Vietnam Scholarships Program

AidWorks Initiative Number INF523 & INJ260

MIDTERM REVIEW

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Aid Activity Summary

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The team also wishes to thank the many people we have interviewed and/or who have provided documentation to us and who have been so generous with their time, providing open and considered reflections on the program. These include:

- The Management and Staff of the Managing Contractor for ADSiV
- The Management and Staff of ACET
- The representatives to whom we spoke from the many Government of Vietnam agencies including Provincial Universities that have participated in the scholarships program
- The other country (Germany, UK and USA) scholarship programs in Vietnam
- The management and staff of Vietnam International Education Development (VIED) of the Ministry of Education and Training who administer a large scholarships program
- The scholarship liaison representatives at Australian Universities
- Recent applicants for scholarships
- Alumni of ADS and Vietnamese Graduates from Australia Club (VGAT)

Author's Details

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Abbreviations

ACET	Australian Centre for Education and Training (in Vietnam)
ACIAR	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
ADS	Australian Development Scholarships program
ALA	Australian Leadership Awards
ALAF	Australian Leadership Award Fellowships
ALAS	Australian Leadership Award Scholarships
ANU	Australian National University
ASDiV	Australian Scholarships for Development in Vietnam
ASMC	Australia Scholarships Managing Contractor
ASS	Australian Scholarships Section (in AusAID)
AUD	Australian Dollar
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CGA	Central Government Agency
CS	Country Strategy
DD	Design Document
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
DIAC	Departure of Immigration and Citizenship
EL	English Language
ELT	English Language Training
GoV	Government of Vietnam
GPA	Grade Point Average
HCMC	Ho Chi Minh City
HCMNAPPA	Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics & Public Administration
HRD	Human Resource Development
IAP	Introductory Academic Program
HTV	Ho Chi Minh Television
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
JSC	Joint Selection Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development
MC	Managing Contractor
MEF	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

MOET	Ministry of Education and Training (in Vietnam)
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOIT	Ministry of Industry & Trade
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MPS	Ministry of Public Security
NGO	Non Government Organisation
OASIS	Online Australian Scholarship Information System
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OOG	Office of Government
PAHRODF	Philippines Australia Human Resources and Organisational Development Facility
PCE	Pre-Course English
PCOC	Party Central Organisation Committee
PhD	Doctorate of Philosophy
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
PI	Priority Institution
PPI	Priority Public Institution
PSLP	Public sector linkages program
SBV	State Bank of Vietnam
TESOL	Teaching English as a Second Language
UQ	University of Queensland
VIED	Vietnam International Education Development
VGAC	Vietnam Graduates from Australia Club
VOV	Voice of Vietnam

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Executive Summary

Background

Through Australian Scholarships for Development in Vietnam (ASDiV), "Australia seeks to support Vietnam's continuing economic development by assisting in the creation of a greater pool of specialists with the highest level of education, and to link the acquisition and use of new knowledge to making contributions to areas of economic and social development that are identified in the Joint Australian-Vietnam Development Cooperation Strategy" (Design Document p.13). Australian Development Scholarships account for approximately 15% of the current bilateral program budget.

ASDiV was designed in 2008 to manage the delivery of 225 ADS , 20-25 ALAS and 50-60 ALAFs per year to Vietnam. The 2008 design proposed a mid-term review (MTR), and modification if necessary, of these approaches around mid-2011 to inform the second phase (2012-2016) implementation. Since the design there have been several changes to ASDiV's operating context. Implications of these changes needed to be explored.

Summary of activity objectives, components and progress to date

The goal and objectives of the program are as follows:

Goal: Economic growth and poverty reduction in Vietnam is facilitated by access to new professional and technical capacity and leadership skills contributed by an expanded group of Vietnamese graduates from Australian tertiary programs and study placements.

Objectives: *(for the quantum over period 2009-15)*

(i) Vietnam has additional higher learning and leadership capability from Australian scholarships and learning placements that is being used by graduates to make personal contributions to priority development areas *(an abbreviated statement).*

(ii) Vietnam has additional PhD qualified university teachers and researchers using new qualifications to improve quality of teaching and research programs in Vietnam universities that in turn train students and researchers in fields and disciplines that support development work in the priority development areas; and has additional post-graduates with qualifications in TESOL who use the skills to improve quality in TESOL teacher-training to support the national program to expand skills in English language

(iii) Women constitute at least 50% of the additional graduates and leaders obtaining new skills, and using them to contribute to development in the priority areas.

ASDiV has successfully completed one year of operation, delivering outputs related to promoting the program, selecting and preparing applicants with ELT, placement and mobilisation and delivering an alumni program. Scholarships have been distributed across 5 targeting profiles in proportions as planned. Monitoring and evaluation has commenced primarily in relation to outputs but with some initial work on case studies of alumni.

Evaluation findings

Overall, the program is on track to produce an expanded group of Vietnamese graduates with professional and technical skills, additional PhD qualified university teacher and researchers and postgraduates with TESOL qualifications from Australian tertiary programs through scholarships for tertiary programs. More than 50% of these graduates will be women. The program is also on track to enhance leadership skills through providing ALAS and study placements such as those available through ALAFs.

At this stage it is not possible to tell whether the graduates will apply what they have learnt to achieve development outcomes. International literature and experience concerning the potential impacts of training individuals on organisational changes and development outcomes, suggest that the program needs a stronger theory of change that fills in some of the more significant gaps between acquiring individual competencies and achieving development outcomes. It also needs a theory of action that shows what the program will do to encourage use of competencies to achieve development outcomes.

The targeting approach using profiles was generally effective in that it successfully attracted sufficient applications across all profiles. However the approach was complex to explain and administer. Some sensible changes have now been made to the profiles. Most have been welcomed by applicants and their institutions. The haste with which the changes occurred and the lack of adequate notice to prepare for them was an issue but this is a problem for 2011 only. The current profiles will need to be updated to reflect the new Country Strategy and decisions that are to be made concerning HRD priorities.

PPIs, all of which were Central Government Agencies (CGAs) were initially conceived as a separate category to the five profiles, but a subset of Profile 3 all CGAs. In practice almost all of the Profile 3 agencies that applied for scholarships were also PPIs. The separate PPI category has now been discarded. The expected engagement and support processes for working with each of the 15 PPIs, have not been feasible. They have been replaced by less intensive processes at the application stage and at the reintegration stage when scholars return. The continuing availability of this assistance will help to maintain good relationships with those that were previously identified as PPIs.

The changes in the PPI support processes that have occurred relative to the original design are likely to reduce the extent to which the studies that scholars undertake are central to an organisation's strategic HRD needs and the extent to which scholars will be able to apply their new skills in the manner described in the objectives. Given this assessment, the MTR concludes that it would be better to now reduce the number of PPIs and strengthen the delivery of the original design features with respect to pre and post scholarship support to organisations.

Despite problems with the PPI, overall implementation has been effective, efficient and adaptive. All stakeholders spoke highly of the services provided by ASDiV and ACET with most suggestions for improvement being at the margins. Many changes have been made for 2011 to streamline processes and improve performance at the output level (promotion, selection, ELT, mobilisation and so on) and to successfully implement corporate requirements relating to consolidation of ALAS and ADS. The alumni data base has been significantly improved and about a third of the 1,995 alumni on the database have participated in one or more activities provided for them by ASDiV. However the purpose of the alumni program remains unclear.

Length of time between submitting an application and taking up a scholarship has been reduced by 6 months both for those requiring and not requiring ELT. Online application has made the process easier for most applicants. One of the remaining inefficiencies relates to the processes by which applicants can track the progress of their applications. A great deal of time and much paperwork is required in responding to enquiries and it is likely that current processes are a source of anxiety and irritation for applicants.

The program goal, objectives and profiles were formulated under the previous Country Strategy. They are not fully aligned with the new country strategy. In addition, the HRD objective of the new Country Strategy with which the scholarships and study placements program is located is too broad to be useful for targeting and promotion, prioritising applications, or providing HRD support to organisations.

Use of flexible modes has commenced with the piloting of some short courses on HRD in Australia. HRD support could make more use of flexible modes of HRD to address the

differing needs of organisations with respect to managing change in relation to development priorities. In so doing, it would also better address AusAID corporate directions and Paris principles for Country ownership and institutional strengthening.

Lessons and recommendations

The MTR acknowledges and commends the progress that has been made in streamlining program administration. The MTR includes some recommendations to further improve efficiency, such as online tracking of scholarship applications. Many of the MTR recommendations are about giving more consideration to intended development outcomes to concentrate more effort on priority areas. AusAID setting priorities is seen as the most urgent and important task that underpins other recommendations. The recommendations are to strengthen the relationship between the program and the Country Strategy (CS), making the latter the touchstone for setting priorities, redefining the program goal and objectives and refining the targeting profiles.

At a strategic level the most significant recommendations are to:

1. **Reintroduce the concept of priority organisations.** About 8-10 organisations should be selected to work as partners with AusAID in line with CS priorities and taking into consideration other factors such as commitment and potential for productive engagement. They could come from any of the three profiles and across sectors, not just public sector. They will receive additional HRD assistance before and after scholarships and access to a range of flexible modes as needed. It is suggested that approximately 40% of the scholarships go to PIs (percentage for internal use, not a quota). Extended engagement over 3 to 4 years (or more) is expected.

2. **Change the goal of the program so that it is more closely linked to the CS, program objectives and includes flexible modes.** The recommended goal is:

   Achievement of HRD priorities identified within Country Strategy objectives is facilitated by access to and use of new professional & technical capacity & leadership skills contributed by an expanded group of Vietnamese graduates from Australian tertiary programs, study placements and through other forms of HRD and HRM assistance.

3. **Determine priorities within the HRD objective of the CS when developing the Delivery Strategy later in 2011 and reflect these in revised program objectives. Some options for consideration:**

   a. More clearly identify and prioritise Vietnamese stakeholder needs with respect to HRD. Choose a relatively small number of areas that are likely to be of ongoing concern beyond the life of the current CS, for which Australian offers comparative advantage, for which political engagement can be secured, and for which Scholarships and other HRD support are likely to be effective delivery modes taking into consideration such factors as need for critical mass.

   b. Restore the CS objectives 2 to 5 to the statement of program objective 1 and identify priorities within the CS HRD objective so that it provides more guidance (e.g. the focus of the HRD objective could be on improving the quality of Vietnam's human resources in HRD and HRM leadership, other institutional strengthening, and for tertiary education; or other priorities as identified in option a*)*.

4. **Add a fourth objective to the program that relates to the alumni strategy,** develop an alumni theory of change and manage the alumni program and other HRD work with organisations to achieve this objective and implement the theory of change. Suggested wording for this objective is:

   Alumni return with and maintain linkages and positive perceptions of Australia that contribute to strengthening the Vietnam – Australia bilateral relationship and are

supported to enhance their contribution to development objectives by applying what they have learnt and through diffusion of learning to others.

Since there have been several recent changes and some concern has been expressed by Vietnamese agencies concerning the frequency of change, the MTR advises against making any substantial changes until 2012-2013. However behind the scenes work can commence for making the recommended changes and some piloting of processes and models can be undertaken.

Evaluation Criteria Ratings

Evaluation Criteria	Rating (1-6)	Explanation
Relevance	4	The nexus between the country strategy objectives and the scholarships program is problematic: HRD is one of three themes of the new Country Strategy but is too broadly stated to provide guidance for priorities and its link to aid objectives is unclear.
Effectiveness	5	The program is largely on track to ensuring that people from across the profiles participate in the scholarship program and that they acquire knowledge and skills. Achievement of the latter parts of the three objectives (parts that relate to use and impact) may be at risk.
Efficiency	5	The program is efficiently managed and technically competent. It has made various changes that should improve efficiency further including the potential to improve online processes for contact with applicants. Some aspects of liaison with Australian universities may need attention.
Sustainability	4	Sustainability of learning and application of learning beyond the period of studies has been threatened by the removal of more intensive HRD support to a small number of high priority agencies following return of scholars and the removal of requirements for career and work-plans.
Gender Equality	5	Women are overrepresented with respect to numbers of applicants and successful applicants. It is too soon to know whether the female graduates will be able to apply what they have learnt when they return.
Monitoring & Evaluation	5	There is increasing attention to measuring 'outcomes' but insufficient attention to the role of scholarships in contributing to outcomes and the specifics of the outcomes as they relate to program objectives. M&E has been hampered by lack of clarity about program priorities. The high rating takes into consideration what could be achieved given these circumstances.
Analysis & Learning	5	The program has learnt from its experience and adapted various processes to streamline implementation and to address AusAID corporate requirements. Unfortunately some of the adaptations may improve performance with respect to outputs and efficiency but may be to the detriment of the long term impact of scholarships.

Rating scale: 6 = very high quality; 1 = very low quality. Below 4 is less than satisfactory.

Introduction

Activity Background

Through Australian Scholarships for Development in Vietnam (ASDiV), "Australia seeks to support Vietnam's continuing economic development by assisting in the creation of a greater pool of specialists with the highest level of education, and to link the acquisition and use of new knowledge to making contributions to areas of economic and social development that are identified in the Joint Australian-Vietnam Development Cooperation Strategy" (Design Document p.13). Australian Development Scholarships account for approximately 15% of the current bilateral program budget.

The goal and objectives of the program are as follows:

Goal: Economic growth and poverty reduction in Vietnam is facilitated by access to new professional and technical capacity and leadership skills contributed by an expanded group of Vietnamese graduates from Australian tertiary programs and study placements.

Objectives: (for the quantum over period 2009-15)

(i)   Vietnam has additional higher learning and leadership capability from Australian scholarships and learning placements that is being used by graduates to make personal contributions to (these)1 priority development areas.

(ii) Vietnam has additional PhD qualified university teachers and researchers using new qualifications to improve quality of teaching and research programs in Vietnam universities that in turn train students and researchers in fields and disciplines that support development work in the priority development areas; and has additional post-graduates with qualifications in TESOL who use the skills to improve quality in TESOL teacher-training to support the national program to expand skills in English language

(iii) Women constitute at least 50% of the additional graduates and leaders obtaining new skills, and using them to contribute to development in the priority areas.

The AusAID Scholarships for Development in Vietnam (ASDiV) Program was designed in 2008 to manage the delivery of 225 ADS, 20-25 ALAS and 50-60 ALAFs per year to Vietnam. The design covers the 2009-2016 timeframe, comprising a pilot phase (2009-2011) and a follow-up phase (2012-2016). In 2010, the ASDiV Program piloted more targeted promotion and selection by using profiles, innovative promotion and alumni management strategies, and support for HRD plans and personal career development in 15 Government of Vietnam (GoV) ministries known as Public Priority Institutions (PPIs).

The five profiles used in 2010 and the percentage of scholarships that were allocated to them were i) local government officers; and ii) rural development workers [30% for i) and ii) together]; iii) central government officers including PPIs [40%]; iv) University lecturers and researchers [20%] and v) English teachers [10%]. Priority consideration has also been given to candidates with disadvantaged background (i.e. ethnicity, disability, poorest areas). Up to 45 of the scholarships were to be for PhDs.

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1 The design document identified these priorities as those of the draft country strategy and specified them as part of objective 1. The priority areas changed when the country strategy was finalised in December 2010 but the new priority areas have not been explicitly carried over to statements about program objectives that appear in ASDiV documentation (e.g. reports and plans). The question of what the priorities are is unclear.

The 2008 design proposed a mid-term review (MTR), and modification if necessary, of these approaches around mid-2011 to inform the second phase (2012-2016) implementation. The timing of this MTR does not allow full assessment of two rounds of selections (2010 & 2011) as envisaged by the design. However, AusAID decided to proceed with the review to ensure sufficient preparation for any program adjustment and enable program continuity beyond January 2012.

Even so, several changes (targeting profiles, promotion, application, selection processes), some of which are relatively small and some of which are quite significant, had already been approved for the 2011-applications–2012-intake prior to this MTR. The review while focusing on the original design also comments on the changes that have been made to the original design.

Amongst the most significant changes are the collapsing of five profiles to three and the fact that there are now 30 'PPI' organisations (compared with the original 13 for this design and 4 in the previous design). The PPI concept has been discarded and all previous PPIs have been rolled into a Central Government Agency profile (new profile 2). This has implications for how much custom tailored HRD support can be given to each organisation.

In addition under the original design, PPI applicants were nominated by the PPI employing agencies and had to submit a Career Path Plan with application. Now they apply directly on-line themselves but need a Letter of Agency Endorsement to be eligible and no career path plan is required. This has implications for how closely aligned individual applications are likely to be with overall HRD plans.

Since the 2008 design there have been several changes to the operating context of ADSiV that have implications for the continuing relevance of some aspects of the design and the ways in which it is implemented. Examples of changes include:

- the new Vietnam - Australia Country Strategy, the change in objectives and in particular the fact that, within the Strategy, HRD has become a strategic objective rather than a cross-cutting theme;

- AusAID Canberra-led Awards consolidation process and in particular the consolidation of ADS and ALAS, and the introduction of online applications;

- the expansion of the number of ADS for Vietnam from 175 to 225;

- increased corporate attention to monitoring and communicating the impacts of scholarships with respect to organisational changes and development outcomes and not just the effectiveness and efficiency of delivery processes, or the completion of studies, return to country and promotions within country; and

- movement by AusAID Corporate Scholarships (referred to in the design document) towards more flexible modes of delivery for HRD.

Evaluation Objectives and Questions

The objectives of this MTR are to:

- independently assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the pilot phase (2009-2011) of the ASDiV Program.
- Make recommendations to modify, if necessary, key elements of the ASDiV second phase design (2012-2016), to enable ASDiV achieve its development objectives. (Targeting and Alumni have been identified by Post as two key issues given the short amount of time for the MTR)

The agreed evaluation questions derived directly from the Terms of Reference (see Annex 1) are:

1. How well is the program progressing in relation to its goal and objectives?

2. How effective was the use of the targeted approach using profiles in the 2010 promotion and selection round in terms of contributing to achievement of program objectives and how efficient has this approach been?

3. How effective has the PPI approach been in terms of contributing to achievement of program objectives and how efficient are the implementation processes?

4. How effective and efficient has program implementation been with respect to:
   - Ongoing promotion
   - Selection process
   - M&E strategies
   - The alumni strategies
   - Technical inputs of the ASDiV Managing contractor & roles played by key personnel
   - The separate management arrangements for program administration and ELT?

5. Do the ADSiV design and implementation arrangements continue to be relevant in the face of changing external aid environment, corporate requirements and the current Australia Vietnam DCS?

Evaluation Scope and Methods

This evaluation had three phases with the amount of consultancy time (15 days for the team leader and 13 days for the in-country consultant) distributed fairly evenly across the three phases of preparation, in-country visit and reporting following the visit. An evaluation plan was submitted and approved well in advance of the visit. It provided the basis for developing various data collection tools such as interview guides. Annex 2 provides a more detailed description of the approach, its strengths and limitations.

The key methods included:
- Reviewing background and other relevant materials including those relating to other scholarship programs;
- Consulting with internal and external stakeholders, including AusAID Hanoi, AusAID Canberra, the Managing Contractors, key GoV ministries (both PPI and non-PPI), Provincial Universities, Whole-of-Government partners and other Vietnam-based international scholarship providers;
- Consulting with selected Australian education providers, alumni, and scholarship awardees from the 2010 selection round.

This report does not reproduce the detailed results that are comprehensively included in ASDiV's 2010 Annual report but draws on them as needed.

Evaluation Team

Sue Funnell (team leader) brings expertise in program design, monitoring and evaluation, including skills that relate to capacity development programs. She has experience at both AusAID country and AusAID corporate levels with respect to design, monitoring and evaluation of scholarships programs. Sue's role was to plan and oversee the evaluation, participate in data collection and prepare the report.

Nghiem Ba Hung is a national consultant who brought insights and information relating to Vietnam as well as local situation. Hung's role was to conduct interviews before during and after the one week visit to Hanoi, assist with the conduct of the evaluation during the visit in Hanoi and to prepare summaries of the findings of the interviews.

There are no conflicts of interest. The size of the team was adequate for the scale and duration of the evaluation.

Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

The findings and recommendations are structured around the evaluation questions. To avoid repetition, most issues relating to relevance from Evaluation Question 5 are discussed as they arise in relation to Evaluation Questions 1 to 4. Table 1 in Annex 3 maps the relationships between these questions, AusAID's standard evaluation criteria for IPRs and the evaluation questions recommended by ASS for scholarship programs.

To assist the reader to engage with the findings, the recommendations are located in shaded boxes ahead of relevant findings rather than after the findings. They are presented as a complete set in Annex 9. Some of the recommendations are already underway and are made to reinforce the approach being taken by ASDiV.

1. How well is the program progressing in relation to its goal and objectives?

Findings in relation to the goal and objectives

Since the goal and objectives relate to graduates and the first cohort of graduates have not yet emerged from this program the focus will be on what the program is doing to select and support scholars who have the potential to contribute to the goal and objectives.

Goal

Goal: a)[2]Economic growth and poverty reduction in Vietnam is facilitated by b)*access to* new professional & technical capacity & leadership skills contributed by c)*an expanded group of Vietnamese graduates* from Australian tertiary programs & study placements.

Continuing relevance of the goal to the Country Strategy

1.1 Reformulate the goal to more closely reflect the current country strategy and the new priorities that are to be set for HRD when developing the Delivery Strategy later in 2011. Some alternatives (depending on the approach adopted for setting priorities) include:

Achievement of HRD priorities identified within the Country Strategy objectives is facilitated by access to and use of new professional & technical capacity & leadership skills contributed by an expanded group of Vietnamese graduates from Australian tertiary programs, study placements and through other forms of HRD and HRM assistance. (Priorities will need to be set, especially with respect to the HRD objective)

Or

Achievement of the HRD objective of the Country Strategy is facilitated by access to and use of new professional & technical capacity & leadership skills contributed by an expanded group of Vietnamese graduates from Australian tertiary programs, study placements and through other forms of HRD and HRM assistance in relation to the following priority areas.....(to be defined).

1.2 Use the priorities that are to be set within the Country Strategy as the touchstone for prioritising fields of study, institutions, applications and for justifying decisions to agencies and individuals concerning requests and applications that do not fit as strongly within the Country strategy.

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[2] The breakup of the goal into parts a, b and c was done for the purpose of the MTR for clearer analysis.

The goal of the program includes a focus on economic growth and poverty reduction. The original expanded objective 1 included the Country Strategy objectives and these also gave some attention to poverty issues. However the objectives of the new country strategy give little direct attention to poverty reduction per se.

This in itself is curious since the intent of Australian ODA is generally to promote development that reduces poverty. This kind of development differentiates ODA from other types of assistance that might come from other Australian government agencies where there is no direct connection with pro-poor agenda. Even though there has been a widespread reduction in poverty in Vietnam over the last two decades[3] there is some merit in keeping some focus on pro-poor issues if only to differentiate ODA from other assistance and give it more focus. This continuing focus could be through the detailed statements of the targeting profiles (see Evaluation Question 2).

