available resources.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOH
	<i>1.5 Formalization of Overseas OVT</i>	Develop a Terms of Reference and Prepare a	asap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OVT Coordinator OVT Management Team

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA	SPECIFIC FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE IMPLEMENTER/S
	<i>Facilitator's position</i>	formal Contract for the Overseas OVT Facilitator		
KSA 2: OVT Financing	<i>2.1 OVT Patients Travel Insurance</i>	Travel insurances for OVT patients should be covered under the OVT scheme	asap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OVT Management Team • MOF
	<i>2.2 Overseas Medical Treatment as a result of accidents</i>	Prepare clear eligibility criteria for overseas referrals that fall under this category	asap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OVT Management Team • ACC
	<i>2.3 Government of Samoa's Financial Obligations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OVT patients recommended investigations and treatments • OVT recommended follow-ups approved by MSC • Full fare and 3 days DSA for clinical escort to New Zealand • Full fare and 9 days DSA for clinical escort to India 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOF • OVT Management Team • OVT Coordinator
	<i>2.4 Patients and Families' Financial Obligations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsorship for both patient and accompanying relative • Visas and visas extensions • Patients and companion 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OVT Coordinator • Patients and Families

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA	SPECIFIC FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE IMPLEMENTER/S
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> or guardian's airfares Passport fees Overseas living expenses 		
	2.5 Financial Support for Vulnerable Patients and Families	OVT Management Team to seek from NZMTS for vulnerable patients/families (low income status)	ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOH
	2.6 Payment of OVT Bills	Invoices and payments are to be made monthly	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OVT Coordinator MOF
		All invoices received have to be checked, reconciled and verified within a week	Weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OVT Coordinator MOF
KSA 3: OVT Information Management	3.1 OVT Patients Registration	Regularly use standardized OVT forms as in Annex 3 for Registration of OVT patients, referrals, discharge summaries and invoicing.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OVT Coordinator
	3.2 OVT Patients Record Keeping	Create an electronic filing or database for OVT patients and should be linked to the e-Health project	By June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OVT Coordinator MOH OVT Management Team
KSA 4: Monitoring and Evaluation of the OVT Scheme	4.1 OVT Scheme Auditing	Auditing of OVT Scheme implementation including the budget should be done on financial yearly basis	Financial yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOH Finance & Procurement MOH Internal Auditing

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA	SPECIFIC FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE IMPLEMENTER/S
	<i>4.2 OVT Scheme Periodic Review</i>	Conduct review of the OVT scheme implementation on financial yearly basis	Financial yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OVT Coordinator • MOH OVT Management Team • Strategic Planning, Policy and Research • MOF

ANNEXES

Annex 1: OVT Patients Registration Forms



SAMOA OVERSEAS MEDICAL TREATMENT SCHEME

Patient Registration Form

Name (in passport): _____ Date Received: _____

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐ Age: _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ (day/month/year)

National Health Number ID: _____

Village: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

In case of Emergency contact: _____

Relationship to the Patient: _____

Contact Details: (Phone): _____ (Email): _____

Diagnosis: _____

Other Illnesses: _____

Summary Report: Yes ☐ No ☐

Urgency: Yes ☐ No ☐

Referring Medical Officer: Name: _____ Signature: _____

Chief of Service: Name: _____ Signature: _____

OVT patient Status: Approved ☐ Not Approved ☐

Name in Passport: _____

Passport Number: _____ **Expiry Date:** ____/____/____

Nationality: _____ **OVT Scheme:** _____

Recommendation/s: Medical Escort: ☐ Oxygen: ☐ Accompanying Relative: ☐

Preferred OVT overseas site: _____

Further Comments:

Chair of OVT Medical Screening Committee (Name): _____

(Signature): _____

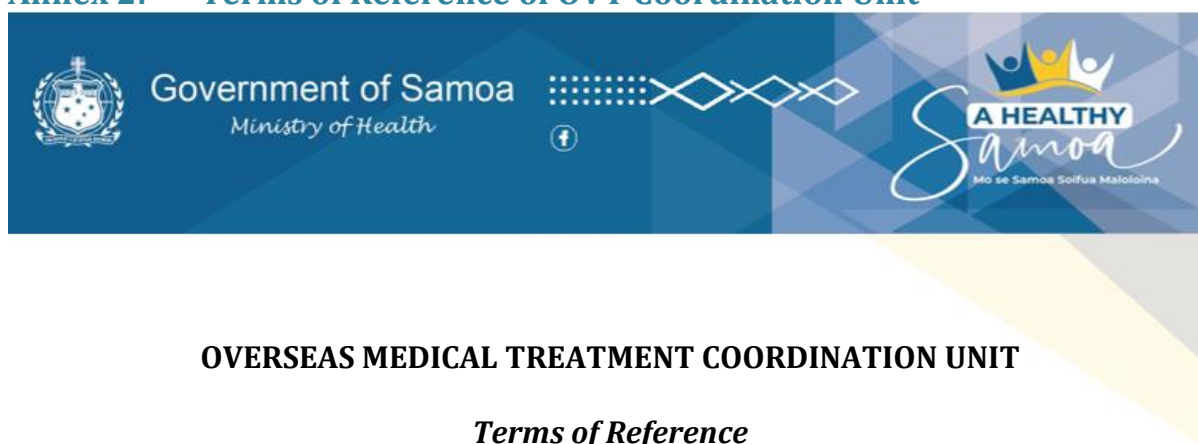
(Date): ____/____/____

Endorsed by Chair of MOH OVT Management Team: Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Annex 2: Terms of Reference of OVT Coordination Unit



OVERSEAS MEDICAL TREATMENT COORDINATION UNIT

Terms of Reference

Background Information:

The Overseas Medical Treatment Coordination Unit was established in 2005 by the Ministry of Health under the Overseas Medical Treatment Policy 2005, 2019 and revised Policy 2023. It is a permanent committee with recommending powers.

Duties and Responsibilities:

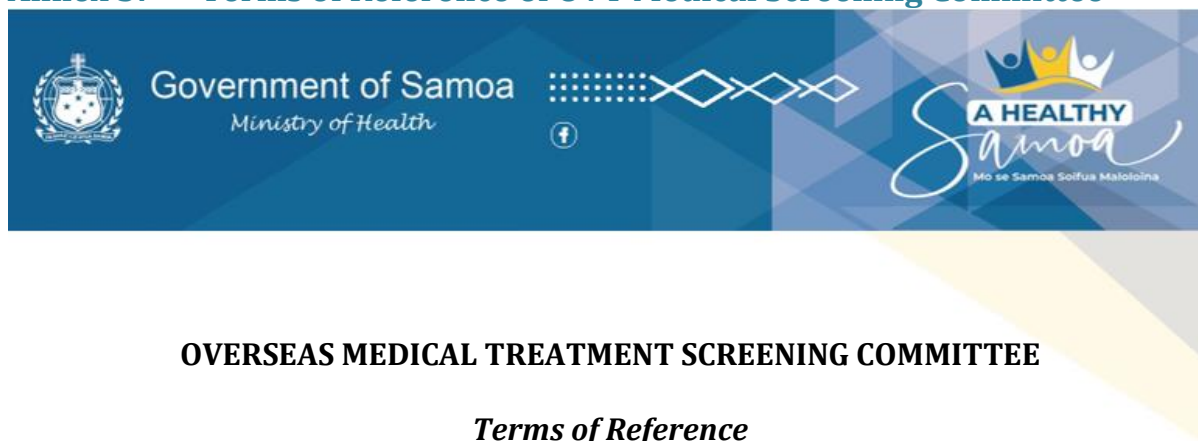
The management and coordination of Samoa Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme is the core responsibilities of the Overseas Medical Coordination Unit which is headed by the OVT Coordinator under the supervision of the Deputy Director General of Hospital and Clinical Services.

This main duties and responsibilities are to:

- (i) ensure that each application has a National Health Number and is recorded on all OVT documents
- (ii) provide information to doctors and patients about the Overseas Medical Treatment programs, including policy guidelines, eligibility and selection criteria and patients and their families responsibilities to the scheme
- (iii) serve as a key point of liaison with treatment services overseas
- (iv) perform secretariat roles to the OVT Medical Screening Committee
- (v) ensure that all OVT patients' information is recorded in the OVT database and OVT data base is updated on regular basis. These include patients referrals, MSC approvals, advices from Overseas OVT Facilitator, Cabinet Approvals, details of patients' travels, treatments and discharge summary and follow-up records.
- (vi) Keep copies of relevant OVT documentations e.g. invoices, discharge summaries
- (vii) Monitor OVT paperwork processing and follow-up payments
- (viii) Communicates with the Overseas OVT Facilitator on verification of OVT invoices before submission to MOH Finance and Procurement division for payment process prior to submission of paperwork to MOF for transfer of funds into relevant overseas service provider's account
- (ix) Arrange OVT travel arrangements and administration logistics for referred patients, their companions and medical/nursing escorts

- (x) Follow up patients one year after their referral to determine their health status, their return to Samoa, Out-of-Pocket Costs and reactions to the OVT Systems
- (xi) Reconcile OVT Accounts in collaboration with the responsible personnel of the MOH Finance and Procurement Division.