In fact the new Country Strategy does not itself have a clearly labelled goal except to the extent that the following statement on page 7 of the CS could be considered a goal:

> *This strategy sets out how Australian aid will assist Vietnam to achieve the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and become an industrialised country by 2020.*

Given that the new CS includes less explicit reference to directly tackling poverty reduction (except in connection with MDGs) and concern is being expressed about the need to progress to an industrialised country[4] it may make sense to include reference in the goal of the program to progression to a modernised industrialised country moving towards a market driven culture.

Perhaps more simply the program goal can refer to the achievement of the objectives of the CS and the process of setting priorities can be undertaken taking the Strategy Goal into consideration (although undifferentiated reference to MDGs is not helpful). As noted later in this report, the CS objectives, and in particular objective 1, which relates to HRD require clarification and priorities need to be set within them. This process will occur when developing the Delivery Strategy for HRD in 2011.

The current statement of the goal makes a direct link between having access to new skills on the one hand and reduced poverty and economic growth on the other hand. This reflects a significant gap and leap of faith in the theory of change for the program. While it is not feasible to include all the 'missing middles' in a goal statement, the goal statement would be improved somewhat by including a reference to the fact that not only is it important to have access to new skills but also that those skills are mobilised. Also the discussion of flexible modes in Evaluation Question 5 and elsewhere in this report suggests that it would be helpful if the goal were not limited to scholarships and other study placements.

The goal statement as currently stated does not add much value to objective 1: *Vietnam has additional higher learning and leadership capability from Australian scholarships and learning placements that is being used by graduates to make personal contributions to the priority development areas in the country strategy.* In fact in some regards objective 1 is stronger than the goal because it goes beyond having access to skills to actually using new skills.

Achievements in relation to the current goal

Overall, the program is on track to produce an expanded group of Vietnamese graduates with professional and technical skills from Australian tertiary programs through

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[3] M. E. Porter *The 2010 Vietnam Competitiveness Report*
[4] Concern expressed by Vietnamese stakeholders in the MTR, Vietnam's 5 year Socio-economic development plan 2011-2015, the Country Strategy. Also progress towards an industrialised country is seen as a means of sustaining advances that have been made in terms of reducing poverty.

scholarships for tertiary programs. The program is also on track to enhance leadership skills through providing ALAS and through study placements such as those available through ALAFs. However the link between this expanded capacity and potential to contribute to economic growth and/or poverty reduction is questionable.

a)Access to an expanded group of Vietnamese graduates with new professional and technical capacity and leadership skills

A considerably larger pool of applicants for ADS was attracted than for the previous year (24% more) to enable more competitive selection of scholars. Across all profiles 1,206 applications were received for 225 scholarships (compared with 150 scholarships per annum before ASDiV) and of these 73% were eligible for further consideration. Later in the report we discuss their distribution according to profile, ethnicity and gender.

With respect to enhanced leadership skills, an expanded and competitive pool of applicants was also attracted that resulted in the award of 20 ALAS compared with the target of 20 to 25 per annum and 16 ALAS for the previous year. In round 9 of applications for ALAFs, Vietnam received 66 ALAFs distributed across 11 project proposals, compared with a target of 50 to 60. Vietnam was the country with the third largest number of fellowship awards. These results are commendable in that applicants for ALAS and ALAFs compete globally with applicants from other countries.

Assuming that good applicants were selected, that scholars complete their studies and return to Vietnam then Vietnam will have access to an expanded group of Vietnamese graduates with professional and technical skills, with ALAS having additional leadership skills.

b) Facilitation of economic growth and poverty reduction

There is a large gap between having access to skills and facilitating economic growth and poverty reduction. The program design as it is currently being implemented gives only limited reassurance that the scholarships will have the potential to contribute to economic growth and/or poverty reduction[5].

Considerations contributing to this concern include the fact that the priority areas for scholarships identified for objective 1 in the original design, prior to the December 2010 Country Strategy, gave much more explicit attention to pro-poor economic growth and poverty alleviation and helped to identify somewhat plausible links between the priorities to be addressed by the program and its goal. These priorities have been removed from recent statements about objective 1. Also, the titles of the original profiles 1, 2 and 3 explicitly referred to poverty and the detailed statements for 4 of the original 5 profiles included some reference to pro-poor agenda.

If the detailed statements about the profiles including their pro-poor focus as stated in the original design were being used to attract and select applicants then there would be some, albeit limited, grounds for expecting a link between scholarships and poverty reduction. However it is not clear that the details and pro-poor focus from these original statements are being used in that way. Instead the simple titles of the 3 new profiles seem now to be providing the main point of reference. This is what appears on the new application form:

1 Local Government Officials & Development Workers
- Civil and public servants working with People's Councils, People's Committees at provincial, district or communal levels
- Development practitioners working on provincial or rural development issues

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[5] The two are not always positively correlated: growth may not be pro-poor.

- Individuals working in rural industry or providing rural services

2 Central Government Officials
   a) Full-time staff at one of the following 30 Central Government Agencies, working on administration, management, policy or training issues.

3 Tertiary Lecturers (including TESOL) & Researchers
- Tertiary–level lecturers at academies, colleges or universities
- English language lecturers
- Researchers at universities, research centres or research institutes.

There is no reference to the objectives or focus of each of the profiles as described in the initial targeting profiles e.g. relevance to poverty reduction for new profile 1, pro-development policy for new profile 2. It is possible that these considerations are being applied when screening applications and conducting interviews but it would be better to also use them upfront at the point of attracting applications. One of the advertised selection criteria is 'potential contribution to Vietnam' but that is a very broad criterion that could include almost any area of endeavour and would not necessarily be related to economic growth or poverty reduction.

Logframe indicators in the M&E plan make no direct reference to contributions to economic growth and poverty reduction or indeed to the five country strategy objectives under the three new country strategy pillars. Being clearer about these priorities and using them for targeting, reporting and M&E could help to show the specific links between what the program will be delivering and the end goal and give some sense of the likely scope of program achievements.

Objective 1

> Objective 1: Vietnam a)[6] has additional higher learning and leadership capability from Australian scholarships and learning placements b)that is being used by graduates to c)make personal contributions to the priority development areas in the country strategy.

Continuing relevance of objective 1 to the Country Strategy

1.3 Determine priorities within the HRD objective of the CS when developing the Delivery Strategy later in 2011 and reflect these in a revised program objective 1. Some options for consideration:

- More clearly identify and prioritise Vietnamese stakeholder needs with respect to HRD. Choose a relatively small number of areas that are likely to be of ongoing concern beyond the life of the current CS, for which Australian offers comparative advantage, for which political engagement can be secured, and for which Scholarships and other HRD support are likely to be effective delivery modes taking into consideration such factors as need for critical mass.

- Restore the CS objectives 2 to 5 (relating to Transport infrastructure and Economic Integration, and Environmental sustainability) to the statement of program objective 1 and identify priorities within the CS HRD objective so that it provides more guidance (e.g. the focus of the HRD objective could be on improving the quality of Vietnam's human resources in HRD and HRM leadership, other institutional strengthening, and for tertiary education; or other priorities as identified in option a*). Annex 4 includes an example of what a reworded objective 1 might look like, using this approach to setting priorities and some possible implications for implementation.

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[6] The breakup of this objective into parts a, b and c was done for the purpose of the MTR for clearer analysis.

Objective 1 in the design was that Vietnam has additional higher learning and leadership capability from Australian scholarships and learning placements that is being used by graduates to make personal contributions to priority development areas. It explicitly identified the priority areas drawing them from the strategic objectives of the draft CS.

The priority areas as defined by the CS Strategic Objectives changed when the 2010-2015 CS was finalised in December 2010 but the new priority areas have not been explicitly carried over to statements about program objectives that appear in ASDiV documentation (e.g. reports and plans). The new CS Strategic Objectives/priority areas are:

i) improving the quality of Vietnam's human resources;

ii) developing better transport infrastructure and policy to support economic integration;

iii) increasing rural access to clean water and hygienic sanitation;

iv) advancing climate change adaptation and mitigation (focusing on Mekong Delta); and

v) developing more sustainable and resilient systems in agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

With the exception of the first objective (HRD) that provides no guidance on priorities, these objectives could have been carried across to objective 1 and relevant features incorporated in the profiles.

The MTR concurs with the Managing Contractor's observations concerning difficulties associated with the lack of guidance for prioritising to meet objectives 1 (and 2) that arose from the fact that the first pillar of the country strategy, namely HRD is too broad:

> "HRD can cover almost any capacity building of individual candidates through post-graduate studies. It would be more useful if the HRD priority needs, where the scholarship program should focus, were made more specific. It was difficult to assess candidates against the three strategy pillars as most could be assessed as meeting the broad HRD pillar, if they did not fall within the economic integration or environmental sustainability pillars. Otherwise it would have been difficult to assess fairly applicants in fields outside these last two pillars such as health studies, law, communication studies etc.

The Managing Contractor recommended that:

> "AusAID prepares a list of list of priority HRD needs against which applicants would be assessed to replace applicants being assessed against the three broad pillars of the current draft country strategy and that the fields of study are reviewed to reflect these priorities".

The MTR is also broadly in agreement with this recommendation, noting that a Delivery Strategy is to be developed later in 2011 in which priorities for HRD will be determined, except that the country strategy should remain the touchstone for setting priorities. Depending on how AusAID determines its priorities within pillar 1 (the HRD objective), these may or may not relate directly to the four objectives that fall under pillars 2 and 3.

Various approaches could be used either individually or in combination to further define the pillars and to set priorities within HRD for scholarships and other forms of HRD (see discussion of flexible modes). These include:

1. **HRD relates primarily to development of HRD and HRM institutional capacity i.e. development of HRD managers etc.** This could relate to all three profiles (local government and non-government, central agencies and universities). Allocating some scholarships specifically for the purpose of strengthening the HRD and HRM sections

within agencies would give a distinctive HRD badge to some scholarships. Some additional priority could (but need not) be given to priority organisations representing the objectives under pillars 2 and 3.

2. **Scholarships relate to all objectives in the CS and within these objectives HRD is further defined as relating primarily to educational management and pedagogy in universities**, as a priority identified by GoV and in the CS i.e. picks up the new profile 3 which might not otherwise be addressed through profiles 1 and 2 or CS objectives 2 to 5.

3. **HRD is primarily HRD in relation to the 4 objectives under the other two pillars.** Greater specification of these objectives and of priorities within objectives could be undertaken by reference to sectoral work-plans and consultations with partners. This would relate to all 3 profiles and would assist with identifying priority fields for study that are relevant to Country Strategy objectives 2 to 5

4. **HRD relates to priorities identified by GoV stakeholders** which may or may not relate to objectives 2 to 5 in the CS.

With respect to the last of these, during interviews with central agencies for the MTR, Government of Vietnam stakeholders identified a range of priorities. Some relate more directly to development than others:

- Several central government institutions called for training in HRD and HRM noting that this could be through short courses either in Australia or Vietnam. Reference was made to the potential value of the pilot courses in HRD and governance. *These requests relate to option 1 above and could also be done using scholarships in some instances.*

- MPI identified infrastructure, HRD and Institutional capacity (placing greater emphasis on the latter two in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, believing that there is a need to change the culture of organisations to customer driven and consumer protection approaches and exploring private sector options). HRD also includes increasing levels of education: by 2020 – 350/10,000 to university undergrad level or better; 55% of total labour force to have received Vocational technical training. MPI identified the need to modernise educational management, teachers and lecturers through contact with international universities. *MTR comment: the latter is consistent with profile 3 and option 2 above would mean that some lecturers would receive scholarships for educational management and pedagogy. Others would receive scholarships that relate to their particular fields.*

- VIED priorities are to have 20,000 PHDs in Universities by 2020. The priority fields are sciences, engineering, technology, environment, health, agriculture. (The least priority is business because already much done there). *All of these fields relate to objectives 2 to 5 in pillars 2 and 3 in the country strategy and some aspects of health (e.g. those relating to cross border issues) could also relate to objectives 2 to 5. Hence these suggestions relate to option 3 above.*

- Several central government institutions called for English language courses and some called for more ELT preparation for those that have very low English skills. *MTR comment: Other than in association with scholarships it would be unrealistic to expect AusAID funds to make a significant impact on such a large need in Vietnam.*

Achievements in relation to the current objective 1

a)Additional higher learning and leadership capability

> 1.4 This report reinforces the recommendation in Annex 5 of the ASDiV second annual report that AusAID (Corporate and Vietnam) reminds universities of the following
>
> i) update student's progress and completion on a regular and timely basis to ensure that the information on OASIS is accurate and up to date
>
> ii) report cases where students have returned to Vietnam without their degree being finalised
>
> iii) report promptly any information that could prevent students from completing their courses on time
>
> iv) seek AusAID Post's approval before taking any action that has cost implications.

Assuming that students graduate and return to Vietnam then we can conclude that Vietnam has higher learning capability. ASDiV reports that tracking the progress of students (pass-fail of subjects, completion of degrees) to estimate the likelihood of them completing their studies and the actual number of graduates has been difficult because universities do not update students' progress on OASIS as often as required. The Australian Scholarships Section (ASS) also has incomplete data. ASDiV notes that many more students have graduated than are on the ASS data sheet.

On the basis of the information that is available (for 193 of 340 scholars in Australia in 2010), the vast majority (188) are making satisfactory progress. The five Australian Universities that were interviewed for the MTR spoke highly of the diligence and achievement of Vietnamese students when compared with those from many other countries. They report very few dropouts. It seems likely that the success rates in terms of graduation will be high.

Within these broad and incomplete statistics, little information is available about such matters as whether students are repeating or changing courses. This information is needed not only to identify whether students might need some extra support, to track progress and provide feedback on student and course selection but also because of its potential financial implications for AusAID. Where there are financial implications the proposals for course changes should be provided for approval before the event.

With respect to whether Vietnam is gaining access to higher leadership qualities, there are two points at which the scholarships program can have an effect.

1. at the selection stage: leadership potential is one of the four criteria used to select applicants on the basis that a combination of leadership qualities and professional skills is needed to bring about change when scholars return.

2. through the ALAS which includes a leadership development component additional to the scholars' studies.

b)Using capability acquired through scholarships

1.5 Ensure that tracer and other follow-up studies collect information that will be useful for determining whether objective 1 is being met and for separating out any additional effects of the leadership development component of ALAS and ALAFs[7]. The follow-up processes should also enable some judgements to be made about:

a) whether any contributions that scholars are making do in fact relate to the priority areas of the previous and current country strategies(recognising at this stage that many will have commenced their scholarship under the previous country strategy)

b) the extent to which they consider that their scholarship contributed to what they are doing (was it a major factor? A moderately significant factor? A minor factor? Not relevant?)

c) what factors (organisational and other) have facilitated or hindered their ability to apply what they have learnt. This information can provide insights that can be relevant to future selection of individuals and organisations and support for organisations

It is too soon to say whether graduates will use what they have learnt: the first cohort of scholars under this program will not graduate until midway through this country strategy. However it would be useful as part of the tracer studies and other follow-up procedures proposed for 2011 and 2012 to start piloting some processes for determining whether this objective is being met. These procedures will need to go beyond simply establishing that scholars have returned to their organisations and have continued to work in relevant areas.

Even if scholars return to Vietnam and continue to work in relevant areas, we cannot be sure that their scholarship experience will influence their work. In other countries, the team leader has spoken with alumni who returned to their area of work (e.g. agriculture) after studying a degree related to that field but were unable to apply what they had learnt because the conditions and available resources in their country were so different from those in Australia around which their courses had been built. It would therefore be useful to include in M&E information, some assessment (even if only subjective by alumni) of the significance of their scholarship in influencing what they did back home and whether what they did related to the priority areas of the CS.

It will be important, when ALAS return to Vietnam, to follow-up with an assessment of the extent to which ALAS are adding the leadership dimension to what is otherwise achieved through ADS. If this follow-up is conducted in a reasonably in-depth manner (as it could be given that only about 20 are going each year) it may also provide insights about whether the right people are being selected for ALAS.

Also the leadership contribution of ALAFs could be assessed but bearing in mind that these awards are targeted more to organisation to organisation partnerships than to individual contributions.

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[7] It is possible that AusAID Corporate will be conducting its own follow-up of ALAS and ALAF in ways that would allow disaggregation of data for Vietnam. In this case it may not be necessary to conduct additional follow-up with these two types of recipients.

1.6 Develop a stronger theory of change to underpin the program and to accompany the program logic diagram which is necessarily stylised and abbreviated. Ensure that it:

    i) identifies the priority areas in which outcomes are to be achieved

    ii) shows the connection between selection processes and the likelihood of achieving priority outcomes

    iii) incorporates the organisational and other factors that will affect whether scholars are able to apply what they learn (especially for those scholars working in priority areas agreed between AusAID and the Government of Vietnam)

    iv) is accompanied by a theory of action that shows how ASDiV will contribute to the later stages of the theory of change (intermediate and higher level outcomes in the logic model)

1.7 Use a theory of change that focuses on making real differences (not just whether scholars return to their organisations and receive promotions)

    a) for selecting applicants whose scholarships are most likely to be able to make a difference to Vietnam, taking into consideration their operating contexts and program priorities and

    b) as a point of reference for providing HRD assistance before and after scholarships.

1.8 Place stronger focus on *managing* the scholarships program to achieve outcomes (application of learning and achievement of outcomes in priority focal areas and institutions) and not just on *measuring* the effects of the program and what individuals have achieved.

In the meantime it is possible to assess whether conditions are in place that are likely to foster use of capability acquired through scholarships. This can be done by considering the validity of its theory of change[8] and comparing program implementation with a defensible theory of change. A program logic diagram has been prepared for the program and has been useful for reporting purposes.

Given what is evident from international literature and experience concerning the potential impacts of training individuals (see discussion in relation to Evaluation Question 3), the program logic needs to be underpinned by a stronger theory of change. Such a theory of change would need to demonstrate plausible links between expanded capacity, application of capacity and contributions to economic growth and/or poverty reduction (or a revised goal statement).

The links between what is done at the output level and what is to be achieved at intermediate outcome levels (program objectives) and then to achieve higher level development outcomes have to some extent been severed and the theory of change is now less robust. While it is clear what the program will do to achieve the outputs it is not clear what the program will do to contribute to the higher levels in the program logic that relate to application of learning.

Accordingly, the theory of change needs to be accompanied by a theory of action about how the program will contribute to the later stages of the theory of change (i.e the higher steps in the program logic). This theory of action will need to refer not just to what ASDiV does through its selection and preparatory processes but also the assistance it provides following return of scholars.

[8] Theory that shows the central processes through which the series of changes that are often shown in a logic diagram will occur

Personal contributions often require receptive and supportive organisational contexts as well as a sense of purpose for learning and a work based learning approach. It will be easier to apply learning as an individual in some types of organisations (e.g. Universities and research institutes) than in others (e.g. large central agencies). For scholars returning to large organisations (in particular), taking up a position and possibly obtaining a promotion is in many cases only a small part of what needs to happen for them to be able to apply their learning, no matter how much they are motivated to do so.

Organisations will need to be ready to use them to good effect, provide opportunities, and have the right operating context (leadership, management styles, work cultures, policies, systems, tools, processes, authority patterns, resources). They may need assistance to do so and their commitment to doing so needs to be considered as part of the process of selecting scholars.

The original design included some activities that would help contribute more directly to helping scholars use what they had learnt, especially for scholars from PPIs. Some of these activities will now be less intensive than proposed in the design. These issues are discussed in more depth in relation to Evaluation Question 3 concerning PPIs but the principles apply equally to all profiles (PPI and non PPI) and to both objectives 1 and 2.

In the theories of change and accompanying performance measures, both AusAID and ADSiV have placed considerable emphasis on whether scholars achieve promotions as an indicator of success. Promotion may increase the likelihood that scholars will be well positioned to apply what they have learnt but will not necessarily be the result of the scholarship.

Moreover, several central agencies that participated in the MTR were keen to break the nexus between promotions and scholarships. They cautioned against creating unrealistic expectations among scholars that they would achieve a promotion as a result of having undertaken studies. Some referred to the fact that the best people could often not be spared for scholarships. Some (who apparently regard promotion as a reward) argued that those who had received scholarships had received rewards enough already and should not therefore also expect a promotion.

AusAID Corporate is now placing increasing emphasis on achieving and assessing outcomes and impact (beyond course completion, satisfaction, return to country and promotion). Along with this goes a need to manage scholarships in ways that are likely to increase the probability of impact given what is known from international experience and aid effectiveness findings.

ASDiV is placing increasing emphasis on the *measurement* of outcomes and impact but could do more to increase the likelihood of *achieving* outcomes by taking a more integrated approach to assisting organisations to use scholarships as part of their HRD strategy and as needed supplementing scholarships with other flexible modes. Recommendations concerning the reintroduction of assistance for HRD are discussed in relation to Evaluation Question 3. Measurement on its own will not ensure outcomes: the program needs to be managed to achieve them.

The MTR concludes that some of the recent changes to the way the program is managed and delivered may reduce the likelihood that scholars will be able to maximise their use of their capability (see discussion of the PPI theory and its implementation under Evaluation Question 3 and issues relating to the online application process in Evaluation Question 4). Some of these changes have made it administratively easier, simpler and faster for applicants and more likely to attract a large enough pool of applicants for the various targeting profiles. These changes may improve performance at the output level (promotion, selection, ELT, mobilisation and so on) but may reduce the extent to which

the program objectives (intended outcomes) can be achieved (especially as originally envisaged for PPI).

Features of the original design that were to facilitate this supportive context (e.g. close liaison with HRD, workplans etc especially for PPIs and follow-up with HRD assistance following return of scholars) have been diluted through the changes made for the 2011 application process in the interests of administrative simplicity for scholars, their organisations and ASDiV.

> 1.9 Recognise that the theory of change for scholars in 'open' categories may need to be weaker and expectations of success less ambitious for priority organisations receiving assistance

Scholars in open categories (if employed) with little if any upfront scrutiny by their organisations are less likely to be guaranteed of organisational support. Accordingly what can be expected of them in terms of using capability to make contributions may need to be lower than for those where scholarships are part of a deliberate HRD strategy. A less ambitious theory of change may be required.

Outcomes in terms of use of learning should continue to be measured for these students but expectations/targets may be lower and the amount of evaluation effort might be reduced commensurate with the amount of support they receive. However the funding for the actual scholarship itself remains the main expense and so it will be important to capture outcomes.

c)Making contributions to the priority development areas

> 1.10 Once priorities for HRD have been developed as part of the Delivery Strategy, ensure that these priorities are communicated to scholars and their organisations and that applicants are targeted, selected and supported with a view to contributing to priority development areas and monitoring and evaluating their contributions with respect to priority development areas.

Objective 1 in recent ASDiV documents refers to but unlike Objective 1 as stated in the design document does not identify CS priority development areas. There is therefore no frame of reference against which achievement in terms of contributions to priority development areas can be assessed.

Initially when designing the terms of reference for this evaluation it was suggested that the three pillars of the new CS be used as a framework. However, as noted in the discussion of relevance of objective 1, one of the new CS objectives - "Improve the quality of Vietnam's human resources" - is not particularly helpful for setting priorities. The other four strategic objectives of the new country strategy could have but appear, not to have been used to any great extent.

One instance in which the new country strategy objectives do seem to have played a role in setting priorities for the program was the expansion of the original PPIs (as a category within the old profile 3) to include some relevant Ministries that had been excluded from the original design. However, other organisations such as the Ministry of Health that were no longer as central[9] to the CS objectives were not removed. Executing the exit strategy while maintaining good relationships proved to be difficult. Hence, to an

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[9] Except in the general sense that they sought HRD assistance through scholarships and so like every single agency in Vietnam could be accommodated under the strategy objective that relates to HRD

external reviewer the connection between the choice of PPIs and the priority development areas in the CS is unclear.

The priority development areas in the CS appear not to have been actively used to attract applicants and select them. Instead, the online application form and the selection criterion that relates to whether the scholar is likely to contribute to development in Vietnam refers to a list[10] of development areas included in the new application forms for ADS (globally) and these are not specific to the Australia-Vietnam CS. For all practical purposes the development priorities of AusAID globally have replaced the CS priorities.

The AusAID list does include most of the areas identified in objectives 2 to 5 in the Vietnam CS but it also includes many others that are not the direct focus of the strategy and may or may not contribute to poverty reduction or pro-poor economic growth. This may make it more difficult to concentrate any of the scholarships in areas that are of particular interest to the CS once priorities have been identified.

There are also some possible omissions from the AusAID list that would be pertinent to the Vietnam CS. For example, given that HRD is the first of the five objectives of the current CS and one of its three main themes it would seem sensible to allow for the fact that development of institutional capacity to manage HRD would be a priority. However, it is not clear how HRD or various other aspects of institutional capacity development that Vietnamese central agencies identified during our interviews as priorities (e.g. institutional culture changes to a consumer and market driven economy) could be accommodated within the current list of development themes (other perhaps than as part of governance).

ASDiV is catering to this need for developing HRD expertise through piloting some short HRD courses in Australia. These are alternatives to scholarships. However there are also degree courses that could be done with scholarships and may ultimately be needed for sound HRD and HRM leadership practices in organisations.

> 1.11 Categorise applications according to the priority areas in the Country Strategy and those identified for HRD (when these have been specified in more detail) and as needed actively seek applications that relate to those areas (e.g. through AusAID sector staff)

The MTR concludes that the loose connection between AusAID's list of development areas and the Vietnam Strategy Objectives may reduce the likelihood that what graduates learn and how they apply it will relate directly to the Vietnam priority development areas. It will be important to evaluate the contributions by individuals to the priority areas of the current and previous CS. Classifying areas of study according to relevance to CS objectives or whatever other priorities are set for HRD as part of the Delivery Strategy would assist with achieving, monitoring and reporting on alignment.

In the meantime the MTR looks at the relationship between areas of study and the areas identified in objectives 2 to 5 in the current CS since objective 1 (HRD) does not identify priorities within it.

As shown in the ASDiV 2010 annual report, the eight Fields of Study with the highest percentages at application and at scholarship approval are as follows:

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[10] The development themes included in the application form are: disability, disaster risk reduction, economic growth, education, environment, food security, gender equality, governance, health/HIV/AIDS/pandemics, human rights, infrastructure, regional stability, rural development, water and sanitation.

Field of Study	Application	Scholarship Award
Education	14%	16%
Commerce	11%	9%
Environmental Studies	10%	13%
Economics	8%	11%
Agriculture/ Applied Sciences	7%	5%
Infrastructure	6%	6%
Health	5%	6%
Community Development	5%	6%

Looking just at the dominant fields of study in the 2010 Annual report it would appear that there is some correspondence between the priority development areas of the Country Strategy and the statistics for applications by fields of study. However it is not clear that this distribution occurred as a consequence of strategic management. In future, the five priority areas in the Country Strategy (with some further refinement of the HRD priority area – see discussion of Evaluation Question 5) could be added to the Vietnam specific additional application form and used for prioritising applications.

Furthermore the fact that participants studied in these areas does not necessarily mean that they will return to organisations where these studies are relevant. It is useful therefore that the M&E report for 2010 has reported on such matters as fields of employment, fields of study and whether alumni are working (1,3 and 5 years after return to Vietnam) in positions that relate to the priority area against which they were selected. The report concludes that:

> *"There appears to be quite a good match between the original field of study and the percentage of alumni working in related fields".*

Objective 2

Objective 2: Vietnam a)[11]*has additional* PhD qualified university teachers and researchers b)*using* new qualifications to improve quality of teaching and research programs in Vietnam universities c)*that in turn train* students and researchers in fields and disciplines that d)*support development work in the priority development areas*; and e)*has additional post-graduates* with qualifications in TESOL f)*who use* the skills to improve quality in TESOL teacher-training g)to support the national program to expand skills in English language.

Continuing relevance of objective 2 to the Country Strategy

1.12   Maintain objective 2 in its current form.

This is an important objective because it is consistent with GoV priorities to increase PhDs and English language teaching, fosters multiplier effects and Australia has demonstrated comparative advantage. The CS (pages 3 and 4) concludes that:

> *"In the area of human resources, Vietnam is on track to meet the numerical MDG targets for education. However, the quality of education, particularly at tertiary level remains low. Only about 12% of tertiary-level academic staff have doctorates."*

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[11] The breakup of this objective into parts a to f was done for the purpose of the MTR for clearer analysis.

VIED commented that teaching English language is a competitive advantage of Australia, noting that all heads of foreign language courses in Vietnam are Australian Alumni. This would seem to reinforce the importance of TESOL but it will be important to gauge when a ceiling effect starts to occur.

ASDiV has commented that as for new profiles 1 and 2, it would be helpful to have further guidance concerning priority areas for lecturers, researchers and TESOL:

> *"All TESOL applicants in Profile 5 easily met the HRD criteria, as did most university lecturers in Profile 4, so the country strategy was not very useful in assessing applicants in these two Profiles."*

The MTR concludes that this priority setting process could best occur through including further detail in new profile 3 rather than incorporating this information in an already multi-faceted statement of objective. The objective should remain in its current form.

Achievements in relation to the current objective 2

Additional PhD qualified university teachers and researchers and additional post graduates with qualifications in TESOL (parts a and e of objective 2)

1.13 Consider increasing the percentage of scholarships that go to PhDs from the current 20% to say 25%, especially where those PhDS have a strong teaching role. This would add about AUD1,650,000 to the cost of the program, given a total of 225 scholarships. However, given a limited budget it may be a lower priority than using the same amount for a range of other flexible modes (such as increasing the capacity of PhD alumni at universities to improve pedagogy and other modes described in relation to Evaluation Question 5).

Data about selection of scholars shows that the program is recruiting scholars who have the potential to contribute to each of these elements. The field of candidates for PhDs was highly competitive with respect to numbers and quality. There was a fourfold increase in the number of PhD applications for 45 PhD scholarships from 80 in 2009 to 306 in 2010 and double the number of conditional PhD scholarships were awarded (50 compared with 26). For old profile 5, teachers of English, 91 eligible applications were received of which 29 were approved by the Joint Selection Committee.

As for objective 1, assuming that the scholars complete their studies, we can conclude that this part of objective 2 will be met.

Several central government agencies and other stakeholders consider that there would be merit in increasing the number of scholarships that go to PhDs. If such PhDs take on a teaching role then they have the potential to achieve a multiplier effect of scholarships. If the number of PhDs were to be increased with a view to achieving multiplier effects then it would be important to select applicants who were likely to play a teaching role, likely to have good teaching skills (assessable to some degree through interviews) and also to recognise the need for development of pedagogical skills alongside their technical skills. Some development of these skills could be through post graduate degrees funded by scholarships. Other scholars whose degrees related to technical skills might benefit from short courses on pedagogy when they return.

The unit cost to AusAID of a PhD is higher than for a Masters Degree (maximum of $300,000 compared with a maximum of $150,000). Any increase in the number of PhDs would need to be accompanied by an increase in the budget for scholarships.

Using new qualifications to improve quality of teaching and research and improves TESOL (parts b, c, e, f of objective 2)

1.14 Identify where there may be a need to strengthen pedagogy so that alumni with a teaching role can apply the technical skills they have learnt to teach others, as required by objective 2.

1.15 As part of the future delivery strategy for HRD, incorporate short courses in pedagogy to assist those who need them, especially in provincial universities and consider providing other assistance such as funds to develop teaching resources.

With respect to likely application of learning, the university environment should be conducive to use in the ways suggested in this objective whether for research, teaching in specific fields or TESOL. However, this cannot be assumed for all universities: some of the weaker universities may require assistance (perhaps organisational capacity, small grants to develop teaching resources etc) and it may be especially important to get a critical mass of scholars for mutual support.

Objective 2 includes a train the trainer component for PhDS. It may be useful to focus on a selection of particular fields that relate to priority development areas (once these have been clarified) and accompany the scholarship studies with some training in teaching and facilitation. Some central government agencies identified the importance of developing pedagogical and educational management skills to raise the standards of teaching in universities. Scholars with high levels of technical skills are not necessarily the best teachers. Developing their technical skills may not suffice to achieve this objective.

1.16 Ensure profile 3 includes some regional universities and consider the option of focusing on a small number (one to three) of regional universities for more active engagement e.g. to strengthen a particular field within a faculty, linked to the Country Strategy or to collaboratively carry out an organisational assessment with relevant sections in them to identify any road blocks for scholars applying their learning.

1.17 Target some key provincial universities including some that have potential outreach roles with respect to priority areas in the Country Strategy.

1.18 Consider the potential to establish long term projects to upgrade the performance of selected provincial universities to the point that they could enter into twinning arrangements with Australian or other universities.

The need for development of technical and pedagogical skills is likely to be greater in provincial universities (but confirmation of this would be needed). The ASDiV 2011 plan has identified 3 regions and some provinces and universities within these that will be the focus of attention over the next year. This selection may enable more intensive work with some universities to increase the likelihood that objective 2 will be met in weaker universities. These universities could also be prepared for twinning arrangements that would enable more sustainable support in the future.

Provincial universities also have the potential to play an outreach role in relation to segments of the population (e.g. remote areas, particular sub-groups) that may be difficult to reach through scholarships, assuming that these rural and remote areas continue to be of interest to the program.

1.19 Apply similar prioritisation criteria to new profile 3 – University teachers. Researchers and Teachers of English (old profiles 4 and 5) as this MTR recommends for application to the other profiles and the program as a whole (see recommendations relating to objective 1). Identify some priority fields for PhDs.

A direct connection between TESOL and the national program to expand skills in English language is to be expected. It is not clear however whether it matters in what locations those skills are developed. Given the size of the task it may be helpful as part of the process of setting HRD priorities to also identify some priorities for TESOL. Alternatively applications could be left totally open with a view to attracting many good quality candidates.

The lack of targeting of particular fields of study for PhD qualified university teachers and researchers may scatter the scholarships too widely to have effect and reduce the efficiency of scholarships. It also detracts from the capacity to achieve part d of objective 2. Also provincial universities commented that since they had informed all faculties and centres about the scholarships there had been a high demand from lecturers. This undifferentiated promotion and response would help to account for the large number of applications for PhDS in 2010. This report suggests some bases for prioritisation (across all profiles) while recognising that there is also value in having some scholarships fall into an open category.

Objective 3

Objective 3: Women constitute at least 50% of the additional graduates and leaders a)[12] *obtaining* and b) *using* new skills c) to contribute to development in the priority areas

Continuing relevance of objective 3 to the Country Strategy

1.20 Reword objective 3 to make it clear that gender equity is important. This does not mean that an exact 50:50 ratio should be sought but it does reinforce that the discrepancy between men and women should not become too great.

A focus on gender is a feature of all country strategies and this objective continues to be relevant. However its relevance within the Vietnam context may be questioned to some extent.

Vietnam has a history of higher representation by women in higher education and in this regard the first part of this objective is easily met. However the objective as currently expressed is not one which is particularly helpful in guiding the direction of the program. As shown below in the discussion of achievements, the ASDiV Annual Report concluded appropriately that the gender balance with respect to applications and take-up of scholarships has improved: it has in fact improved in favour of men who were previously significantly under-represented.

While this change in the gender balance is not specifically sought in the wording of objective 3 it would seem to be a more equitable approach and aspiration. There may be value in rewording the objective to make it clear that a reasonable level of gender equity

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[12] The breakup of this objective into parts a, b and c was done for the purpose of the MTR for clearer analysis.

is also sought i.e. that too much over 50% representation by women is also not desirable.

Achievements in relation to current objective 3

1.21 When rewording objective 3, incorporate reference to the need for gender equity across levels of study.
1.22 Breakdown Level of Study data by gender for future reports.

a) Women obtaining new skills

Assuming that those who have been selected for scholarships successfully graduate from their studies then the program is on track to that part of the objective that relates to 50% or more of those who obtain new skills being women.

Women constitute more than 50% of applicants and conditional awardees and have done so to a point of being what could almost be considered to be excessive for several years. For 2010 the ratio of female to male applicants was 60:40 and the ratio of female to male conditional awardees was 61:39 compared to last year's ratio of 66:34 at both stages. The favourable female ratio is consistent across all Profiles, the PPI program and ethnic minorities. Not unexpectedly, women are even more favoured in old profile 5 (TESOL teachers). Representation of women from ethnic minorities was particularly pleasing since this was a group that was considered difficult to reach.

The ASDiV 2011-2012 plan also reports that:

> "There have been impressive achievements in achieving equal access to education for male and female students up to university level, although there are considerable disparities in higher education with women less likely to pursue post-graduate qualifications."

Despite this statement there appears to be no breakdown of level of study by gender in the 2010 annual report (see section 10 on Level of Study). It would be useful to have such a breakdown in future and perhaps to incorporate reference to the need for gender equity across levels of study in objective 3.

b) Women using new skills to c) contribute to development in the priority areas

1.23 Work with organisations (one to one or one to a small group of organisations) in priority areas that have female scholars to prepare them to make good use of the knowledge and skills that the scholars have developed.
1.24 Identify where risks are greatest to target this work e.g. where women are in junior positions.
1.25 Assist selected organisations to identify barriers to using women effectively and identify how AusAID assistance might work on those barriers as part of an HRM plan.

Equitable representation of women amongst those undertaking studies is only part a) of objective 3. With respect to part b), international experience has shown that women returning from scholarships often have more difficulty in applying what they have learnt (refer last point in Box 2 under Evaluation Question 3). Contributing factors include age, seniority and promotion prospects, cultural issues and family responsibilities.

This means that even if, say, 60% of graduates are women it is quite possible that less than 50% of those who use their new skills to contribute to development in priority areas will be women and that parts b) and c) of objective 3 will not be met. Therefore it is important to follow through with activities that will ensure that women are also

equally or better represented amongst those who use what they have learnt. This is not just a matter of equity but also of program effectiveness and efficiency.

The 2010 and 2011 Gender Plans included some reference to the need to provide such support in its discussion of reintegration plans:

> *"HRD focus on re-entry to roles and positions which will provide career advancement for female and ethnic minority graduates.*
>
> *Continue to discuss issues of gender equality and social inclusion with PPI's so they can provide support to returning students to continue to build their capacity as well as recognising their potential contribution to the agency after study."*

Also the 2011 plan identifies as the main activity for working with Central Government Organisations (CGAS, which in effect have replaced the PPI category):

> *"HRD Advisers' engagement with CGAs to consider gender and social inclusion issues in application processes, HRD plans and in re-integration plans for women and ethnic minority alumni and alumni with disabilities".*

With the expansion of the number of PPIs (or removal of the PPI category) it is unlikely that the custom tailored assistance that might have been available in the past will now be available unless a smaller number of priority organisations are identified with which to work more intensively. Given the complexity of reintegration issues and the organisation-specific constraints, it is questionable whether mass education/training approaches (referred to as consolidated assistance) will suffice to help organisations to effectively reintegrate female graduates so that what they have learnt can be used to best effect. Effective reintegration is an issue for all graduates but perhaps more difficult for women.

With respect to part c) of objective 3, previous comments concerning the difficulty of establishing the relevance of learning to priority areas apply here as well. Follow-up evaluations will need to collect information that will allow such judgements to be made. In the meantime as noted in relation to recommendations for objective 1, it would be useful to classify successful applicants according to which of the 5 priority areas their studies relate most closely.

2. How effective and efficient was the use of the targeted approach using profiles in the 2010 promotion and selection round in terms of contributing to achievement of program objectives?

Findings in relation to targeted approach using profiles

Continuing relevance of the profiles to the Country Strategy and corporate directions

Relevance to Country Strategy

2.1 Once the CS HRD priorities (target groups as well as field of study) have been more clearly defined as part of developing the Delivery Strategy, reword the detail in the profiles and as needed their titles to incorporate these priorities

New profile 1 would pick up on various government and non-government (including private sector) agencies whose collaboration is needed around regional and rural issues and that may be linked to profile 2 scholarships in related areas (e.g. transport policy at central level and transport implementation at regional levels) or scholarships given under profile 3 to universities working in related areas.

See references to profiles in recommendations relating to objectives – Evaluation Question 1.

The Managing Contractor drew attention to mismatches between the profiles and the new CS in Section 19.8 of Annex 2 of the second annual report. Amongst the anomalies identified was the fact that the ASDiV focus on rural development and ethnic minorities and disadvantaged rural applicants (captured in old profiles 1 and 2) does not sit comfortably with the new CS

"which does not specify rural development as a broad objective, although environmental sustainability can be interpreted broadly to cover many aspects of rural development (and it was during the assessment of this year's applicants). Moreover, there is not full convergence between the country strategy and the fields of study in the 2012 application package, e.g. the health studies, communication studies, social sciences and law etc".

This lack of congruence need not be a problem if the profiles are thought of as relating to priorities that can in future be set as part of the HRD Delivery Strategy. These priorities could relate not just to fields of study but also to different target groups/locations– rural (government and non-government), central government, and universities (which could be rural and non-rural) and the fields of study could be defined with respect Country strategy objectives. Transport issues, water and sanitation, disaster management and so on can all be issues that are equally relevant in rural and urban areas. Presumably the AusAID sector work plans will be focusing at different levels for different issues and in some cases may be working across several levels.

Ethnic minorities are more difficult to accommodate and a decision needs to be made as to whether there are particular needs to achieve specific outcomes with ethnic minorities or whether (like gender), ethnic minority, disability and disadvantage should be considered as cross cutting issues relating in part to equity of access and opportunity to apply what they have learnt.

This raises the question as to whether there should be an additional objective and/or targets for ethnic participation and how much effort should be committed to recruiting

and assisting them. However, doing so may reintroduce too much complexity to the mix and the MTR does not recommend such an objective be included.

Relevance to corporate requirements and directions

> 2.2 Once profiles have been amended following clarification of HRD priorities, apply the details of the profiles (not just their titles) to attracting and prioritising applications and demonstrate in annual reports what has been achieved in relation to the details.

Some important aspects of the original design continue to be relevant to AusAID corporate requirements. These include the use of the profile approach which reflects the desire of AusAID corporate to more proactively target those for whom scholarships have the potential to achieve desired outcomes agreed between Governments in country strategies and to make more concentrated, effective and efficient use of limited resources.

Only truncated versions of the titles of the profiles and not the detail of the profiles seem to have been used to promote the scholarships. The truncated versions relate primarily to an applicant's place of employment and say little about the priorities and intended outcomes of the scholarship program. This approach may have been taken because, with the introduction of the new Country Strategy, some of the details of the profiles in the Design Document were no longer as relevant. When the new profiles are developed to support the new country strategy it would be helpful to include in those new profiles the same level of detail that was included in the original ones and then to use that detail for purposes of promoting the scholarships, the application forms and the selection processes.

Although applicants would not need to know all of the details included in the profiles as shown in the Design Document it would be helpful to include some of the details that relate to the focus and intended outcomes for each of the targeting profiles. Box 1 illustrates what an expanded version of the description of profiles included in the current online Vietnam specific additional application form, might look like drawing on the information included in the Design Document. This information would need to be revised when the profiles are redesigned in line with the new Country Strategy and the Delivery Strategy.

Box 1: Expanded versions of profiles for purposes of promotion, application and selection

Profile 1: Poverty reduction in rural areas and for ethnic minorities

Current information in application form:
Local Government Officials & Development Workers including:
- Civil and public servants working with People's Councils, People's Committees at provincial, district or communal levels
- Development practitioners working on provincial or rural development issues
- Individuals working in rural industry or providing rural services

Illustrative additional information taken from Design Document (old profiles 1 and 2)
The scholarships program seeks to attract individuals for whom a scholarship will enhance their capability to contribute to poverty reduction in rural areas and for ethnic minorities, including:
- Government staff working at different levels in provinces who have current or potential influence on provincial or local regulations and administrative systems and who can facilitate the further development of rural industries and local social services delivery that will contribute to poverty reduction in rural areas and in ethnic communities (enablers).
- Persons who potentially can influence change in rural regions and ethnic minority communities that **are focussed directly on poverty reduction** for the 'most poor' with an emphasis on improving productivity of agriculture, forestry or fisheries and on improving quality or access to local services delivery in the poorest (including ethnic minority) communities (implementers).

Profile 2: Promoting Pro-Development Policy in Central Government.

Current information in application form:
Central Government Officials including:
- Full-time staff at one of the following 30 Central Government Agencies, working on administration, management, policy or training issues.

Illustrative additional information taken from Design Document (old profile 3)
The scholarships program seeks to attract individuals for whom a scholarship will enhance their capability to promote pro-development policy in Central Government. Potential contributors to pro-development policy and administration in central policy ministries are those who can influence continuing systemic reforms that are focussed on creating the right conditions in governance, that facilitate growth in private enterprise and economic development, and more effective systems in any of the following development priority areas:
- international economic integration to ensure pro-poor growth
- disaster mitigation approaches, including to address climate change
- water and sanitation
- the health sector
- development challenges associated with 2010 middle income country status,

Profile 3: Improving Teaching and Research Capability in Public Universities and Expanding Capacity for Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESOL) in Vietnam

Current information in application form:
Tertiary Lecturers (including TESOL) & Researchers including:
- Tertiary–level lecturers at academies, colleges or universities
- English language lecturers
- Researchers at universities, research centres or research institutes

Illustrative additional information taken from Design Document (old profiles 4 and 5)
The scholarships program seeks to attract individuals for whom a scholarship will enhance their capability including:
- University teaching academics who need to improve the level of their academic qualifications **to improve teaching and research capability** in universities in relation to development priority areas (see Profile 2 above).
- University teaching academics qualified in TESOL who need to upgrade qualifications to teach English, and for TESOL faculty management, in Vietnam.

The MTR did not ascertain whether the details of the profiles are used less directly to attract, screen and select applicants within the broad categories suggested by the titles of the profiles. See discussion of this issue in relation to Evaluation Question 1. In any case, with respect to the future, it is likely that the details of the profiles will need to be modified once priorities for scholarships are clarified.