Annex 3: Terms of Reference of OVT Medical Screening Committee



OVERSEAS MEDICAL TREATMENT SCREENING COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

Background Information:

The Overseas Medical Treatment Screening Committee was established in 2005 by the Ministry of Health under the Overseas Medical Treatment Policy 2005, 2019 and revised Policy 2023. It is a permanent committee with recommending powers.

Membership:

The Overseas Medical Treatment Screening Committee members consist of:

Chair:	Deputy Director General for Hospital and Clinical Services
Vice Chair:	Chief Surgeon
Secretary:	OVT Coordinator
Members:	Representative from Private General Practitioners
	Head of Clinical Units
	- Chief Surgeon
	- Chief Paediatrician
	- Head of Medical Unit
	- Head of ICU
	- Head of ENT Unit
	- Head of Eye Unit
	- Head of Obstetric and Gynae Unit
	- Head of Emergency Department
	- Radiologist
	- Pathologist

Duties and Responsibilities:

This Committee's main responsibilities are to:

- (xii) meet on regular basis to properly screen and assess OVT applications
- (xiii) thoroughly assess applications of patients requested for overseas referrals due to unavailability of medical treatment in country
- (xiv) work in partnership with the OVT Coordinator and Overseas OVT Facilitator with reconciling and verification of supporting documents for OVT submitted applications and

- (xv) provide evidence-based medical recommendation/s to the MOH OVT Management Team, Minister of Health and the Cabinet on OVT applications to approve/not approve.

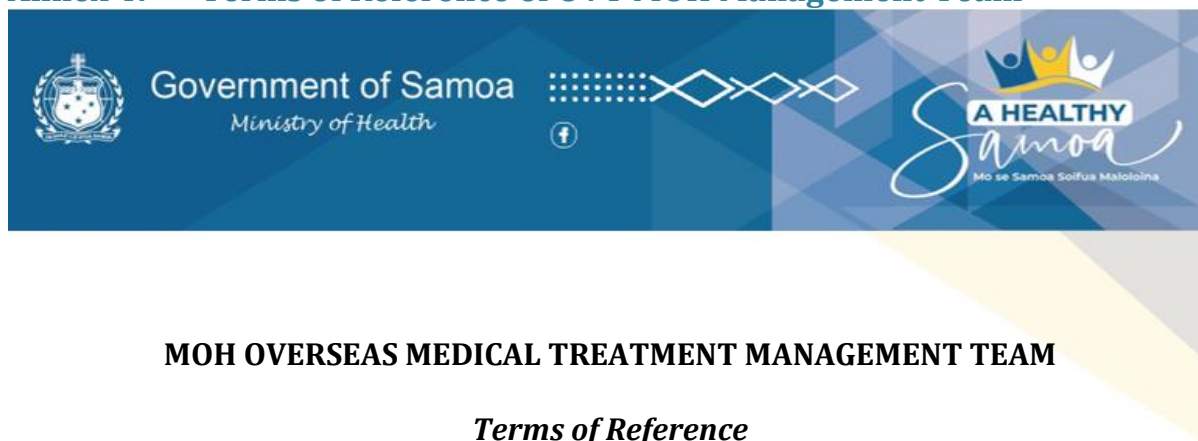
Meetings Frequency:

The committee meetings should be conducted on weekly/fortnightly basis.

Reporting:

The secretariat of the OVT Medical Screening Committee is responsible for submitting the outcome/s of each meeting to the Chair of the MOH OVT Management Team to guide the decision making on OVT application/s.

Annex 4: Terms of Reference of OVT MOH Management Team



MOH OVERSEAS MEDICAL TREATMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Terms of Reference

Background Information:

The MOH Overseas Medical Treatment Management Team was established in 2019 by the Ministry of Health under the Overseas Medical Treatment Policy, 2019 and revised Policy 2023. It is a permanent committee with recommending powers.

Membership:

The MOH Overseas Medical Treatment Management Team members consist of:

Chair:	Director General of Health
Vice Chair:	DDG-Hospital & Clinical Services/ DDG-Public Health Services
Secretary:	OVT Coordinator/Principal Health Policy Analyst
Members:	Deputy Director General – Hospital & Clinical Services Deputy Director General – Public Health Services OVT Coordinator Legal Consultant Assistant Chief Executive Officer – Finance and Procurement Assistant Chief Executive Officer – Internal Audit Assistant Chief Executive Officer – Strategic Planning, Policy and Research

Duties and Responsibilities:

It is the duty of the MOH OVT Management team to:

- (i) meet on regular basis to thoroughly evaluate the OVT Medical Screening Committee's recommendation/s with regards to submitted OVT applications.
- (ii) assist the OVT Coordinator with preparing Cabinet Submission for successful applications when needed.
- (iii) continuously monitor the implementation of the OVT Scheme implementation
- (iv) continuously monitor the performance of the OVT Coordinator, Overseas OVT Facilitator and OVT Medical Screening Committee

Meetings Frequency:

The OVT Management team meetings should be conducted on weekly/fortnightly basis.