Achievements in relation to the profiles

Administrative effectiveness

> 2.3 Clarify the communication concerning the profiles with a view to reducing the number of applications that do not fit any of the profiles

The profiles successfully attracted sufficient applications across all profiles. However some ADS profiles were more competitive (university lecturers and researchers) than others (central policy agencies including PPIs) and may therefore have produced a higher quality cohort of awardees.

Most applicants fitted within the profiles but it is noteworthy that 93 of the total of 325 ineligible applications were deemed ineligible because they did not fit any the five profiles. Most of these were working in the commercial sectors in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi.

Although the targeting approach using profiles was generally effective in the end it was complex to explain and administer. Some sensible changes have now been made to the profiles. Most have been welcomed by applicants and their institutions but the haste with which the changes occurred and the lack of adequate notice to prepare for them was a concern to some.

Useful changes have included merging profiles 1 and 2 and profiles 4 and 5 and re-assigning central agency affiliated research institute applicants to new profile 3 where they will compete with other research institutes rather than having them go through the central agency route. All PhDs are to be associated with universities or research institutes.

> 2.4 Clarify the circumstances under which, from the perspective of achieving development priorities, it would be appropriate for a provincial application to go through the central agency. For example if a particular issue had been identified that required a concerted effort across all levels of government and to which scholarships across all levels of government might contribute, then it may be more appropriate to have a co-ordinated response going through the central agency.

Some central agencies were confused about whether their staff in provincial offices should apply under old profile 1 or old profile 3 (i.e. as a central agency application) and considered it possible that, unknown to them, some of their provincial staff had applied under both profiles. Some wanted to ensure that such applications went through the central office. In fact on this and several other issues there were differences of opinion amongst central agencies as to how active their role should be in vetting and approving applications.

> 2.5 Retain some flexibility to offer PhD scholarships to government agencies under exceptional circumstances. This would only be done as part of a considered and defensible HRD plan developed with a priority organisation (see discussion of Evaluation Question 3) i.e. these would not be promoted as a separate category.

Central agencies have expressed concerns that in future no PhDs will be available to them. Some have argued that occasionally there are highly specialised roles (such as legal drafting) that require high level skills and that a small number of scholarships (say 5 per annum) should be available for such purposes. They commented that if such people had to do their PhD in Vietnam it would be difficult to totally devote themselves to their study whereas if they go to Australia they have access to funds for field trips and opportunities to go to other countries to see (for example) law makers in action.

Effectiveness in contributing to achievement of program objectives

> 2.6 As part of setting priorities and rewording profiles, determine whether a pro-poor focus is to provide an additional filter as it has in the past and if so ensure that some reference to pro-poor as a discriminating criterion is preserved in the reworded profiles.

At this stage we can only look at the match between the program objectives (i.e. the three program objectives discussed in relation to evaluation question 1) and the profiles as described in the design document. As noted, originally objective 1 specified the priority areas included in the draft Country Strategy. These were:

i) planning and effectively managing the long term opportunities and risks of international economic integration to ensure pro-poor growth

ii))planning and implementing approaches to assist alleviating poverty in rural areas and among ethnic minorities

iii) implementing integrated disaster mitigation approaches, and supporting new national approaches to addressing climate change

iv) planning and implementing approaches for providing water and sanitation in rural areas

v) planning and managing the financing and coordination of the health sector

vi) identifying and preparing for the new set of development challenges associated with 2010 middle income country status.

The description of the original profile 3 for central government agencies reiterated these six strategic objectives of the Country Strategy showing their links to particular MDGs and so there was a good link between objective 1 and profile 3. So had the detail in profile 3 been used to attract and screen participants, then one could have reasonably said that the use of profile 3 would contribute to the achievement of objective 1. Note that both objective 1 and profile 3 included reference to poverty reduction. In addition, profiles 1 and 2 referred to poverty reduction in rural areas and in so doing aligned with priority areas ii) and iv) in objective 1.

Profiles 4 and 5 related to objective 2 of the program. These was no specific profile relating to objective 3 concerning women but it was appropriate that this be a cross cutting issue that applied across all profiles and all objectives.

As noted in the earlier discussion of objective 1, reference to country strategy objectives has been dropped from recent descriptions of objective 1. Since no replacement priority areas were identified, the statement of objective provided no guidance for determining the extent to which the targeting approach was contributing to achievement of the current program objective 1.

In conclusion:

- in the absence of a definition of priorities it is impossible to say whether profiles 1,2 and 3 (new profiles 1 and 2) will effectively contribute to the achievement of

program objective 1. Previous recommendations in the MTR concerning the clarification of priorities and the need to carry these over to the detail of the profiles should address this issue.

- profiles 4 and 5 (new profile 3) *are* likely to be effective in contributing to program objective 2; and

- cross-cutting approaches applying to all profiles are likely to be effective in contributing to objective 3 (except for the reservations expressed in the discussion of objective 3 concerning women being able to apply what they have learnt).

- it is not clear whether dropping any reference to poverty reduction has been deliberate or a casualty of the lack of definition of priorities following the introduction of the new CS. It would be helpful to revisit this issue as part of the process of setting priorities through the Delivery Strategy.

Other features of the objectives and profiles that may detract from contributions to priority development issues

> 2.7 Within profile 1, consider more active engagement of a variety of sectors around an issue of joint concern.

The program objectives are largely described in terms of personal contributions of scholars. To be effective these personal contributions will often need to be supported by a favourable operating context in their organisation or community. In addition, to achieve priority development outcomes it is often helpful to involve several sectors in collaborative work [13]: government, NGO, universities and business. In a particular policy or geographical area, all sectors may need professional development in order for progress to be made. This raises the question as to whether the current profiles are likely to encourage and/or permit such holistic approaches.

The 2010 Annual report includes no sectoral breakdown (government, semi-government, NGO, private) of applications and in fairness this has probably not been requested. However it would be useful to have such a breakdown in ways that would make it possible to see if applications (and successful applications) are coming from different sectors around similar issues and in future perhaps to more actively encourage cross sectoral applications in priority areas.

There is also some argument for either expanding the profiles or more active targeting within profiles to encourage take-up by particular segments of the commercial sector that would be relevant to the themes in the Country Strategy:

- The Government of Vietnam has a strong interest in meeting human resource needs associated with progression to an industrialised country (refer Country Strategy). This perspective was reinforced during interviews with MPI when they spoke of the need to develop a market driven culture, amongst public sector staff and policies.

- At the same time it will be important to have appropriate skills in the private sector. Indeed the Country Strategy refers to the fact that potential foreign investors in Vietnam have identified a serious lack of graduates with skills matching market

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[13] This is consistent with the approach recommended by Michael Porter in his presentation of the 2010 Vietnam Competitiveness report (slide 59). The approach is relevant to many areas not just economic development. He proposed a new model for economic development in Vietnam in which economic development is a collaborative process involving government at multiple levels, companies, teaching and research institutions and private sector organisations. This new model would replace an old model in which Government drives economic development through policy decisions and incentives.

demands. They may be looking for graduates in the private sector rather than the public sector.

The old Profile 2 (Rural industry production and community services for the poor) now part of new Profile 1 allows inclusion of private sector applicants in rural areas (individuals working in rural industry or providing rural services) but it is not known whether these would meet the needs of foreign investors. Comments on page 60 of the 2010 Annual Report indicate that there were some applicants from the private sector (mostly unsuccessful).

Those with commercial interests could also be directed to apply for ALAS. ALAFs are open to the private sector but are unlikely to be of sufficient length to develop the types of skills that foreign investors are looking for. They could however be used strategically in conjunction with ALAS and ADS.

3. How effective and efficient has the PPI approach been in terms of contributing to achievement of program objectives?

Findings in relation to the PPI approach

The theory and its implementation

3.1 Reintroduce, for the application round that closes mid 2013, priority organisations that will receive intensive HRD assistance at all stages of the scholarship process. This will include assistance with HRD planning, integrated packages of HRD assistance, and support for effective reintegration and building on scholars' learning to effect organisational change and contribute to development outcomes.

3.2 Select about 8-10 priority organisations to work as partners with AusAID in line with CS priorities and taking into consideration other factors such as commitment and potential for productive engagement.

3.3 Pilot processes with 4 or 5 agencies over the next 12 months to develop capacity for providing assistance firm up the number of organisations that can be supported in the manner proposed and the resources available to do so and to enable some outcome data to be available by 2016 (see also recommendations 3.16 and 3.20)

PPIs, all of which were Central Government Agencies (CGAs) were initially conceived as a separate category to the five profiles, but also a subset of Profile 3 all CGAs. In practice almost all of the Profile 3 agencies that applied for scholarships were also PPIs. The separate PPI category has now been discarded and indications are that many more CGAs (around 30) will be applying for the 90 scholarships that are allocated to the new Profile 2 (replacing old Profile 3). The re-definition of priority organisations has been delayed awaiting the findings of this MTR and the development of the Delivery Strategy for HRD that is to take place later in 2011.

The theory behind PPI and the provision of assistance with HRD plans, career plans and reintegration in the original design was a sound one that recognised the need to link learning to application, organisational change and development outcomes. The design incorporated various activities such as active engagement of ASDiV with PPIs around their HRD plans and support for reintegration following return. The design also included direct involvement of HRD co-ordinators in agencies in the process of selecting and supporting applications before they were submitted. Upon return of scholars to Vietnam, ASDiV was to provide reintegration support to each PPI.

However, ASDiV in its second annual report observed that:

> *"It became clear in seeking to meet the DD's provisions of assisting the PPIs in formulating institutional HRD plans that this was unrealistic and too ambitious. Thus, the decision was made with AusAID's concurrence to narrow the plan to an institutional HRD training plan, which could then be aligned more closely with ADS priority areas and the applicants' career path plans. ....*

Factors that may have contributed to the lack of realism included:

a) **too great a number of PPIs across which to spread the limited resources of one in-country HRD advisor and one part time international advisor.** The design document may have made an error of judgement when it concluded in relation to PPIs that "the number of around 12 to 13 is manageable". The scope of services for ASDiV (schedule 1) did not specify how many PPIs there would be. So, in principle, there would have been some room to reduce the number of PPIs. Doing

so may, however, have damaged relationships with those 13 organisations since they had already participated in the previous program as priority organisations and expected to continue to do so.

b) **the relatively short time available to establish the types of tools, trust and relationships needed to provide useful HRD assistance** to each organisation individually. These developments had to occur at the same time as establishing the new contractor and bedding down the operational procedures for the program. The approach that has been successful in the Philippines has built up over several years. Now that ASDiV is moving more into a routine procedural mode there should be more opportunities for it to work on these other aspects of its role envisaged in the DD.

Given that the intensive assistance envisaged by the design proved unrealistic in 2010, a decision was made with AusAID concurrence to provide 'consolidated' assistance to PPIs (through seminars etc) as an alternative to working with each PPI individually.

Less intensive custom tailored assistance to PPIs and more thinly spreading scholarships across an increasing number of CGAs are likely to reduce the potential contribution of scholarships to the program goal and objectives. This is because such changes:

a) result in a less focused and concentrated approach to targeting those organisations that with assistance may be able to contribute to program objectives;

b) reduce the likelihood that scholarships will be deliberately used by organisations as part of a cohesive HRD strategy that is in turn part of an organisational development strategy

c) reduce the potential to engage with a critical mass (large numbers) of scholars in particular organisations that might be central to the agreed Australia-Vietnam Country Strategy (such as transport and infrastructure);

d) reduce the potential to ensure a *cohesive* outcome focused critical mass of scholars in an organisation (not just large numbers scattered across an organisation);

e) reduce the level of targeted assistance to facilitate follow through from learning to application to organisational change to improved service delivery, progression to an industrialised country, economic productivity and environmental outcomes. The theory of change will not be as fully supported and enacted as it could be; and

f) threaten the sustainability of learning.

The changes that have occurred are likely to affect the robustness of both front-end (links to HRD plans) and follow-up (reintegration) activities needed for scholars. Of course, improving front-end and follow-up processes would not *guarantee* achievement of development outcomes. Individuals will pursue many and different pathways that may /may not contribute to development outcomes and it would be a mistake to prescribe a one size fits all trajectory or set of expectations for alumni[14]. However some

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[14] Some concern has been expressed that AusAID corporate M&E approaches for scholarships may be too rigid with respect to the expected outcomes for alumni and the indicators of success that are used: return to country, return to organisation, receive a promotion. These indicators are proxy measures of intended outcomes in terms of alumni influencing what happens in their country and may in many cases be misleading as indicators of a)level of influence of alumni and b)the effect of the scholarship program in contributing to any such influences.

processes can increase the likelihood of some relatively immediate outcomes (e.g. over 2 years after returning) for a higher proportion of scholars and their organisations.

One small example of what can happen when HRD assistance is provided comes from the 2010 annual report which showed that a higher percentage of the applications that came from PPIs (92%) were eligible than those from applicants for other profiles (70%). This has been attributed to the more intensive collaboration that the ASDiV HRD advisors had with PPIs to screen applications prior to their submission. Given that this level of intense collaboration may not occur in future it is possible that there will be an increase in the percentage of ineligible applications coming from central agencies.

The current practice of spreading HRD support more thinly across a relatively large number of priority organisations could be treated as an interim decision while alternative approaches are explored and better processes for identifying priority organisations (including the number of them) and for supporting them are developed.

In light of all of the above, the MTR concludes that given the potential impact on the outcomes likely to be achieved by scholarships of pulling back of HRD assistance to PPIs it would be better to reduce the number of PPIs, and maintain the original design features with respect to implementation. Within the HRD priorities that are to be established by the Delivery Strategy, preference could be given to those agencies that expressed a genuine interest in and commitment to strengthening their HRD capacity and linking their scholarships to HRD plans and HRM following development.

It is difficult to estimate what the right number of organisations is but as a first step pulling back from 15 to 8 or 10 should help. Piloting of HRD support processes with a sample of four or five of these over the next 12 to 18 months before formal introduction of the new processes will help to determine the appropriate number and whether there is a need to redistribute resources within ASDiV. The MTR team was not in a position to make recommendations concerning allocation of staff resources. Commencing piloting in 2012 will also enable more evidence of results to be available by 2016.

What follows is a discussion of some of the implications of this conclusion and possible directions for implementation.

The importance of situating scholarships within a robust and living HRD plan.

3.4 Reintroduce the expectation that scholarship applications will be linked **proactively** to HRD plans and ASDiV priorities (to be clarified as part of the Delivery Strategy) and encourage organisations to play an active role in soliciting applications from appropriate sections (if not people) in their organisations.

From international literature and experience there is a recognition that long term scholarships can play a valuable role provided they are situated within an overall HRD strategy and individuals are supported to apply what they have learnt (see Box 2, extracted from Annex A of the Philippines PAHRODF design document).

Box 2: Lessons learned about capacity development through long-term training
USAID's African Graduate Fellowship (AFGRAD) and African Training for Leadership and Advanced Skills (ATLAS) programs were evaluated over the period 1962-2003. The following are some of the lessons drawn: • It is better to aim at changes in key organisations than to focus on improving the capacity of individuals. Not only does this lead to improvements in organisational performance, but the impact on the individuals is more beneficial. • The gains to individuals of long-term overseas training abroad include changes in work attitudes, critical thinking, and other "non-technical" attributes (such as self-confidence). These qualities may be less easily instilled by short-term training, yet they may be among the most important for making a measurable difference in trainees' home countries. • Having a critical mass of staff in a particular organisation that have been trained abroad in the same country may be a factor in making changes more possible, more sustainable and more effective. If so, this is an additional factor in favour of a long-term and selective approach targeted at key organisations. • The costs of different training options should be assessed in relation to the desired impact. Of critical importance is the cost of obtaining the desired impact, not the cost of providing the training. • Follow-up support in organisations where trainees are employed should be factored into programs. Maintaining contact with returned trainees can help those who encounter difficulties in introducing changes in their workplaces, a situation reported particularly by women. This, too, calls for a long-term commitment by the donor. *Source:* Adapted from USAID (2004) "Generations of Quiet Progress: The Development Impact of U.S. Long-Term University Training on Africa from 1963 to 2003," Washington, D.C., and quoted in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (2006) "The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working Towards Good Practice," Paris, France.

From the 2008 Indonesia Australia Development Scholarships Program Design document:

> *"Targeted activities that integrate scholarship and other training interventions with the HRD plans of organisations to increase the potential for capacity building will be most effective; conversely activities that are one-off and conceived outside of organisational plans will result in little institutional impact."*

The original ASDiV design recognised, at least for PPIs, the importance of situating scholarships within an overall HRD and organisational development strategy and of the importance of giving strong support to organisations to do so. Clearly some organisations will need that support more than others. Organisational capacity development has many aspects:

> *'capacity development is as much about developing management styles, work cultures, confidence, policies, systems, tools, processes and authority patterns as it is about enhancing the knowledge and skills of individuals'[15].*

[15] AusAid Policy Note 1, Capacity Development Overview, 2009, page 2. See also Baser, Heather and Peter Morgan with Joe Bolger, Derick Brinkerhoff, Anthony Land, Suzanne Taschereau, David Watson and Julia Zinke, *Capacity, Change and Performance, Study Report,* European Centre for Development Policy Management

These other aspects of organisational capacity need to be acknowledged when choosing organisations with which to work as priority organisations, and the nature and intensity of assistance to be given at front-end and at the stage of reintegration of returning scholars.

In its analysis of lessons learnt about scholarship programs, the 2008 Indonesia Australia Development Scholarships Program Design document concluded that

> *"Institutional targeting approaches have the potential to address the specific knowledge and skill gaps of an agency and eventually develop a discrete and small critical mass of expertise, but require at minimum basic training needs analysis, while the agency must have a human resource development and management plan in accordance with its overall goals and strategic directions."*

The ASDiV second annual report observed that:

> *On the whole, the PPIs fulfilled their commitments to ASDiV, providing institutional HRD training plans and indicative scholarship allocation targets, attending the several briefing workshops, promoting the scholarships internally and conducting their in-house career path planning workshops."*

This observation is encouraging in some respects. However, in some organisations, these practices may have reflected a willingness to comply with AusAID's requirements in order to obtain access to scholarships rather than a strong commitment to integrating scholarships into HRD plans in the manner intended by the program. With the new online application processes, many applications may not be reviewed by organisations until after they have been submitted online.

Locating a scholarship opportunity within an HRD plan (or even against a training needs analysis) is a more strategic process than simply checking its consistency with the plan and the plan needs to be a soundly formulated one: not all training plans are strategic ones that will contribute to organisational development and development objectives. Moreover, HRD plans are only plans: they need to be implemented and AusAID needs to be confident that this is occurring in order to have reasonable expectations that scholars will be able to apply what they have learnt to improve organisational performance and achieve development outcomes.

However, HRD is more than just training and training (whether long term or short term) on its own has limitations in terms of its effectiveness in bringing about change. Flexible modes, as an AusAID corporate direction, are discussed in relation to Evaluation Question 5 with a recommendation that ASDiV make greater use of them.

Supporting HRD planning practices at the front end

> 3.5 Provide intensive HRD support to priority organisations with their HRD planning processes and continue to provide less intensive consolidated support to non-priority organisations wishing to have their staff submit applications for scholarships.

The original notion was that ASDiV advisors would assist with HRD plans for PPIs but as noted this proved to be unrealistic. The approach has changed from giving one-on-one assistance to each PPI to providing consolidated (mass) presentations on how to prepare an HRD plan. This approach may be useful as an awareness raising exercise for some organisations especially those that are starting out on the HRD planning process

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1.

(ECDPM), April, 2008, p.109. This was the final report from a multi-donor funded research project. AusAID was one of the sponsors.

but is unlikely to be sufficient. The new processes may reinforce the practice of having an HRD document against which it will be possible to "tick off" scholarship applications. Unfortunately the MTR was not able to collect information from CGAs about whether the seminars had been useful to them and how what they had learnt from the seminars had affected their HRD and scholarship planning processes.

Preparing a robust and feasible HRD plan, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and improving it within the context of organisational objectives and strategic directions can be quite a complex process. To develop good HRD plans and even good training plans, organisations need OD and HRD skills.

These skills are likely to be highly variable across organisations. Interviewed organisations expressed a need for such skills but differed in their awareness of what was required. Some of the PPIs that participated in interviews did reflect on some principles of HRD and HRM. One commented that training is just a small part of HRD and HRD just a part of HRM, that extra emphasis on HRD and training needs analysis is required and that people who manage HRM and personnel managers need to understand the theory and practice of HRM. As an alumnus he felt that too much was expected of him in terms of being able to apply what he had learnt without organisational support through a more comprehensive approach to HRD/HRM.

Some important skills, some of which are would be required to act on the written advice that ASDiV has prepared concerning HRD, are those required to:

- conduct organisational assessments of organisational capacity and readiness for change (ASDiV can assist with some tools);
- identify important areas for change, and which are related to HRD;
- identify which learning mechanisms (scholarships, short-term training, internships, mentoring, work based learning projects etc) are most effective and efficient for different HRD purposes in order to produce organisational outcomes;
- prepare plans and proposals for HR and OD including training plans as part of HRD plans; and
- support the application of what is learnt whether through scholarships, training or other human resource development activities such as mentoring and internships. For scholarships in particular these processes will need to include support for implementation of the reintegration plans of returning scholars.

PPI co-ordinators that participated in MTR interviews expressed differing views about the strengths and weaknesses of the recent changes and the extent to which they wished to be involved in the process. A minority appreciated the changes in that it meant less work for them. However the majority were of the view that there should be some agency involvement in encouraging particular applicants in line with agency priorities and reviewing applications.

They were divided in their opinion as to whether this should happen before or after online application. Some considered that applications should go through an HRD co-ordinator or personnel section but one large agency commented that the personnel section was unable to effectively review all applications and that particular sections should take responsibility for encouraging and reviewing applications. These are agency specific considerations that they can resolve internally

Supporting HRM practices at the reintegration stage

> 3.6 Reintroduce expectations that all applicants will provide indicative action plans and that successful applicants will refine these as they progress through their studies, in consultation with their organisations. The final action plan is the reintegration plan.
>
> 3.7 If the ASDiV HRD program expands to include other activities such as short courses (not just for alumni but for others without scholarships) include action plans in those activities as well.

There is mounting evidence across scholarship programs that good work based learning reintegration plans (not just cultural and personal readjustment plans) accompanied by follow-through activities can play a valuable role in focusing learning and encouraging implementation of what has been learnt. Some countries such as the Philippines already have reintegration plans as central to their scholarship program and after several years consider them to be one of the most critical success factors for their program. Returned scholars provide six monthly updates on their implementation and outcomes.

Reintegration plans are increasingly being addressed in the leadership development part of ALAS and are likely to be recommended more widely for ADS. Reintegration plans are developed when thinking about what studies to undertake and then followed through during and after studies.

The elimination of the requirement to produce career plans and action plans as part of a scholarship application further reduces active involvement of agencies and applicants in the nomination processes. Some central agencies disagreed with dropping this requirement. They commented that just having to prepare a plan, even if it is not ultimately carried through, helps to focus applicants' decision making and studies.

Plans can be valuable in themselves by giving focus but implementing them and adapting them as needed is an entirely different matter. Agencies that participated in the MTR interviews were generally in favour of the idea of reintegration plans. However one organisation cautioned that each plan should be assessed by the organisation with respect to its usefulness and the resources required to implement it before the plan was finalised. Reference was made to the importance of scholars keeping in touch with their organisation during their studies and producing a reintegration plan for consideration 6 months before they return to Vietnam.

The MTR concludes that although action plans will not be useful for all applicants and organisations they would be useful with a sufficient proportion of applicants to justify having them as a requirement for scholarship applicants. Their purpose would be to clarify expectations about how the scholars will be able to use what they have learnt to the benefit of their organisations (if they are employed) and development in Vietnam. They may need to be modified over the course of their studies as they gain a greater appreciation of what their studies can and cannot offer and according to organisational needs. In consultation with their organisations, their final version of their action plan would be their reintegration plan.

> 3.8 Reintroduce support specific to particular scholars and for their organisation for the implementation of reintegration plans in priority organisations.
>
> 3.9 Scholars and their organisations should monitor and report on the implementation of their reintegration plans for up to 2 years (according to the expected duration of the actions and their outcomes) following their return. This expectation should be built into the conditions of receiving a scholarship.

Reintegration plans are not a panacea. While the existence of such plans and evidence of their implementation are 'hard' outputs, some reintegration plans may lead to a one-off product after which the organisation proceeds with business as usual. Of equal or greater importance is the soft and more difficult to measure issue of organisational commitment to ongoing change. One alumnus in reflecting on the difficulties of bringing about change said that scholars feel they are so small and the organisation is so slow to change that they feel they can't produce effects. This leads to frustration. To overcome this frustration, it was reported that some people are willing to pay compensation and leave for another institution. The institution needs to be committed to using the alumni and may need help to do so e.g. by identifying barriers to use.

The more intensive support for reintegration that was to have been provided according to the design document is, like preparatory HRD assistance, to be replaced by monitoring and mass education/training strategies, referred to as consolidated assistance. The 2011-2012 plan identifies the following as the post scholarship HRD support:

> *"Review returning Australia Awards graduates' post-course reports.*
> *Conduct reintegration workshops 4-5 months after return of Australia Awards graduates."*

The proposed review of returning Australia Awards graduates' post course reports may help to identify areas and organisations in which reintegration assistance could be usefully provided. However those reports would need to be structured in a way that encouraged scholars to identify factors that are helping or hindering their reintegration and application of what they have learnt[16]. It may be necessary to conduct one on one return interviews to elicit this information with an expectation that assistance may be provided with agreement from their organisation. This information could highlight warning signals to be identified when assessing future applications, especially given that interviews are now to be conducted with all applicants during which such issues could be explored. Measuring alone is not managing.

Reintegration is a complex issue that goes far beyond personal adjustment to returning home after studying in Australia. It is important to recognise that reintegration is not just about the scholars but also about the receptiveness of their organisations and capacity to use the scholars to best effect.

Reintegration workshops are potentially useful for networking and social activities for the alumni themselves and should be continued. The MTR team received some second hand feedback that the reintegration seminars were not particularly useful for the intended purpose and should be restricted to their social purpose. This was isolated feedback and we cannot establish how widespread the views were. However, the usefulness and in particular the sufficiency of the reintegration workshops should be closely monitored.

However such workshops are unlikely to be sufficient to promote effective reintegration in many organisations. More intensive support may be needed for organisations where the stakes are high (e.g. in terms of the number of scholarships awarded) and/or HRM (managing the human resources that have been developed) capacity is lacking. Less direct approaches than training may be needed. The HRD advisor might, for example, work alongside an HR manager or section head to identify how to make best use of a

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[16]For example, supervisor support, receptive environment and recognition of what the scholar brings, location in organisation – level and extent to which the position is isolated/part of a team/mainstream, attitudes of colleagues, workload, task assignments, discrimination, availability of resources, incentives, leadership in the organisation, organisational priorities, politics, culture; other non-organisational factors such as family, change in employer, change in employment opportunities/interests.

scholarship or cluster of scholarships (past and present), including additional HR activities such as short courses for others in the organisation. The development of the Delivery Strategy may be able to consider making available limited resources to priority organisations for other complementary HRD activities (e.g. funding training or train the trainer activities, developing resource materials).

Distribution of 8-10 priority agencies across profiles and sectors

3.10 The 8-10 priority organisations could come from any of the three profiles and across sectors, not just public sector. They would be referred to simply as PIs (or some alternative term that AusAID may prefer, to avoid confusion with the PPI terminology)

The original design really only took the strong HRD strategic perspective in relation to PPIs (up to 40% of the applicants) all of which were central agencies. In some respects, it might be expected that the central agencies would be more likely to have established HRD plans and less likely to need assistance.

Applicants for profiles 1, 2, 4 and 5 which constituted 60% of the scholarship allocations were regarded as open applications i.e. not specifically linked to HRD plans and some of the profile 3 applicants (the remaining 40%) who were not from PPIs would also be classified as open.

Given a desire to use scholarships to achieve outcomes across Vietnam and to engage with willing and needy organisations it is not clear why priority organisations should be limited to central agencies and one profile. Priority organisations could instead be selected from across the profiles, according to potential to bring about desired changes rather than concentrating them in just one profile.

Much valuable HRD work could be undertaken at provincial and local level, or across levels of government around a particular outcome or indeed across sectors around a particular outcome or particular location. Box 3 provides an illustrative distribution of priority organisations across profiles. The particular priority areas would need to be determined following the development of the Delivery Strategy. In the absence of that Strategy some of the examples below relate to the five objectives in the CS, purely for illustrative purposes.

Box 3: illustrative distribution of 10 priority organisations across profiles and relationship to ASDiV program objectives.
i) 6 provincial and central agencies for Profiles 1 and 2 that relate to a selection from the following: transport infrastructure; policy to support economic integration, rural access to clean water and hygienic sanitation, climate change adaptation and mitigation focusing on Mekong Delta, nationwide community based disaster risk management, sustainable and resilient systems in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. An agency with significant public sector HRD policy and program responsibilities might also be included. Work with these agencies would relate to achieving *ASDiV program objective 1.*

ii) 2 local agencies (could be NGOs, businesses etc) for Profile 1 that are actively involved in rural industry production and community services for the poor. There may also be potential to link to a provincial university or provincial government. Work with these agencies would relate to achieving *ASDiV program objective 1.*

iii) 2 provincial universities for Profile 3 - one to achieve critical mass in a nominated area e.g. a field and one where significant HRD assistance and other forms of assistance such as exchanges may be needed to get them started with scholarships. Work with these universities would relate to achieving *ASDiV program objective 2.*

ASDiV program objective 3 concerning gender should be pursued in relation to all institutions, no matter what profile they relate to and regardless of whether they are priority institutions or not.

Recommended distribution of scholarships between PIs and non-PIs working in HRD priority areas and non-PIs working in other areas (open)

> 3.11 The MTR recommends that:
>
> - Approximately 40% of the scholarships go to PIs provided they can submit applications that are competitive in other regards with more open categories. Distribution across the priority organisations would be according to demonstrated relative need and likelihood of scholarship effectiveness rather than on the basis of formula.
>
> - Of the remaining 60% of scholarships, the MTR recommends that:
>   - 40% go to non-PIs but related to HRD priorities that are yet to be identified as part of the Delivery Strategy,
>   - up to 20% be open to other areas that are not the direct focus of the CS objectives provided they serve a development agenda (e.g. relate to one of the MDGs).
>
> These figures would be AusAID in-house guidelines rather than publicly advertised quotas conveying any sense of entitlement.

To date approximately 40% of scholarships have been allocated to PPIs. Anything less than that might beg the question as to what was meant by 'priority'. The MTR acknowledges that, even with 15 PPIs, there has been some difficulty securing as many applications as have been obtained for the other profiles. Reducing the number of PIs from 15 to 10 might, without further deliberate targeting, make it even more difficult to secure enough high quality applications.

It will be important therefore to start engaging with the priority organisations well in advance of application processes (as early as 2011-2012 for the 2013 application round) and really working with them on their overall plan to identify a range of HRD needs, which needs might best be met by scholarships and how to go about identifying the right applicants. Applicants would need to be competitive with those from other organisations. The applications from priority organisations will be strengthened by the fact that they should, with assistance, be able to demonstrate a more cogent argument for how the scholarships will be used to strengthen the achievements in priority areas.

A particular number of scholarships per organisation would not be guaranteed and the 40% could also be considered to be a guide rather than a quota. If it seemed like some were not going to be needed by PIs in a given year then they could be made available to others. The advance work done with PIs would give early indications of the likely scale of their needs to guide the allocation across all organisations (PI and non-PI).

Scholarships are intended to support country strategies. Whatever approach is adopted for setting priorities (see discussion of Objective 1), the majority of the scholarships should go to country strategy priorities. However there are also instances in which scholarships may be used to consolidate gains in relation to legacy programs or lay the foundations for emerging needs. Moreover scholarships can also be used to maintain relationships and for whole of government agency interests where these can be shown to relate to development objectives.

We were advised that some Australian Government agencies who were unable to attend our session with Whole of Government partners want to use ADS scholarships to send people from their counterpart organisations to Australia. It would be important, when screening any such applications, to establish that the agencies and the areas of study were strongly connected to the development objectives of the Country Strategy. Similarly, if Australian Government agencies encourage people in counterpart

organisations to apply for scholarships, then to avoid raising unrealistic expectations, they would need to emphasise that any such applications should relate to the Country Strategy. Alternatively such applications could be made for Endeavour Scholarships that do not have a strong connection to development objectives.

Distribution of HRD advisory resources and managing relationships

3.12 The majority of the HRD advisor resources assigned to ASDiV should go to working more intensely with the 8-10 priority Institutions.

3.13 The residual resources should be used to continue with consolidated seminars/workshops on HRD and on reintegration.

3.14 Expectations concerning what can be achieved through workshops should be realistic and performance indicators chosen that will reflect this realism.

3.15 Consider opportunities to extend the consolidated support seminars to carefully targeted organisations in profiles 1 and 3.

Exit strategies that could have removed some agencies from the PPI category and made the provision of more intensive support as envisaged by the design document more feasible have proved difficult to implement. PPI concerns that if removed from the PPI list they would receive fewer scholarships and perhaps less support have been accompanied by AusAID concerns that removing them would adversely affect relationships.

The conflating of the PPI and CGA categories has meant that removal from the list affects all PPIs equally so there should be no perception that some are being deliberately excluded. This merging will undoubtedly result in more competition for the scholarships and some previous PPIs expressed concern about that increased competition during MTR interviews. However, as in the past, agencies with the strongest candidates will continue to score well in terms of scholarships and many of them will be previous PPIs.

In the ASDiV design and scope of the services, the resourcing of ASDiV was to provide relatively intense assistance to 15 PPIs as proposed in the scope of services. With the proposed change to 8 to 10 priority organisations, once HRD advisor support has been provided to this smaller number of organisations, there should still be some residual resources that can be used for consolidated HRD activities such as seminars and resource materials. So on the support side of the equation, the full absorption of PPIs by Profile 2 (CGAs) should not make any noticeable difference to those that have in the past been PPIs: consolidated support can continue to be provided and while this is different from what was envisaged by the design it is similar to what has been provided over the last year (seminars).

The MTR confirms that it will be helpful to continue with seminars for awareness raising and for prompting requests for one-on-one assistance if such assistance is to be available. They can also be very useful for maintaining relationships. At the same time, it will be important to acknowledge that this form of mass education while useful to some degree is likely to have limited impact with respect to substantially influencing HRD practices. Performance indicators for these seminars should relate to what can realistically be achieved.

It may be possible to extend the seminars/workshops to a wider variety of organisations (especially carefully targeted organisations in profiles 1 and 3). However, the first priority for use of limited HRD advisor resources will be to ensure that effective support processes are in place for the smaller number of priority organisations.

Laying the groundwork for recommended changes to the PI approach

> 3.16 For the remainder of 2011-2012, undertake the necessary groundwork to make the recommended changes in relation to priority organisations, with a view to introducing those changes for the application round that closes mid 2013. Groundwork will relate to:
>
> - identifying and engaging with priority organisations (or groups of organisations)
> - developing, piloting and refining HRD advisory support processes

The recommendations included in this section are made in the interests of increasing the likelihood that scholars will be well positioned to apply what they have learnt in the interests of Country Strategy priorities. However, given that there have been several recent changes and some concern has been expressed by Vietnamese agencies concerning the frequency of change and lack of notice concerning changes, the MTR advises against making any substantial changes for the next year (i.e. applications to be submitted in May 2012). In the meantime, the groundwork for implementing recommended changes and testing of models proposed in this MTR can commence.

The groundwork to be undertaken consists primarily of two types: selecting and engaging with priority organisations and developing and piloting HR support models and approaches. Some suggestions are included in boxes 3 and 4.

This HRD work should be used as a basis for moving to a future phase of the program of more intensive support for HRD and organisational development strategies using scholarships as part of a package of modalities. Learning from the experience of the Philippines these developments will take several years and are very likely to extend beyond the life of this Country Strategy. However the types of issues and the types of assistance that are selected are likely to continue as areas that AusAID will wish to support beyond this country strategy.

Identifying and selecting priority organisations

The Delivery Strategy will provide a strong basis for making these choices and assessing levels of interest amongst organisations. Box 4 identifies some approaches that could be taken to identify possible priority organisations or sections within organisations as part of the process of developing the Delivery Strategy.

Box 4: Some approaches for identifying priority organisations when developing the Delivery Strategy

i) **Draw on AusAID sectoral knowledge** to identify where skills development is most needed (standing in the way of reform) and where HRD support including but not limited to scholarships is most likely to be effective and exert greatest leverage (achieve a good return on investment either through scholars being in positions to exert direct and substantial influence on policies and practices or through being able to achieve multiplier effects).

ii) **Consult with the relevant counterpart organisations** that AusAID sectoral staff have identified. Note that AusAID contacts may primarily be technical people rather than HRD people so there would be a need for HRD and sectoral staff in AusAID to jointly liaise with HRD and technical people in counterpart organisations.

iii) **Identify any particular emerging HRD priorities that appear in the recently completed GoV HRD plan**, especially those that relate to other focal areas of the Country Strategy.

iv) **Consider selecting a policy area to work with a cluster of organisations around a Country Strategy priority area** e.g. developing better transport infrastructure and policy to support economic integration; increasing rural access to clean water and hygienic sanitation.

    Purposes might be to achieve vertical integration across central, provincial and local levels and/or horizontal co-ordination across sectors (government, non-government, university, commercial) to get the connections between policy and practice and to foster a holistic approach to change. ASDiV could bring these scholars from across the policy area together to foster collaborative work around shared desired outcomes, drawing on their scholarship experiences (see earlier discussion of cross sectoral involvement in relation to Evaluation Question 2).

v) **Apply a strengthened theory of change to determine where the scholarships program is likely to get the most traction and achieve outcomes**. A strengthened theory of change will be one that incorporates an appreciation of the organisational and other factors that will affect whether scholars apply what they have learnt and whether development priorities are achieved. This may need to be done in more detail on an organisation by organisation basis when undertaking an organisational assessment for organisations identified as potential priority organisations. Organisations assisted by the Philippines program have found participating in such an organisational assessment process to be valuable.

vi) As part of the above selections **consider the need to work on strengthening the HRD/HRM/OD departments of priority agencies** and what mechanisms might be available through AusAID (scholarships, ALAF, PSLP, Short courses, internships etc) to develop this capability.

Engaging priority organisations

> 3.17 Seek formal and genuine commitment to partnership arrangements as part of the process of selecting the 8 to 10 organisations and consider the potential to tie incentives (such as additional short courses and other assistance) to demonstrated commitment.
>
> 3.18 Develop or adapt other tools for gauging appropriate levels of engagement and support for HR and OD capacity development in particular organisations.

The engagement and support processes for working with each PPI, envisaged by the design and supported by international literature and experience, have not been feasible with 15 PPI organisations[17] but should be feasible with a smaller number of organisations and clearer less perfunctory and more committed rules of engagement.

Gaining better access to scholarships and other types of support could be a carrot for a priority counterpart organisation to engage with AusAID around HRD and it would need to make a commitment to engage[18]. This commitment would need to be a genuine one. Other options for consideration in the Delivery Strategy would be to use performance incentives with upfront partial but not full release of funding for particular HRD activities.

Not all agencies that might be identified as potentially high priority organisations would want HRD assistance or recognise their need for it. However, if AusAID is to give assistance through scholarships as part of an intensive program of working with a particular agency to achieve development outcomes then it would be reasonable to seek assurance that the agency had the HRD processes in place to the extent needed to make best use of the scholarships. It will be important to develop clear and transparent processes for assessing likely levels of commitment and engagement.

The Philippines program has developed and refined the use of such tools over several years. ASDiV may find it helpful to liaise with PAHRODF concerning their processes[19]. Other organisational capacity development programs to which ASDiV could refer include the AusAID document: A Staged Approach to Assess, Plan and Monitor Capacity Building 4 May, 2006.

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[17] This may have been partly because of spreading resources of 1 in country HR advisor too thinly over 15 organisations. However it has also been reported that difficulties were encountered under the previous program when there were only 4 priority organisations. Perhaps some improvements need to be made to processes of engagement e.g. to ensure that those that are identified as priority organisations are genuinely committed rather than 'jumping through hoops' and that the types of support that are given to them are effective and valued and that scholarships are set within a broader reform agenda.
[18] Formally, this could be through something like what was envisaged in the sample Arrangement Between The Party Central Organization Committee Of Vietnam And The Australian Agency For International Development (AusAID) Relating To The Australian Scholarships For Development In Vietnam (ASDiV)-Public Priority Institution (PPI) Program in the HRD Annex of the 2010 plan.
[19] See p25ff in Design Document for PAHRDOF and discuss with the MC the dashboard, progressive engagement criteria and other approaches that they use for organisational assessment, assessing the level of support needed, receptiveness to support and when to exit. A list of considerations from the PAHRODF design document is attached at Annex 4).

3.19 Assess current resourcing (level and skills) within the Managing Contractor to carry out the HRD role envisaged and if needed strengthen that internal capacity (e.g. through professional development, visits to and/or brief internships in other scholarship programs that are applying wider HRD approaches).[20]

3.20 Review the assessment of ASDiV resources and the feasibility of working with 8 to 10 priority organisations following the piloting of proposed HRD support processes during 2011-2012. As alumni activities become more independent (see recommendation 4.42) consider the potential to redirect some of the alumni officer resources to HRD functions (e.g. to conduct consolidated seminars).

ASDiV has already undertaken some useful HRD advisory support activities through its seminars and production of resource materials on HRD. It is quite possible that other assistance of which the MTR team is not aware and did not have time to explore has been provided on a one on one basis to some organisations. For example, the second annual report refers to the fact that 4 of the 15 PPI co-ordinators were not from 'organisation and personnel departments' and that they required more help from the two advisors.

The MTR has not been able to explore the resourcing (quantity or quality) implications of changing the approach to working with a smaller number of priority organisations. Suggestions in Box 5 are for building on what has already been done.

Box 5: Laying the groundwork for strengthening HRD assistance

1. **Over the next two years actively develop stronger relationships with HRD sections** in priority organisations

2. **Pilot more intensive HRD work with a small number of interested priority agencies** (say 4 or 5 of the expected future combination of 8 to 10) that already have some scholars that fit the profiles and Country Strategy priorities and are likely to want more. Use a mix of agencies at different levels of development with respect to HRD and across the profiles rather than concentrated within a profile.

3. **Address a range of different objectives through piloting.** The intensive HRD work would be with HRD sections in their organisations and/or relevant sections to:

   a. start preparing them for using the scholars to good effect, especially those in AusAID counterpart and related organisations for transport infrastructure and policy and environmental sustainability.

   b. enable feedback to be obtained on use of scholars.

   c. use this feedback for M&E, future decisions about levels of engagement with the organisations and giving scholarships.

   d. explore potential use of some incentives for organisations to use returning scholars to good effect e.g. linked to AusAID sector programs, access to other flexible modes of HRD assistance to help make maximum use of what scholars have learnt.

One of the purposes of piloting will be to test the feasibility of the proposed number of priority agencies (8-10) and as needed to change the number and/or the resourcing of ASDiV.

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[20] This recommendation should in no way be read as suggesting that ASDiV lacks the necessary HRD capacity. The MTR was simply not in a position to make that assessment and simply flags the issue as one to consider.

4. How effective and efficient has program implementation been?

Findings in relation to program implementation

Overall, implementation has been effective, efficient and adaptive. All stakeholders spoke highly of the services provided by ASDiV and ACET with most suggestions for improvement being at the margins. Corporate requirements to consolidate ADS and ALAS and online application have been addressed well by ASDiV under demanding circumstances and time constraints.

Many of the changes that have been made recently for the 2011 round have already started to improve the efficiency of the processes for the Managing Contractor, the applicants and their departments. The roles of HRD advisors in advising and screening gave been clarified for the 2011-2012 round of applications so that they are used more efficiently and there will be less confusion in the minds of applicants concerning their advisory versus selection roles. Use of Joint Selection Committees has been made more efficient. One of the remaining inefficiencies relates to the processes by which applicants can track the progress of their applications. A great deal of time and much paperwork is required in responding enquiries.

Some concerns have been expressed by institutions about some of the changes. As noted, some have concerns about the less active involvement of HRD co-ordinators in encouraging (and controlling) applicants. Institutions also commented on the fact that there had been many changes to the program since 2004 and that some (for example the changes in academic scores required) have caused 'shocks' for students.

Short notice of changes, including the new timetable was causing problems for some applicants but it was not possible to ascertain how widespread these problems were. For example, students did not have enough time to up-skill with respect to English language before submitting an application. Some institutions seemed to be better than others at circulating timely notice of the changes to prospective applicants.

Some of these concerns were created by factors outside the control of ASDiV such as the changes arising from consolidation of ADS and ALAS and the flow on effects of online applications. In any case, organisations and potential applicants have plenty of notice for the next round of applications so the problems should diminish.

In response to a request from the MTR team, ASDiV kindly prepared a Table (Annex 6) showing changes from the 2010 to the 2011 round of applications, and some implications of those changes.

Ongoing promotion

Overall, promotion has been effective. It has generated a sufficient number of eligible applications across all profiles and for females and males to make competitive choices. It has reached some areas that traditionally have been difficult to reach. In general it has been more effective in urban areas and populated regional areas than in more remote areas, especially mountainous areas. However, the shift in the overall balance between the cities and the provinces has been impressive.

What promotion activities have been used and which have been most effective?

These recommendations are in addition to (and/or reinforcing) the suggestions that the Managing Contractor provided in the 2010 Annual report:

4.1 Continue to use a wide range of promotional activities and mediators such as HRD co-ordinators, Universities and PPCs but focus attention on targeted areas in line with priorities that are to be clarified for the program.