Reporting:

The secretariat of the OVT Management Team is responsible for recording of the team's meetings minutes and compiling of reports of this team's work progress.

Progress Reports of the OVT Management Team should be shared to the Hon. Minister of Health for his awareness and reference.

Annex 5: Terms of Reference of Overseas OVT Facilitator



OVERSEAS OVT FACILITATOR – SAMOA MEDICAL TREATMENT SCHEME

Terms of Reference

A. Overall Objectives

The overarching objective of the Contractual arrangement is to facilitate efficient, equitable and quality management of the Samoa Medical Treatment Scheme, in order to improve the health status of the Samoan population in line with the Pathway for the Development of Samoa FY2021/22-FY2025/26 vision of *“Fostering social harmony, safety and freedom for All”* and the aspiration for its Key Priority Area 2: *“Improved Public Health”* i.e. *“All persons receive quality health care services”*.

B. Objectives of the partnership

- iii. To ensure the appropriateness of overseas referrals for all patients referred for the SMTS and that all patient referrals remain within OVT policies and guidelines;
- iv. To ensure that all records and treatment notes for patients referred via the Scheme are well kept and relayed in a timely and effective manner to counterparts in Samoa;
- v. To ensure efficient and effective management of the Overseas component of the Scheme i.e. as it pertains to patient treatment executed in Fiji, New Zealand and India;
- vi. To serve as an adviser to the Government of Samoa and the Overseas Referral Committee/Scheme with regards to alternate cost effective treatment options for patients referred within the Scheme,

C. Scope of Work / Roles & Responsibilities

- 1. Ensures that the Scheme operates according to approved OVT guidelines;
- 2. Actively monitors all activities, patient referrals and financial resources utilized within the Scheme;
- 3. Reviews and facilitates appointments only for patients endorsed by the Samoa Medical Screening Committee (MSC) with the appropriate specialist or health care facility within Fiji, New Zealand or India;

4. Responds within 24hours to all queries and referrals set forth by the Chair of the Medical Screening Committee and the OVT Coordinator;
5. Seeks cost estimates from treatment hospitals and relevant medical specialists for approved patients within the Scheme;
6. Ensures that all Specialist recommendations including reasons for decline of referral are confirmed in writing and relayed to the OVT Coordinator and MSC;
7. Arranges for admission of approved patients within 24hours of acceptance by these hospitals/specialists;
8. Provides acceptance letters complete with projected treatment costs to the OVT Coordinator and MSC within 24 hours of specialist acceptance;
9. Monitors the management of referred patients and ensures that all treatments dispensed are for the agreed course of treatment as approved by the Scheme;
10. Coordinates patient appointments including admission and follow up, necessary investigations and pastoral care;
11. Remains in contact with all Samoan patients referred via the Scheme and addresses any relevant concerns of these patients as they arise;
12. Provides timely feedback to the Medical Screening Committee and OVT Coordinator regarding the status of patients undergoing treatment, particularly in situations where patients may have deteriorated or projected treatment costs are greatly expected to exceed initial forecast budget;
13. Maintains confidential records of all patient referrals in the Scheme and ensures that copies of these records, patient treatment plans etc are relayed in a timely manner to the OVT Coordinator.

D. Expected Outputs

Provides monthly reporting of the Scheme, these reports to which include:

1. Comprehensive list of patients referred and accepted through the Scheme, treatment costs, arising complications and relevant statistics;
2. Updated cost estimates and billings for all patients;

E. Qualifications and Experience

1. A health-care related qualification from a recognised institution is necessary. A medical or nursing qualification is highly desirable.
2. At least 10 years' experience in health care management or health systems management.

F. Remuneration

The Samoa Medical Treatment Scheme Overseas Facilitator will be remunerated based on a 'Fee for Service' Arrangement, with a standard fee charged for each patient referred and processed through the Scheme.

G. Selection Criteria

1. Meets the Qualification and Experience requirement.
2. Proven work experience in medical administration or health systems management.

3. Ability to work as a team with other healthcare providers and the community.
4. Holds a current business license.
5. Practices with a high level of Professionalism.
6. Ability to communicate effectively in spoken and written English. An understanding of both written and spoken Samoa would be an added benefit.

H. Duration of Contracted Service

The contract for the Overseas OVT Facilitator will be for a period of 3 years with an annual review of performance outcomes.

I. Institutional Arrangements

Counterparts will be the OVT Coordinator at the Ministry of Health in tandem with the Medical Screening Committee (MSC). Reporting obligations are to the Director General of Health through the Deputy Director General of Clinical & Hospital Services, Ministry of Health.