4.2 Continue to use returned scholars actively whenever opportunities arise and not just in briefing sessions. In particular develop vignettes around very successful alumni and use these to promote the program.

4.3 Draw on Australia's comparative advantages to promote the scholarships e.g. Australia is recognised as having competitive advantage in relation to ELT: all heads of foreign languages courses in Vietnam are ADS alumni.

4.4 Good news stories can be extracted from M&E longitudinal studies and other tracking processes to communicate success. However it is critical that M&E efforts seek a balanced picture and not be diverted just to discovering good news stories.

4.5 Engage further with Austrade efforts to promote quality of Australian Education and elevate the reputation of and demand for ADS and ALAS scholarships amongst high quality candidates.

4.6 Establish an online scholarships forum with other scholarships programs through which potential applicants and alumni could exchange information about scholarships programs. This would capitalise on word of mouth and online communication as prominent communication modes but would need to be quality controlled through, at minimum having links to websites of the various scholarship programs so that potential applicants could check the facts.

Promotion has included both a targeted promotion strategy relating to the ADS profiles, (using mail-outs of information packages, targeted promotion visits to priority provinces, and information sessions in targeted universities and for NGOs) and a general awareness strategy.

The latter has consisted of a range of activities (updated application packages, a website, a package consisting of a brochure, poster and folder), an information video, promotion through alumni events and awardee briefings, advertising on commercial and non-commercial websites, ADS hotline and email, social networking sites, national daily newspapers, radio and television. Local television was particularly useful in those provinces for which PPC support could be obtained. The 2010 Annual ADSiV report notes that in future more advanced planning will be used to secure PPC support. Voice of Vietnam was used once free of charge but being restricted to Hanoi there was a concern that it might stimulate too many applications that would fall into the open category.

As with all such promotion activities, how a person finds out about a program such as scholarships is often opportunistic: being in the right place at the right time. So it is important to use a wide range of techniques to reach the right people and not just those that will reach a lot of people.

Clearer priorities for the scholarships program in future should assist with a more focused application of targeting profiles to ensure not just that more applications arrive but that they are relevant to program objectives and the Country Strategy. It is possible that more personal contact and visits will be required. AusAID Sectoral staff and their

contacts in counterpart organisations could play a role in identifying promising locations and in some cases individuals or groups that might be encouraged (without prejudice) to apply. However PPC involvement would need to be carefully managed given the gatekeeper role that they play.

Co-ordinators in central agencies expressed a desire to be kept informed of any further changes so they could promote the scholarships and give advance notice of any changes and play a proactive role in promoting scholarships. It was clear from the interviews that some co-ordinators were more proactive in this regard than others.

The main sources of information reported by ADS applicants were employer/work colleagues (534 applicants), friends and relatives (399 applicants), and the ADS website (353 applicants, but they must have had some information about ADS to go to the website). Other sources for 30 or more applicants included VN Express, Australian Embassy, Dantri.com, Tuoi tre newspaper and Vietnam Net. Interviewees in central agencies and others commented that returning scholars are very effective in promoting scholarships.

Some have commented that even when suitable people know about the Australian scholarships they may not be attracting the cream of the crop: given that so many ADS scholarships are provided it is difficult to convey a sense of prestige and value. Also, interviewees from some institutions expressed the view that 'good people' are often reluctant or unable to leave their job for any length of time.

Continuing active use of success stories of prominent alumni in various public fora could help to forge a closer association in people's minds between Australian scholarships, study in Australia and success at home. Austrade also has a continuing interest in promoting Australian Education as high quality. Closer co-operation with Austrade for marketing purposes could be to mutual advantage. AusAID could provide case examples and Austrade could promote scholarships as well as showcasing the quality of Australian Education.

An online forum for exchange of information about scholarships might be a useful technique for promotion, given that word of mouth is such a strong communication and promotion mechanism. Applicants and alumni may be keen to swap information about the wide array of scholarships available from Australia and many other countries. The popular Facebook site that has been established (see later discussion of alumni activities) might also be a useful promotional activity.

Attracting applications from the Provinces for profiles 1 and 2

4.7 Continue to work with local authorities and co-operate with PPC well in advance of applications closing to gain access to local communities and research centres that are outside the universities

4.8 Engage with Australian volunteers especially those working in the regions

ASDiV reported that its biggest promotional challenge was to attract local government officials in rural areas (old profile 1). English language and GPA requirements were considered to be major obstacles. In practice, rural development workers (old profile 2) proved much easier to attract and made up more than three quarters of all applications coming for profiles 1 and 2. Together these two profiles did in fact attract 39% of all applications compared with the target of 30% of scholarships to go to profiles 1 and 2 combined.

There has been an improved geographic spread with 58 of 63 provinces providing applications and conditional awards going to 45 provinces/cities. There is a reduced

dominance by Hanoi and HCM City with the percentage of applications from these cities dropping from 70% last year to 57% this year. The drop in percentage of conditional awards was lower (65% to 62%) so there is still some way to go in improving the quality of applications from other regions.

In 2010 there was a wide representation of applications from 109 universities and colleges including 38 provincial universities and colleges, with 46 universities/colleges including 13 provincial universities/ colleges represented in the conditional scholarships awarded.

ASDiV has now started to communicate earlier with potential rural applicants through presentations to undergraduates at provincial universities. They could also reach into high schools with a view to encouraging aspiring scholars to take a long term perspective on increasing their chances of a scholarship by working on their English language skills and GPAs.

Suggestions concerning other opportunities for improving reach in the provinces have come from provincial universities and AusAID staff. Provincial universities noted that many research centres are outside the universities and that ASDiV should work with local authorities and co-operate with PPC to advertise the program on the PPC website and through local newspapers. ASDiV and AusAID staff reported that in some provinces it was difficult to get agreement from the Provincial People's Committee (PPC) to undertake promotion activities. They noted that promotion might need to start earlier with those PPCs.

AusAID staff identified the possibility of promoting the scholarships at the community level through some 60 to 70 Australian volunteers working in the regions and remote areas. Volunteer networks linked to alumni networks could provide opportunities to use alumni to brief new volunteers about the scholarships program so that they could in turn tell others in communities.

Ethnic minorities, disadvantaged rural applicants and people with disabilities

4.9 With limited resources and likely diminishing returns relative to amount of effort expended, consider whether it is worth the effort to pursue the most remote members of the target audience more vigorously or is better to reach them through multiplier effects by giving scholarships to provincial universities under profile 3.

4.10 As an alternative to scholarships in those remote or disadvantaged areas, consider the use of short courses as an entry point.

4.11 Consider options other than undergraduate studies in Australia for developing the types of research capacity that would be useful in the context of ACIAR's work where this work relates to development objectives. (Other sectors within AusAID may have similar needs). This could be by short courses or supporting a local university to develop specific skills to train such people.

The ASDiV 2010 annual report showed that 10% of applications were from disadvantaged applicants (ethnic minorities, disability and disadvantaged rural applicants) and 36 disadvantaged candidates including 24 ethnic minorities received conditional awards. Applications and conditional awards for these groups were as follows:

- 57 applications from ethnic minorities of whom 49 were eligible and 24 were awarded conditional scholarships
- 64 disadvantaged rural applicants (ethnic Kinh), of whom 49 were eligible and 11 were awarded conditional scholarships

- 5 applications from persons with disabilities, of whom 3 were eligible and one received a conditional award.

- no undergraduate scholarships were awarded from the 9 undergraduate applicants from disadvantaged applicants; the one applicant short-listed for IELTS did not meet IELTS or Special English candidate requirements.

Following the experience of 2010, there is no longer an undergraduate study option for disadvantaged applicants who must apply for a post-graduate degree. There were just so many obstacles to making this work well and so much effort would need to be expended to make it work well that the value of the investment of that effort would be questionable. ACIAR has expressed disappointment about this[21]. However there may be other more effective and efficient ways of up-skilling some of the people that were originally the intended beneficiaries of undergraduate studies.

It will be important to track whether disadvantaged scholars return to their place of origin to apply what they have learnt. Some interviewees were of the view that if scholars (whether disadvantaged or not) returned to their organisation then the program had achieved its objective. However, if they do return, they may not have the necessary operating environment to apply what they have learnt and some may move to the cities following their studies.

There is no longer any strong reference to ethnic and disadvantaged people in the country strategy. Equity for individuals is a consideration but increasingly AusAID is seeing scholarships as a vehicle for change and not just an individual development opportunity. These considerations raise the question as to how much effort should be applied to reaching the most remote areas and whether there are diminishing returns in doing so.

Application and selection process

Information services

4.12 Ensure that information on the ASDiV website, including that provided by the international academic advisor, is regularly updated. This may require one on one contact with scholarship co-ordinators at the universities.

4.13 Given that some students are having difficulty accessing or using CRICOS information, consider ways in which the information might be easier to access and more directly draw attention to its availability during as part of promotional activities.

4.14 Ensure that HRD co-ordinators are aware of the CRICOS information and how to access and use it.

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[21] An ACIAR interviewee expressed concern about this development, commenting that people in rural areas if supported to undertake an undergraduate degree would be real assets to research programs. Such students would have local knowledge of farmer needs. A difficulty would be finding high school graduates in those areas who were sufficiently well prepared to undertake a degree in Australia and who had had the required two years of work experience. So if undergraduate options were reintroduced there may be a need to waive the 2 year work experience requirement. Those who have already done an undergraduate degree in Vietnam may be better placed to undertake a complementary undergraduate degree in Australia but current Scholarship rules do not allow degrees to be taken at the same level as degrees that have already been completed. An alternative to using ADS scholarships for undergraduate purposes would be for ACIAR to use some of its own scholarships to that end. However they would still need to overcome the English language and GPA requirements.

In general the 2010 applicants interviewed by phone for this MTR (including a small number of unsuccessful applicants) and in groups while attending ACET for ELT were happy with the application and selection process. Some unsuccessful applicants commented that they did not know why they had not been selected and would like feedback.

Overall, the applicants find the ASDiV and ACET staff to be very supportive and the supporting documents for the applications detailed and clear. Provincial universities also reported that requirements and procedures were easy to follow and that the co-operation between themselves and ASDiV was very good. One expressed concern about the age limit of 45 years.

The website prepared by the international academic advisor contains some useful information but will need to be regularly updated. One Australian University commented that it:

> "would appreciate some one-on-one time with their academic program advisor to ensure she is kept abreast of changes to our offerings, and entry requirements."

Some applicants did have difficulty finding or understanding the information on the ASDiV website concerning the courses and some 2011 applicants are said to have had difficulty finding and using CRICOS codes. Information about courses is not readily apparent from the ASDiV website. Some central agencies were unaware that the information about courses was available and requested that it be provided.

Applicants undertaking ELT also commented that the library at ACET has an abundance of documents and reference books, and that the ACET infrastructure provides a good environment in which to study English.

2010 applicants commented that the selection process while sticking to its timeline was nevertheless too long. The streamlining of the application process for 2011 has reduced the amount of time from application to commencement of studies by approximately 6 months to 6 months for those who already have an IELTS of 6.5 and to a maximum of 18 months for those requiring maximum ELT. This change is a welcome one given that one of the greatest complaints about the application process has been the length of time involved, the fact that people's circumstances can change greatly over a long period and that those who are no longer in a position to accept an offer due to change of circumstances (change of employment, take-up of another scholarship, family reasons) will have foreclosed on opportunities that would have been available to others.

Online applications

4.15 Introduce an online applications tracking process that applicants can access using a password and that will have the capacity to be a continuing online interactive access points for successful applicants around such matters as reintegration plans.

Online applications for 2011 have streamlined the application process but as mentioned previously may sever the active links between applications and HRD planning processes. Also some applicants are reported to be having difficulty when they are not used to online processes or less competent with computers.

However the online process does offer various other advantages that the program could capitalise on. These include the potential to have an online process by which applicants, given a password, could track what stage their application was up to. This would give immediate feedback to applicants, save ASDiV from preparing as much written correspondence at the various stages and reduce the number of telephone enquiries it had to handle.

Some 2010 awardees interviewed for the MTR commented that they received short notice for the various stages of the selection process and did not have enough time to prepare for the next round. Some were only informed 10 days before they were required to go to Hanoi for ELT and were not always in a position to hand over their work to colleagues. This short notice may reflect delays caused by the amount of administrative paperwork that is required to keep all applicants informed. Again the use of an online tracking process that could be accessed by applicants may help to give greater notice to applicants.

It is possible that OASIS may be able to provide this online tracking facility globally. The MTR team leader has discussed this possibility with AusAID Canberra and been advised that while this approach is being considered it is not likely to occur in the immediate future and that Vietnam should develop its own system in the meantime. The approach used could be similar to the approach that VIED uses for all its scholars.

An alternative for updating students on progress with the applications would be to produce PDF documents at the various stages of selection from which individuals using their own code number could track their progress (similar to the approach used by the Indonesian Scholarships program). The online approach offers many more interactive opportunities than a PDF one-way communication document. For example, an online process would also provide downstream options for individuals to enter information about their reintegration plans (and as happens in the Philippines scholarships program) to routinely update progress with implementing their reintegration plans, outputs being delivered, outcomes being achieved and factors that are helping and hindering the implementation of their plans.

4.16 In addition to profile titles, and consolidated list of AusAID priorities identify Vietnam specific priority areas (once clarified), in the Vietnam specific application form to provide further definition within the generic AusAID list in the general application form.

When the application process went online, AusAID used a standard application form with a generic list of AusAID priority development areas. ASDiV included a Vietnam specific additional application form that identified the titles of the Vietnam targeting profiles but little indication of development priorities. Given that ASDiV had not received any replacement priorities following the introduction of the new CS it was not surprising that the Vietnam specific additional application form online also remained vague.

The corporate inclusion of a generic AusAID wide list of priority development areas in online applications may be undermining the capacity of the Vietnam program to emphasise the priority areas that are important to it (see discussion of achievements in relation to the goal: facilitation of economic growth and poverty reduction (Evaluation Question 1). In future there would be merit in having the Vietnam specific additional application form refer not just to the titles of the profiles but also to priority areas for Vietnam, once these have been clarified.

Information to be included in application forms

4.17 Carefully monitor the impact on universities of the new application processes to ensure that the workload for them in terms of assessing students and providing conditional acceptance does not substantially increase through unsuccessful and successful applicants alike seeking such assessment and acceptance.

Some of the changes to application processes may create problems or uncertainties for the Australian Universities and there may be some misunderstanding of the requirements. For example, one university was concerned that many more applicants than would eventually receive scholarships would be requesting an offer of a place from the university before submitting their application than had been the case under previous arrangements and that this would impose an extra workload that departments in universities may not be prepared to accept. Although applicants are not *required* to obtain acceptance by the university prior to applying for the scholarship and it is no longer a pre-condition for ALAS applicants to submit a university Letter of Offer at application as in previous years, two factors may increase the likelihood that they will seek acceptance by a university before submitting their application:

1. the 2011-2012 ASDiV plan comments (p. 7) that all ADS/ALAS applicants are *encouraged* to submit conditional or unconditional university Letters of Offer at application.

2. Applicants are required to nominate two specific courses and are discouraged from changing those courses later in the application process. Given that they can only choose two courses they would want to feel confident that they were choosing courses for which the universities would accept them and would be likely to seek advance acceptance.

The issue of the potential increase in workload for universities will need to be carefully monitored.

IELTS assessments and ELT

4.18 Monitor the success rates of the lower levels of IELTS and those requiring a special EL program of up to a year. If there is evidence of substantially increased failure rates then consider raising the entry level, removing the special English provisions and encourage further EL acquisition locally (e.g. arranged by authorities in the provinces or by TESOL courses, including those by alumni) before applying for scholarships.

4.19 Clarify in writing for universities the requirements around bridging and other ELT courses when they arrive in Australia. This may also be a useful topic for discussion at the meeting of AusAID Canberra, Posts and Universities in October 2011 in Canberra.

Applicants highly appreciated the 2010 practice of having IELTS assessments done after rather than before initial screening. However from 2011, certificates are required in advance for profiles 2 and 3 and some rural people who may fit into these profiles see this as an obstacle for them. However, many would fall into profile 1 which has no such requirement.

Central agencies reported that some potential applicants were disappointed that they did not have time to prepare themselves to get the best IELTS possible before submitting their application in order to strengthen their application. They called for an additional IELTs testing opportunity in August this year as a one off exercise for those who were not ready to sit their IELTS and reach 4.5 by close of applications in May 2011. However this would seem to be an inequitable approach for those who have already taken the risk of sitting for the test earlier, submitting their application with a lower IELTS score than they might have achieved had they been able to sit the test in August.

English language training was one of the forms of HRD most often requested by central agencies during the MTR interviews. There was a wide variety of views about how this

should occur a) in association with scholarship applications and /or b) just as a form of HRD in its own right. Clearly with a limited budget the AusAID program could only scratch the surface of the overall need in Vietnam for ELT and hence the MTR does not consider the selection of ELT as an HRD priority for Vietnam to be a viable course of action for the Australian Aid program.

When linked to the scholarships program there were varying views about how much effort should be invested by individuals in preparing themselves to meet English language requirements and how much ASDiV should be prepared to do i.e. how low an IELTS ASDiV should be prepared to accept as a basis for providing subsequent ELT to reach required levels.

ACET has expressed concern that, although IELTS success rates for those receiving ELT so far have been 'almost unbelievably high' (98%), as more applicants from the provinces with lower levels join the ELT program more special English is likely to be needed and the dropout rates may be higher. ACET noted that IELTS does not discriminate well at the lower levels of English speaking ability and this in itself would be a cause for concern if the levels were to be lowered further.

Another issue that has been raised in relation to applicants from the provinces especially those with the lower starting IELTs scores is that they may invest a huge amount of time (7 months or more) in Hanoi learning English, fail the IELTS and then go back to the provinces empty handed. This would be very dispiriting for individuals and may discourage others from applying.

While some central agencies called for a lowering of the IELTS score, these various considerations concerning the probability of success and the impact of failure would seem to militate against any arguments to further lower the English requirements in order to attract people from the provinces. If monitoring of what happens with those presenting with lower IELTS scores confirms these predictions then there may be an argument for raising the level and removing the special English provision.

Some institutions and areas (e.g. Mekong) were already taking the initiative to provide ELT for their own people, some of whom may apply for scholarships. This would help to close the gap between the level of English needed to go to an Australian University and the amount of assistance that AusAID would need to provide through its ELT program.

Sometimes long periods between completion of ELT (and accompanying IELTS tests) and commencement of studies in Australia means that English language skills have eroded in the interim and this has sometimes lead to a questioning by universities of the adequacy of IELTS and the preparation. ACET has proposed various approaches to overcoming this erosion of English language skills while students are waiting to commence studies.

Proposed approaches include online updating of skills (but the human element is also needed) and post IELTS 100 hour courses that would include preparation for participating in tutorials. For its part AusAID wonders whether the scheduling of ELT courses could be more flexible. Doing so could reduce the likelihood of long periods between finishing ELT and going to an Australian University. In the time available the MTR team was unable to explore this issue further.

Some awardees undertaking ELT suggested that their English training be continued in Australia for up to three months. This would add significantly to the cost of the scholarships program since they would need to be paid living allowances during that period while not undertaking studies. If they had reached the required IELTS score then ELT in Australia could be concurrent. One of the Australian Universities interviewed commented that

"We have found that students who have attained the required IELTS level still have problems with written and spoken English. Funding for supplementary (concurrent) English may assist".

Another university expressed concern that students can come to learn English before they take courses either by taking bridging courses or more full blown ELT to make significant improvements in IELTS. A bridging course is used where their IELTS score falls short by 5 points or less of what is required for a particular course in which case they do not need to re-sit their IELTS. The more fullblown English language training required to pass their IELTS causes anxiety for students since if they fail they will be sent home or may need to change courses or universities.

This university recommended that only students who have passed the IELTS to 6.5 and require a bridging course to acquire an additional 5 points for particular course be sent to Australia. To assist it to prepare for the scholars, the university requested information from Post when a course application is submitted to the university concerning whether the individual will meet the IELTS requirement in Vietnam, and an update of the information with their most recent IELTS result in Vietnam when they have undertaken their ELT, before coming to Australia.

Another university sought clarification in writing concerning

"whether PCE is to be allowed in Australia in future for Vietnamese students. We are of the understanding that PCE in Australia is no longer allowed when they do not have the Institution's English entry requirement only if they require higher IELTS for entry into specific programs".

James Cook University commented that three students that had done pre-course English for a university in Brisbane were unable to meet the requirements and had then transferred to James Cook University whose IELTS requirements they met. The university was concerned, given that the IELTS scores did not seem to reflect what in practice was an even lower level of English, that the students would not cope. However they reported that the students seem to have made up for these difficulties with English by working hard, (they are getting distinctions) and by asking for help and tutorial assistance.

Issues for rural applicants

4.20 If there is continuing evidence of widespread difficulties experienced by profile 1 applicants with respect to submitting applications in English, allow them to submit in either English or Vietnamese. The MTR team was unable to tell how widespread the concern was.

4.21 Identify ways in which the number of trips to Hanoi and HCMC might be reduced or combined with other activities or visits to regions

4.22 Consider funding assistance in cases of special hardship especially in the latter stages of the selection process.

Rural applicants who participated in MTR interviews identified some unwelcome steps in the selection process for them:

- all of the interviewed applicants from 2010 thought that the process was too long. The 2011 processes will reduce the timelines for some applicants.
- Many applicants from the rural areas considered that ADS scholarship selection process did not really support them in some steps:
  o they have to prepare the application form in both English and Vietnamese (now just English but some would prefer just Vietnamese).

- o during the process, the applicants had to travel many times to Hanoi or Hochiminh City (at least 5 times) sometimes just for a 2 hour meeting.
- o the applicants have had to bear their own costs for these trips, which is high in comparison with their income.

Lack of English skills was confirmed by Regional Universities as an issue affecting applications from them. Regional Universities identified as a possible type of support the provision of ELT to the lecturers. One suggestion was that an English training centre could be established at the university.

Use of interviews

> 4.23 The MTR endorses the use of interviews with all eligible applicants as agreed for 2011, subject to the process proving to be feasible.

In 2010 interviews were used with only a subgroup of the eligible applicants. The interview process provided valuable information that in some cases reversed decisions that might have been made on the basis of written applications alone and helped to prioritise applicants. From 2011 interviews are to be used with all short listed applicants and this is expected to enhance the validity of the selection process.

Other scholarship programs and ACET all emphasised the added value of interviews. ACET staff while not wanting to participate in the interview process believed they could provide some pointers for use by interview panels that would help with assessing an individual's likely ability to adapt to Australia. The MTR endorses the use of interviews with all eligible applicants as agreed for 2011, subject to the process proving to be feasible.

M&E strategies

Given the duration of this evaluation the MTR team was not in a position to do a comprehensive analysis of the M&E strategies or the data presented. Instead some general observations are made about the general approach.

Overall framework

4.24 Refine the performance indicators once the priorities for the program have been clarified and include more indicators relating to the application of learning to contribute to reform processes and development outcomes.

4.25 Amalgamate the logframe and MEF to overcome redundancies and avoid confusion. Use the program logic, expanded to identify organisational and other factors that will affect outcomes, as the theoretical framework for organising agreed performance indicators and identifying others as needed (e.g. concerning the relative contribution of the scholarship experience, the collective impacts of clusters of scholarships and other HRD and sectoral activities – see recommendations 4, 6 and 7). The evaluation questions can all be retained and positioned within the program logic framework so that the logical connection between them can be emphasised rather than each question being treated as standalone.

4.26 Cross reference the M&E items to the criteria for QAI and to the standard AusAID Scholarship questions to make it easier for AusAID M&E staff to extract the information.

4.27 Reword outcome 3 in the program logic to more accurately reflect objective 3 and to reflect any changes that are made to objective 3 (e.g. in the light of the changes recommended by this MTR).

Given the stage of development of the program most of the data that could reasonably be expected is available either in the main report or the M&E annex. However there are some opportunities for improvement to the data and to the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF).

The overall framework is in keeping with the program design. However it is saddled with difficulties arising from the current lack of clarity concerning priorities for HRD. Following the introduction of the new country strategy the priorities of the old country strategy that had given some definition to the program objectives were removed and a vacuum created: no replacement priorities were identified. The absence of clear priorities has added to the problem of the missing middle between what scholars learn, what they apply (given their organisational context) and what development impacts can be expected. They have also made it much more difficult to define performance indicators.

The accessibility of the data could be improved and there is a lot of unnecessary duplication. Some of the difficulties relating to accessibility have arisen in part through having both a logframe and a separate Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF). The respective roles of the Logframe and MEF are unclear – they overlap but are not the same. There is potential to combine them to avoid redundancy, confusion and the need to flip back and forward between different sets of data to find the information one needs. Some specific issues concerning the relationship between the program logic diagram, the logframe and the MEF are included in Annex 7.

The M&E annex is important as a source of data for the main report and there is some advantage contractually in keeping it separate. However the indicators in it should all be useful for the main report and integrated into it. If they are not useful for the main report then perhaps they should be revised (unless they serve a specific purpose for other audiences such as ASS or QAIs).

The M&E framework does not show the direct links to QAI criteria and standard questions that ASS uses concerning scholarships. A simple cross referencing would help. Unintended outcomes (positive, negative and neutral) of scholarships for individuals

and organisations are not currently included in the M&E framework but should be: they can be explored during follow-up studies.

The program logic diagram is useful in that it draws attention to important elements in the theory of change, as well as helping to draw attention to where there are gaps in the theory of change and difficulties with program objectives. For example, the program logic diagram includes (intermediate) outcomes 1 to 4. Outcomes 1 to 3 correspond fairly closely to objectives 1 to 3. Outcome 3 needs rewording to better reflect objective 3[22]. The program logic has a fourth outcome relating to alumni. This outcome, along with the evidence concerning the lack of purpose of the alumni strategy discussed later in this report, draws attention to the fact that it would make sense for the program to have an objective that relates to alumni.

Collecting data about outcomes

4.28 Develop and pilot processes for capturing the collective impacts of scholarships in organisations, sectors, regions or other appropriate units of analysis. This can be done with returned scholars from previous programs. The MTR notes that cluster evaluations are planned and endorses this direction.

4.29 Work with the alumni strategy to improve the data base and in particular to ensure that contacts will be available for the important elements in a sampling frame that would be developed for tracer studies.

4.30 Reinforce with all new awardees and their organisations the expectation that they will participate in follow-up processes on returning from their scholarships.

4.31 Engage priority institutions (yet to be identified) in the M&E of scholarships and other HRD activities with a view to assisting them to develop M&E systems and capacity, aligning the M&E processes used by AusAID for scholarships with those of institutions and ultimately being able to draw more directly on their M&E information. This engagement should commence at the point of working with them to develop or refine their HRD plans by raising questions about how the results of the plans will be evaluated. In particular, ASDiV should engage priority organisations in processes of following up on the impacts of scholars by assisting/guiding them to monitor and support reintegration plans and continuing to monitor the implementation of HRD plans.

4.32 Ensure that data collection instruments seek information that is relevant to the specific features of the different program objectives and profiles

4.33 Ensure that data collection instruments enable some conclusions to be drawn not just about whether alumni have had an impact but the extent to which their scholarship experience contributed to their ability to have an impact.

It is pleasing to see that the M&E plan for 2011-2012 includes the commencement of several activities to follow-up on graduates. Some case studies of scholars who have returned from previous scholarship programs have already been undertaken. These case studies are useful in that they tell holistic stories about individuals. They will also be useful for promotional purposes but such purposes are quite different to what is required for M&E and it will be important not to let the M&E purposes be overshadowed by the promotion and good news story purposes.

[22] This is a minor point since it is noted that the wording of objective 3 is used to present results for outcome 3 rather than the wording of outcome 3 as shown in the logic diagram.

As these case examples accumulate, processes will be needed to synthesise the information including pulling together clusters of scholarships around particular issues, fields or organisations in order to draw conclusions about nature and level of outcomes.

The M&E approach focuses on individual scholars. No doubt this focus is encouraged by the ways in which the program objectives are worded and so is an accurate reflection of the objectives. However, by adhering to the measures that are directly related to the objectives as stated, the MEF provides little opportunity to consider the collective impact of several scholarships (e.g. in a given agency or location) and their relationship to other AusAID sectoral activities. Also, if the future HRD program includes flexible modes and other HRD activities such as short courses it will be important that M&E consider the combined effects of long terms scholarships and other HRD activities to see how well the package of HRD assistance is working.

Even when the first cohort of scholars from this current program returns it will take some years to fully test the usefulness of the M&E framework. The follow-up studies to be undertaken in the meantime with graduates from the previous program can be used not only to collect information of value in its own right (there will always be a lag for scholarships) but also to pilot methodologies for the graduates of this current program.

Other follow-up processes such as tracer studies are also being developed. Tracer studies will be better if they draw on a good data base of alumni. In addition it will be important to establish expectations at the point of awarding a scholarship that scholars will be asked to participate in follow-up evaluation activities, emphasising the potential benefits of doing so to them their organisations and future applicants.

As yet there seems to be little intention of engaging scholars' organisations in those follow-up activities or strengthening their expertise to do so. The use of reintegration plans and engagement of organisations in those processes as well as assisting organisations to assess their own performance with respect to HRD and HRM could assist with building this capacity. Such an approach would also be more in tune with Paris Declaration principles for strengthening and using local systems as part of providing ODA.

Engaging priority organisations in monitoring and evaluation (including a focus on using it to improve their practices, not just reporting to AusAID) could also improve the effectiveness and efficiency of ASDiV M&E processes, as long as appropriate quality assurance processes were also included as part of capacity building.

When conducting follow-up studies it will be important to ensure that information is collected that can be linked back to each of the objectives of the program. This may mean custom tailoring data collection techniques according to profile and most relevant objectives. For example objective 2 and profile 3 include a strong focus on scholars taking on their intended training roles, improving quality of teaching and learning materials and applying what they have learnt to teach others. Data collection tools would need to be developed to capture this. The proposed templates included in the 2010 M&E plan (none are provided in the 2011-2012 plan) are very general and would need to more specific and custom tailored to some extent to objectives and profiles.

The M&E approach focuses primarily on what individuals *do* with little attention to *why* they do it. It overlooks the extent to which what individuals do arises from their scholarship experience i.e. to what extent did the scholarship make a difference?

The effective removal of the concept of priority organisations decreases the likelihood of institutional monitoring. The risk analysis in the most recent M&E framework has reduced the level of risk associated with poor HRD capacity in organisations from high to medium but no reason is given other than that the program realistically accepts HRD constraints in the public sector; that HRD staff provide advisory support to Central

Government Agencies and there will be Ongoing M&E of PPI/Central Government Agencies program outcomes.

In fact through this MTR all the signs are that lack of depth in HRD capacity is likely to be a continuing issue that needs to be addressed. Its continuing importance underpins many of the recommendations in this report. The option put forward in the risk analysis to accept the realism of HRD constraints may mean that the program achieves much less than it could beyond the outputs level. As discussed in relation to Evaluation Question 3 there are ways in which these constraints can be addressed even if only with a limited number of important organisations.

Various recommendations in this MTR are designed to strengthen the links between outputs, outcomes and the program goal and address unrealistic assumptions about how movement through the program logic will occur. Of prime importance are those recommendations that relate to the work that needs to be done with organisations so that scholars acquiring skills are able to apply them in supportive organisational contexts, the need to identify and work with a small number of priority organisations to be able to make effective use of relatively small amounts of resources and the need to identify development priorities and concentrate effort on those priorities.

The alumni strategies

At the time of preparing this report, repeated attempts to contact alumni had been largely unsuccessful. Only 2 active alumni had responded and none of the inactive alumni that were contacted were interested in participating in a telephone interview. The purpose of the interview was to discuss their experience of alumni activities and, for those who were not active, to discuss what might attract them to alumni activities. One of the active alumni commented that:

> *"There should be a kind of contracted commitment from the awardees to join alumni activities in the future. For the time being, many awardees/ returnees considered this a free rider."*

Purpose needs to be clarified

4.34 Develop a program objective to correspond to outcome 4 in the program logic diagram, amplify it by reference to support to alumni to apply and disseminate what they have learnt and Suggested wording for the objective is:

Alumni return with and maintain linkages and positive perceptions of Australia that contribute to strengthening the Vietnam – Australia bilateral relationship and are supported to enhance their contribution to development objectives by applying what they have learnt and through diffusion of learning to others.

4.35 Clarify the theory of change around the alumni activities, showing how it links to the goal of the program. Link alumni activities to that theory of change, while accepting that some (especially the large social events) will simply be about bilateral relationships.

4.36 In consultation with the proposed national alumni structure, further clarify the intent of the Alumni program and identify important selling points and benefits for alumni.

Expectations are high but there is a lack of clarity about what can be achieved through alumni strategies (the theory of change) and about who are the intended beneficiaries. As noted in the discussion of M&E there is an outcome in the program logic that relates

to alumni but there is no corresponding program objective. Outcome 4 reads: Alumni return with and maintain linkages and positive perceptions of Australia that contribute to strengthening the Vietnam – Australia bilateral relationship. This could and should be expressed as a fourth objective for the program, with some modification as discussed below.

The lack of such an objective in the past may account for why the alumni strategy lacks a strong rationale. There is something of a tension between achieving this objective as currently stated and achieving development outcomes associated with an aid program. This is a tension that is not unique to Vietnam: it applies to the entire AusAID scholarships program. Several possible approaches could be taken:

1. **Apply a 'purist 'development approach': the links between this alumni outcome and the development goal of the program would need to be demonstrated** by for example focusing on those aspects of bilateral relationships that relate to development objectives. Doing so may limit the types of alumni activities to those that directly or indirectly contribute to development goals. This approach would be in sympathy with one of the strategy objective targets for 2015 which is to 'increase the contribution of scholarship alumni and institutional links to meeting the Vietnam development challenges'.

2. **Accept the alumni outcomes as a whole of government spin-off of the scholarships program, not directly linked to development objectives.** Any activities that promote positive networking and links with Australians in any capacity would be appropriate. If this approach were adopted then in the program logic diagram, the alumni would be the end of a line and would not connect to the program goal.

3. **Reword the alumni objective to include reference both to the bilateral relationship component and that alumni are supported to enhance their contribution to development objectives** by direct application of learning and through diffusion of learning to others (i.e. through further learning, networks with other professionals, small grants, development of resources for diffusion etc).

No matter which objective is selected, it will be important not to place too much emphasis on alumni activities in the service of this objective as the main post scholarship support activity. Doing so could draw attention away from the need to use other strategies to assist scholars to apply their learning.

As well as serving the program goal and other AusAID and other bilateral agenda, option 3 presents some direct benefits to alumni This is important if alumni are to be engaged by alumni activities. Providing activities solely to foster bilateral relationships (option 2) may not be a sufficiently strong incentive for alumni to participate. People are busy and will only attend alumni activities if they are of benefit to them in some way (professional, social, feeling valued/recognised etc). An alumni strategy driven primarily by Australian Government interests is unlikely to succeed.

Alumni data base

> 4.37 Use incentives and various forms of recognition to encourage participation and updating of data base.
>
> 4.38 Continue to work on completing and maintaining the data base especially for graduates over the last 10 to 15 years.
>
> 4.39 Consider introducing an on-line data base that can be accessed by scholars to update their details. This data base could also be used to update progress with reintegration plans and associated information once these requirements have been established. It could be a continuation of the online application and application tracking process.
>
> 4.40 Inform universities of upcoming alumni events in which they may wish to participate and identify ways to extract university specific reports on their alumni, with permission from the alumni.

The core for any activities to promote alumni activities is a good data base. ASDiV has made great efforts to improve the database including labour intensive telephone calls with contacts. These have proved to an effective follow-up method in addition to emails, questionnaires, google and various approaches to contacts. Alumni events have provided opportunities to update contact information. Contact data are now available for 1995 alumni out of a total of 3138 since scholarships began in the 1977 although it is understood that the data are incomplete for some of the people for whom some contact details are available. Annex 8 provides further information about the alumni data base and why it has been difficult to make contact with some people.

Alumni need to be able to update information and need to be able to do so online. This process could follow on from their original online application for a scholarship. The incentive for updating information would be to ensure that they are contactable to receive information about alumni activities. Less rigorously and more for purposes of social networking they could also update their details using Facebook.

The fields in the data base have also been improved. For example the data base now includes information about fields of study. This will provide opportunities for AusAID to draw on alumni for particular purposes.

Also the data base records at which Australian University alumni studied. During interviews, Australian universities expressed an interest in keeping track of their alumni and one asked that they be kept informed about how the alumni are doing at home, what is happening with their reintegration plans and what is coming out of tracer studies. So the field that shows Australian university should allow university specific reports to be generated, if alumni give permission for the information to be used in that way. Australian universities also asked to be informed of upcoming alumni events in Vietnam so that if someone from their university happened to be there at the time they could, if appropriate, join in with the activity.

Activities for Alumni

4.41 In consultation with the proposed national alumni structure, continue with a range of activities to address different interests and needs. A suggested portfolio of activities is:

- one high profile social event per annum and one high profile professional conference per annum, rotating amongst the three major locations.

- Continue to support seminars but run fewer of them, their main purpose being networking.

- Include reintegration support activities under the proposed new program objective 4. Some would be general activities such as seminars and workshops on returning home and some would be more intensive, specific to priority organisations (see Evaluation Question 3).

- Consider running more 2 to 3 day training programs on soft skills such as negotiation, HRM especially at middle to senior management levels and leave some spaces open for non-alumni (e.g. 30% of spaces). Include the possibility of alumni inviting their peers, supervisors or other relevant people in their organisation.

- Continue to foster the use of small grants especially for projects that achieve multiplier effects arising from the scholars' learning and for reinforcing scholars' development e.g. training programs delivered by scholars; establishing research networks, continuing connections with Australian Universities.

- Consider running short courses on how to give good presentations and run training programs for those alumni who wish to make presentations or run training programs on what they have learnt.

The activities being undertaken as part of the alumni strategy have included professional development seminars, social networking activities, a small grant scheme, online access to academic resources, ASDiV website and face book and co-operation with other alumni organisations in Australia and in Vietnam (VGAC). The activities are broadly consistent with those being undertaken by other scholarship programs that participated in the MTR (Fullbright, Chevening and GIZ): combination of professional, social and in some cases charitable activities. Most consider that a combination is important to address different interests. The success of ASDiV in attracting alumni to activities also seems to be at levels consistent with those experienced by others organisations.

Alumni may maintain contact and participate in a variety of different ways according to preference and circumstance. Some will want to just be kept informed of events while others will want to have quite an active role. For example, 63 alumni have volunteered to be mentors to scholars in a mentoring program that is just being established. This should help to strengthen networks when the scholars return to Vietnam.

ASDiV has prepared the following information concerning the level of participation in various activities.

"Statistics extracted from the alumni database indicate that there are 606 active alumni. This figure excludes 55 new returnees who attended re-integration workshops conducted by the Local and International HRD advisers. It is important to note that 606 active alumni have been counted once only regardless of how many times/alumni

activities in which they have participated. The table below shows the gross numbers and percentages of alumni participating in the seven activities.

Seq.	Activities	Number of attendees	Percentage
1.	Registered/attended conference, seminars, workshops, and alumni core team meetings	348	40%
2.	Registered for online academic databases	202	23%
3.	Have updated their information since June 2010	111	13%
4.	Registered to be a mentor	63	7%
5.	Taken part in alumni social activities including coffee talks, sport activities, charity activities, and network drinks.	92	11%
6.	Applied for/has been offered small grants	28	3%
7.	Supported ASDiV promotional activities	18	2%
Total		862	100%

Notes: *There are duplications in the total number of 862 attendees since one alumnus may participate more than one alumni activity."*

These figures show that it is not just the same people participating in all the activities. A little less than a third of the 1995 alumni for whom contact data is available on the data base have had some active involvement with ASDiV alumni activities. It would be useful to benchmark this level of participation against other AusAID Scholarship programs.

The popular *Facebook* site has not been included in the above analysis. The ASDiV 2010 Annual Report notes that:

"Social networking is a new approach in the ASDiV promotion strategy. A Facebook site named ***"Australian Scholarships for Vietnam"*** *was created. Facebook allows a very high level of interaction and connectivity. Awareness of the scholarship programs has increased rapidly through the Fans' network including potential applicants. Although it was published only in May 2010, the active number of users reached 782 at the end of October with 312 active users in October."*

Some of the activities do take considerable effort to organise and there was a view that there would be some merit to focusing on fewer high profile events that can showcase Australian Education as well as the scholars, and can make them feel they belong to something with high status and are valued. ASDiV has proposed that a high quality conference be run in June 2012 focusing on environment (one of the 3 pillars) and a gala dinner. However it will be important also to maintain some smaller professional development activities.

Central agencies are calling for more short courses and there may be some potential to merge short courses for alumni with a more open invitation to others, reserving a certain percentage of places for non-alumni (as GIZ does). Alumni could invite colleagues with whom they work with a view to strengthening their organisational support and promoting more widely the benefits of scholarships.

There may also be potential to use the small grants (each a maximum of AUD5000) for training and train the trainer courses by alumni as GIZ does. This would help with achieving the objectives of the program in terms of passing on what they had learnt as well as providing an opportunity for alumni to demonstrate the value of their Australian education. GIZ provides grants to alumni for such purposes and estimates that a budget of about USD3000 would be expected for a short training program for about 25 people.

Structure, management and ownership

4.42 Support the establishment of an Alumni Co-ordinating structure with a view to it ultimately (say 3 years time) operating largely independently but with some financial assistance from AusAID and reduced need for a dedicated alumni officer in ASDiV. Consider the potential to redirect some of the alumni officer resources to HRD functions (e.g. to conduct consolidated HRD and reintegration seminars).

4.43 Establish formal relationships between the Alumni co-ordinating structures, ASDiV and VGAC (assuming VGAC continues to be funded by Austrade) for sharing of information, joint activities and achieving efficiencies. One possibility would be to have AusAID alumni as a chapter of VGAC and for AusAID and Austrade to jointly fund it. Joint activities would mostly be for the large events that are primarily directed to the bilateral relationship aspect of the objective.

Other alumni organisations encourage some level of ownership of alumni activities by the alumni themselves through formal or informal organisations. There is potential for alumni to run their own website and networking as occurs in some other countries. They may need assistance to establish the website and perhaps access to some ongoing technical assistance to maintain it but it could be largely run by the alumni. However this may take some time to establish. GIZ for example expressed reservations about the usefulness of its alumni portal so far and in particular the English version of the portal.

VGAC is an alumni organisation for all Australian Alumni (whether scholarship or self funded). About half of the members on its 5000 strong data base are scholarship alumni. Already VGAC and ASDiV have co-operated with several events and AusAID has provided funding for some of the joint activities (e.g. a Climate Change Seminar; the Gala Dinner) for which VGAC is very grateful. VGAC's status and funding arrangements beyond June 2011 are questionable given some changing responsibilities of Austrade and DEEWR. DEEWR funds VGAC until June 2011 and then Austrade is responsible for funding.

It is unclear at this stage what support Austrade will give to VGAC and this opens opportunities for discussion with Austrade about joint activities. Austrade is keen to promote the value of Australian education and it would seem that this could be done both through scholarship holders and self funded graduates. Some efficiencies could be achieved by having VGAC and whatever structures are established specifically for AusAID alumni work more closely together.

It is noted that ASDiV plans to establish a national alumni structure based on 'chapters' in the three main regions of Vietnam with a prestigious alumnus as the Head of the organization. VGAC has a structure and legal status but so far AusAID alumni have neither a structure nor legal status. Setting up a second Alumni organisation so that there were two parallel Australian Alumni organisations may result in them competing for scholars' scarce time and interest. Joint presentation and promotion of activities also with potential for self funded Australian alumni to participate in some or all activities run by AusAID alumni would achieve efficiencies, promote Australian whole of government interests with respect to the value of Australian education and strengthen Australia –Vietnam links.

VGAC has five chapters: Hanoi, HCMC, Danang, Hue and Cantho-Mekong Valley. AusAID alumni already tap into VGAC activities in all 5 regions; AusAID chapters could co-operate with their equivalent VGAC chapters. In the remaining two VGAC regions for which no AusAID chapters are proposed AusAID alumni could be especially encouraged to link in with those VGAC chapters and ASDiV could more generously sponsor particular activities in those chapters. It is understood that, for full co-operation to occur, some issues around information exchange and confidentiality for scholars would

need to be addressed but these issues while not investigated by this review should not be insurmountable if the will is there.

The main areas for co-operation between VGAC and AusAID alumni would be, as they have been in the past, for large professional and social events that are likely to appeal to self funded and AusAID alumni alike. But some of the shorter training programs could also be of mutual interest and foster cross sectoral linkages needed to bring about change. Once again for such training programs that AusAID may wish to sponsor or run, a certain percentage of places could be reserved for AusAID alumni with the remainder being accessible by self funded alumni and others.

It is understood that due to lack of funding VGAC's data base needs considerable improvement (as does AusAID's) but its established contact with 5000 members could be an asset to AusAID alumni data bases.

Technical inputs of the ASDiV Managing contractor and roles played by key personnel

Comments across the full range of stakeholders have in general been positive and they have been keen to express their appreciation to AusAID/ADSiV for the scholarships and for the support received in accessing the scholarships. Other parts of this report have addressed issues such as the role of HRD co-ordinators and the importance of keeping them involved and informed, and the need for the international academic advisor to maintain regular contact with Australian Universities to ensure that they are providing up to date information to applicants.

Much of what appears below arises from interviews with a selection of five Australian Universities that have AusAID scholars.

Support for students to settle in to Australia

4.44 Emphasise to successful applicants the importance of making links with other non-Vietnamese students and others, while continuing to provide information to Vietnamese scholars about Vietnamese networks in Australia that can help with accommodation and other matters.

Australian Universities appreciate the preparation that ASDiV gives to students:

"We find the students are well disciplined when they arrive and are aware of the expectations that their award entails. A small survey of current students has provided overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding the pre-departure processes and support they received from their employers and ASDiV."

Another commented in relation to the practical aspects of settling into Australia:

"I think they are well supported compared to scholars from other countries. We always receive timely information on travel so that the scholars can be met at the airport on arrival and they seem to be quite well prepared for life in Canberra".

And another commented that Vietnamese students are well prepared compared with other students and have family and friends networks and temporary accommodation before they arrive. One university described the Vietnamese students as:

"low maintenance with respect to accommodation. They are not fussy and are quite happy to have 6 to 8 Vietnamese students living together".

ASDiV commented that they provide information about Vietnamese networks in Australia. One downside of the strength of these networks to which universities referred

was the tendency for Vietnamese students to stick to their own group and speak Vietnamese all the time. They considered that greater emphasis could be placed on encouraging them to forge links with non-Vietnamese students and others with whom they share professional interests.

Other accommodation and settling in issues that universities raised were that:

"It is extremely important that we are advised of the correct temporary accommodation address that students would like to be taken too. There have been a few instances where the student insists on being taken to another address once they have arrived in Australia other than what UQ had been advised about".

UQ noted its own approach to helping students to settle into their studies

UQ does not encourage dependants to arrive with the student at the beginning of their scholarship. If dependants will be joining the students in Australia UQ would prefer they don't arrive until at least mid semester break generally in April/May in 1st semester and at the end of September in 2nd semester. This enables the student to concentrate 100% on IAP and obtain a feel of the study load required to be successful in their studies before having family responsibilities.

Advice on selection of appropriate courses

4.45 To ensure continuation of ASDiV's good reputation with respect to the advice it gives students, regularly update the information about courses available to students using a variety of methods (website, international advisor, information fairs for universities etc.

Australian Universities have commented that in general Vietnamese students seem to be well informed about courses and are prepared to undertake their own research to find out. One commented that:

"I think often Vietnamese scholarship holders, like other ADS recipients, choose to study in the wrong programs for the wrong reasons. However, I think this trend has definitely been decreasing recently. ADS students are doing more research and getting better advice in Vietnam before they made the decision about which university to choose."

Another commented that

"AsDiV counsel the students well and the students research extensively (independently) as well."

And another:

"In my experience Vietnamese students on the whole make appropriate study choices. They conduct extensive research and have very clear understandings of what the Vietnam priority areas are. I understand that the program choices are confirmed and approved by ADSiV before applications are forwarded to Institutions."

Information fairs that universities participate in Vietnam are also said to provide useful input.

"The annual ADS Information Sessions held in Hanoi and HCMC are invaluable to students to ask questions not only about our programs but questions about life in Brisbane and family issues.'

Relationship between universities and ASDiV

4.46 Ensure that all queries from universities are promptly acknowledged and a course of action to address them is identified even if they can't be immediately answered.

4.47 Discuss the issue of streamlining decision-making processes concerning suspensions further with UQ and possibly with other posts that they nominate as having more efficient processes.

4.48 Provide clear information about the names of Vietnamese students and consistently use AusAID ID (OASIS) numbers.

All universities considered the relationship between themselves and ASDiV to be a very good one and even one of three universities that expressed some specific concerns commented that, in general:

"compared with other posts, Vietnam has got their act together:"

One of the universities commented that ASDiV:

"are easily contactable and respond quickly and follow through on issues."

And another:

"The relationship between myself and the Scholarship Administration Team is excellent. Our main form of communication is via email and I believe that is effective. When required I am happy to phone."

However two of the five Australian Universities commented that ASDiV was slow to respond to emails and requests for information (both said that sometimes weeks go by, but far from the worst when compared with other countries). They would like acknowledgement of their emails and some indication that action is underway even if it is just that ASDiV are consulting with the Embassy. Putting a journal note on OASIS was suggested.

One breakdown in communication to which a university referred concerned payment to the university for expenses incurred when a student's scholarship had been terminated. Once a student's scholarship and studies are terminated they are off OASIS and in general all claims need to go through OASIS. It took a considerable amount of time and many requests to receive advice that an invoice could be sent manually to Post.

Another university commented that :

"When students are progressing as expected I don't believe there is much involvement between the student and the Managing Contractor. When things do not go as planned there have been delays in processing variations due to the high number of justifications and medical reports required by the Managing Contractor before suspension variations for example can be approved. With other Managing Contractors and POST the process is a lot smoother as they are happy to accept the opinion and recommendations of the Institution and so students are able to return home a lot sooner.

..... I do feel that Institutions are in a better position to understand what is required and what is best for students in a particular situation while they are on scholarship. It is important that the MC and AusAID in Vietnam understand due to the large number of AusAID Vietnamese students at UQ, myself as the Student Contact Office, Learning Advisors, Student Advisors, Faculty staff and in some cases Student Counsellors and Medical Doctors all work together to come up with the best way forward for students. Once a recommendation is sent to ADSiV for consideration it is not just the opinion of 1

person but a plan of many professional staff members with the best intentions for the student."

Transferring between courses is another area that has presented difficulties and where one university reported receiving conflicting advice:

"When it comes to transferring a student to another Institution it seems to be a very drawn out process. I have received conflicting procedures and expectations from ASDiV and AusAID/Canberra on the Institution's role when it comes to transfers. Maybe this can be discussed further between AusAID/Canberra, Institutions and POSTS at the AusAID forum in Canberra in October 2011"

Some issues have arisen around identifying students. One university commented that there is often confusion around the names of Vietnamese students. It is not clear what their first, middle and family names are and the names for a given person often appear in a different order in different places – on applications, passports and on OASIS. This makes it very difficult for the university to locate information about students and, on occasion, some students have been confused with others. They requested advice about which is the first, middle and family name for each applicant and a consistent approach as far as possible.

Another commented that

"In most instances ADSiV staff use OASIS or AusAID ID numbers but it would help UQ identifying students if this can happen at all times."

Avoidance of re-work and confusion by endeavouring to provide the right information on the first occasion, while not always possible, would be preferred by universities. One university commented:

"My colleague who is responsible for all arrival details explained that a few times she receives duplications of emails stating exactly the same information but in most cases she receives notifications with slight changes. From her position she would be grateful if all details are confirmed and double checked before forwarding through to UQ. We understand that there may be last minute changes with a small number but it would make a big difference if the majority of travel details are correct in the first instance. The majority of changes involve students changing their temporary accommodation address."

The separate management arrangements for program administration and ELT

4.49 The separate arrangements for contracting the delivery of the scholarships program and the delivery of ELT should be maintained for the foreseeable future.

These arrangements seem to be working well. There is good co-operation between the two and with AusAID. We also note that the students at ACET are happy with the conditions and arrangements made by ACET. ACET is a significant part of the process of preparing students for their time in Australia in a variety of ways other than those that relate to language.

There are some advantages to keeping the two services separate. For example, it could be difficult if the same people who were providing training in English and developing quite close relationships over an extended period were also selecting applicants. However, as noted, ACET could contribute some questions or considerations to be explored in interviews since they find interviews very useful themselves.

5. Do the ASDiV design and implementation arrangements continue to be relevant in the face of changing external aid environment, corporate requirements and the current Australia Vietnam DCS?

Findings in relation to continuing relevance

Changing external aid environment

Paris Declaration principles for ODA place a strong emphasis on strengthening in–country institutional capacity, independence and ownership and the need to foster sustainable processes and outcomes. This includes a gradual move from supply driven approaches to demand driven approaches within agreed frameworks such as jointly agreed country strategies. Part of this approach involves assisting countries and institutions to make well informed demands that will produce maximum benefits for them.

With respect to scholarships as a form of HRD this would include developing the capacity to know when scholarships will be most useful and skills in making them useful in conjunction with other modes of delivering HRD. Amongst other things this capacity includes HRD and HRM capabilities, and the capability to monitor, evaluate and learn from the implementation of various HRD approaches, including the use of scholarships.

The current approach has reduced the extent to which capacity building in HRD is a prominent part of the program. This has been somewhat in sympathy with Paris Principles in that on occasion a reduced ASDiV engagement around HRD has reflected an existing capacity and/or lack of interest by agencies in receiving that type of support. Clearly the support needs to be both valuable and valued.

The M&E approach does not appear to include any engagement with institutions as active partners in monitoring and evaluating the impact of scholarships, any capacity building with respect to M&E of scholarships or any alignment with whatever M&E systems institutions might have in place or need to develop with respect to scholarships and other forms of HRD, including the implementation and outcomes of HRD plans.

Recommendations to improve internal systems for HRD and HRM and M&E are included in the discussion of Evaluation Questions 3 and 4 respectively. As noted in those discussions, this involves a shift in focus (especially for a small number of priority institutions) from individuals as recipients of scholarships to organisations *and* individual recipients and how the two work together to achieve organisational change agenda and development outcomes .

Relationship to Country Strategy.

The program goal, objectives and profiles were formulated under the previous country strategy. They are not fully aligned with the new country strategy and the HRD objective of the new Country Strategy with which scholarships are located gives no guidance concerning what the priorities of the program should be. The continuing relevance of the goal and objectives has been discussed in relation to Evaluation Question 1 and the continuing relevance of profiles in relation to Evaluation Question 2. Some recommendations have been made concerning possible changes to the goal, objectives and profiles.

Choice of priority organisations also needs to be guided by the Country Strategy and, as discussed in relation to Evaluation Question 3, to date this has been difficult to do. When discussing the Alumni strategy and the M&E program logic in relation to Evaluation Question 4, the addition of a fourth objective relating to alumni has been recommended.

Corporate requirements and directions

Findings and recommendations in relation to the following corporate requirements and directions have been addressed as follows:

- Increasing focus on outcomes and impacts has been discussed in relation to achieving objective 1 under Evaluation Question 1 and the importance of having and implementing a theory of change that actively links scholars' learning to organisational change and development outcomes.

- ASS directions to use targeting profiles have been discussed under Evaluation Question 2.

- Corporate consolidation of ADS and ALAS and online application processes have been discussed under Evaluation Question 4.

Flexible modes

> 5.1 When developing the Delivery Strategy for HRD, widen the activities under HRD beyond scholarships to include flexible modes beyond scholarships:
>
> i) Draw up a menu of flexible modes, the circumstances under which each would be particularly useful (including use in combination with other modes) and identify what is currently available through various sources: Australian aid, other donors, Vietnamese providers.
>
> ii) Use this menu in discussions with priority organisations around their HRD needs and when considering the relative value of scholarships and other modes.
>
> iii) Include budgets for flexible modes when the Delivery Strategy for HRD is developed and when submitting future budgets and forward estimates.
>
> iv) In the meantime, consider various possible sources of funding within Post and AusAID Corporate for these flexible modes, where their potential value can be demonstrated. Possible sources within Post would be sectoral programs when they have identified specific HRD needs and using some of the small grants currently allocated to the alumni program for flexible modes that will complement scholarships in priority institutions or in relation to priority issues.

AusAID is increasingly encouraging the use of flexible modes (alternative approaches) for delivering Australian aid for capacity development. Examples of flexible modes include twinning of institutions, internships, cross posting, short courses, work based learning projects, mentoring and coaching, technical assistance, benchmarking and so on. ALAFs and PSLP are formalised corporate examples of flexible modes but many other approaches can be country specific e.g. short courses and workshops.

Management by Canberra of allocation of ALAS and ALAFs reduces predictability of access and does limit the extent to which they can deliberately be used in country as part of a strategic package of HRD options to apply with a given institution and/or in relation to a particular outcome. This means that it is even more important to have some Post controlled HRD activities in addition to what might be available through Canberra.

There is a large demand for flexible modes in the central organisations that participated in the MTR. Most organisations want more than scholarships and consider that alternatives such as short courses (whether in Vietnam or Australia) would in many cases be more appropriate and/or useful adjuncts. Examples of flexible modes identified by MTR interviewees as potentially useful were:

- Short courses (MPI, MOFA, SBV, MONRE, MOLISA, State Audit, Construction, Vietnam News).

- Bringing Australian Experts to Vietnam to assist with training and developing training materials, demonstrating and adapting models (SBV, Construction).
- Train the trainer courses (MPI, MOLISA, State Audit, Transport).
- Internships (MPI, State Audit, MOLISA, VTV).
- Institutional twinning (MPI).

Other types of support that regional universities requested were:

- ELT for lecturers. One suggestion was that an English training centre could be established at the university. Another suggestion was to provide volunteer English teachers.

- Short training courses on management, leadership, time management and other soft skills. These short courses were seen as very important for the management of the University and the management of the PPC. One of the provincial universities requested more information on any training courses held by ADS so they can make arrangements to participate. Since very few short courses other than for alumni have been run so far this is a suggestion for the future.

- Bilateral cooperation between Central Highland University and Australia's Universities

- Support for research and development activities.

Applications from ethnic women from provinces has been pleasing. However, there may be opportunities to reach even more women in the provinces using flexible modes such as short courses that do not required English. Australian university staff with interpreters could be used on some occasions.

Flexible modes such as in-country HRD provisions have been identified in the literature, by stakeholders and in the design as relevant for a number of different target audiences and reasons:

- reaching difficult to reach populations;
- reaching greater numbers;
- for highly qualified and senior personnel who cannot leave their positions and who would also benefit more from experience e.g. through short linkages;
- for government officials and those with a heavy workload who may not be able to be spared from their jobs;
- for those who do not speak English and for whom interpreters can be provided if English speaking personnel were to deliver HRD experiences in Vietnam;
- using appropriate combinations of HRD tools that are fit for particular purposes;
- immediate rather than delayed input of new skills through shorter term approaches; and
- pursuing demand driven approaches to delivery of aid rather than supply driven approaches.

The value and outcomes of long term training such as that provided through scholarships can be enhanced by complementary use of other flexible modes. It is not a matter of using either scholarships or other modes but using effective packages[23].

Flexible modes are included in the ASDiV design but have not yet been activated to any significant degree. This is understandable given the need to bed down the new program

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[23] Refer page 34 of the 2009 PAHRODF design document for an example of a package at provincial level.

and address the various corporate changes that have occurred in relation to scholarships. Some short courses provided in Australia (e.g. in HRD) are currently being piloted. However this report has referred to the potential to make greater use flexible modes when discussing of types of HR support that ASDiV could provide to priority organisations (see Evaluation Question 3). It is also possible that the flexible modes would appeal to many other organisations that are not amongst the proposed small number of priority organisations but that are working on issues relevant to the Country Strategy HRD priorities.

As part of the process of developing the Delivery Strategy for HRD and then for working with organisations, it would be useful to draw up a menu of different types of HRD activities and opportunities for accessing them through AusAID and from elsewhere. The AusAID menu would include scholarships and other types of AusAID assistance such as ALAF, PSLP, through sectoral programs and through small grants for alumni that could perhaps be used for training. Items from elsewhere would include such alternative sources of assistance as project 165 which is A Vietnam Government project providing HRD for leadership and management, and training opportunities provided by other donors. Donor mapping of such opportunities would be helpful.

Even if AusAID is not at this stage in a position to provide a lot of extra support itself it may be able to assist with locating and mapping other sources of available support and leveraging off it e.g. GIZ reserves 20% of places in training programs for non GIZ alumni. Organisations could be encouraged to link scholarships to other short courses and other modes provided by others, Project 165. For an example of use of modalities see page 48 in the PAHRODF design.

Overall conclusions

ASDiV has made commendable progress in establishing the new program and putting in place the various support processes and systems. Significant achievements have been made in term of attracting, selecting and preparing applicants for their studies. This report includes suggested improvements in the administration of the basic delivery of the scholarships program but most are incremental changes rather than fundamental changes of direction.

ASDiV's achievements have been made in the face of changing corporate requirements and a lack of clarity concerning priorities and objectives for the program following the introduction of the new Country Strategy. The lack of clarity has affected how well the targeting profiles and the PPI approach have been implemented and this in turn is likely to adversely affect what outcomes are achieved.

Modifying the goal and objectives and clarifying the priorities has now become the most pressing issue in order to determine how to manage limited resources to achieve sustainable outcomes. This is a task that AusAID needs to undertake.

A considerable amount of ASDiV activity and resources has been devoted to alumni related activities. However, the absence of an objective relating to alumni has left these activities without direction or a sense of purpose. It is now time for AusAID to develop a clear statement objective for the alumni program and incorporate it in the overall theory of change. The MTR includes a suggested objective.

The program delivery has for various reasons placed too little attention on managing for outcomes beyond scholars completing their studies, returning to their organisations and possibly obtaining promotions. AusAID and ASDiV together should prepare a revised theory of change that places greater emphasis on the pathways of intermediate outcomes heading towards the program objectives and goal and not just on the outputs associated with delivering and completing scholarships.

Assuming that the revised theory of change incorporates some of the features that this MTR has identified as currently missing, in future, more attention should be given (at front end and at reintegration) to supporting scholars and their organisations to make maximum use of what scholars have learnt and to build on that learning to strengthen and extend organisational capacity. More intensive support will be provided to a smaller number of priority organisations with which HRD partnerships will be developed. These organisations should be selected from across all profiles and sectors according to their potential with HRD assistance to contribute to Country Strategy HRD priorities (once defined).

The kind of support that is envisaged requires greater use of flexible modes of delivery, including but not limited to short courses and guided work based learning projects in Vietnam and/or Australia. The M&E approach will need to reflect these wider outcomes and the collective effects of multiple scholarships and other modes of support.

Recommendations are presented in relation to issues discussed above when addressing the five Evaluation Questions. Four key recommendations relating to the above conclusions are included in the executive summary. A consolidated set of recommendations is in Annex 9 for ease of reference.

Evaluation Criteria Ratings

Evaluation Criteria	Rating (1-6)	Explanation
Relevance	4	The nexus between the country strategy objectives and the scholarships program is problematic: HRD is one of three themes of the new Country Strategy but is too broadly stated to provide guidance for priorities and its link to aid objectives is unclear. The details concerning priorities that were incorporated in program objectives that were formulated in relation to the draft country strategy are no longer relevant but have not been replaced.
Effectiveness	5	The program is largely on track to ensuring that people from across the profiles participate in the scholarship program and that they acquire knowledge and skills (within the limitations imposed by lack of clarity about priorities – see relevance). However the program is not fostering the conditions needed to facilitate implementation of what scholars have learnt in order to address development priorities. Achievement of the latter parts of the three objectives may be at risk.
Efficiency	5	The program is in general efficiently managed and has made various changes that should improve efficiency further. There is potential to improve online processes for contact with applicants and some aspects of liaison with Australian universities need attention. Some implementation difficulties resulted from corporate consolidation of awards and these have created some concerns amongst applicants and their agencies in Vietnam. Most concerns should not recur in future.
Sustainability	4	Sustainability of learning and application of learning beyond the period of studies has been threatened by the removal of more intensive HRD support to a small number of high priority agencies following return of scholars and the removal of requirements for career and work-plans. The small grants program could be used to improve sustainability but is likely to be insufficient on its own. Scholarships offer a very limited approach to HRD and need to be more strategically situated as a capacity development and organisational development tool within an AusAID HRD delivery strategy.
Gender Equality	5	Women are overrepresented with respect to numbers of applicants and successful applicants but there are some difficulties in attracting ethnic women. It is too soon to know whether the female graduates will have opportunities to apply what they have learnt when they return. PPIs were to receive gender related reintegration support. Removal of the PPI concept means the removal of that support and potentially poorer gender related outcomes with respect to use.
Monitoring & Evaluation	5	The Program logic that underpins the logframe and MEF has some 'missing middles' between learning, application and development outcomes. The MEF gives increasing attention to measuring 'outcomes' but insufficient attention to the role of scholarships in contributing to outcomes and the specifics of the outcomes as they relate to program objectives and goal. The MEF has been hampered by lack of clarity about program priorities. The high rating takes into consideration what could be achieved, given these circumstances.
Analysis & Learning	5	The program has learnt from its experience and adapted various processes to streamline implementation and to address AusAID corporate requirements. Unfortunately some of the adaptations may improve performance with respect to outputs and efficiency but may be to the detriment of the long term impact of scholarships.

Rating scale:

Satisfactory		Less that satisfactory	
6	Very high quality	**3**	Less than adequate quality
5	Good quality	**2**	Poor quality
4	Adequate quality	**1**	Very poor quality

Annex 1: Terms of reference

Mid-term Review Mission for the AusAID Scholarships for Development in Vietnam (ASDiV) Program

I.   Introduction

The AusAID scholarship program was officially introduced and managed by the Aid Program in Vietnam in 1993. Since 2010 Human Resource Development (HRD) assistance, mostly in the form of scholarships, has become a strategic development area in the Vietnam – Australia Development Cooperation Strategy 2011-2015 (the Country Strategy). Major AusAID scholarships include Australian Development Scholarships (ADS), Australia Leadership Award Scholarships (ALAS) and Australia Leadership Award Fellowships (ALAFs).

The AusAID Scholarships for Development in Vietnam (ASDiV) Program was designed in 2008 to manage the delivery of 225 ADS , 20-25 ALAS and 50-60 ALAFs per year to Vietnam. The design covers the 2009-2016 timeframe, comprising a pilot phase (2009-2011) and a follow-up phase (2012-2016). In 2010, the ASDiV Program piloted *more targeted promotion and selection by using profiles, innovative promotion and alumni management strategies, and support for HRD plans and personal career development in 15 Government of Vietnam (GoV) ministries .*

The 2008 design proposed a review, and modification if necessary, of these approaches around mid-2011 to inform the second phase (2012-2016) implementation. Although the proposed timeline will not allow full assessment of two rounds of selections (2010 & 2011) as envisaged by the design, AusAID decide to proceed with the review to ensure sufficient preparation for any program adjustment and enable program continuity beyond January 2012.

II.   Background Issues
1. <u>Canberra-driven issues and factors</u>
1.1.   Impact and Communication of Impacts

The regional AusAID Scholarship Conferences in October 2010 reinforced the importance of monitoring and communicating scholarship impacts to both internal and external stakeholders. This has been long a challenge for not only AusAID but all donor-funded scholarship programs. At the moment, we are expecting more detailed guidance from Canberra on branding and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) issues, but it is timely for the Vietnam scholarship program to examine these questions:

- Will the scholarships bring **desired** impacts to development in Vietnam? Are the impacts **monitorable** and how?
- How can we best collect and communicate evidence on impacts, to AusAID Canberra, Government of Vietnam and the public?

1.2.   Consolidation of major Australian Government scholarships

There is an overall expectation that the promotion, selection, M&E and alumni activities of major Australian Government scholarships will be consolidated under a single Australia Awards brand. This will likely include DEEWR and AusAID-funded scholarships, but the extent of consolidation will vary by country. From 2011 AusAID start to consolidate the different ADS and ALAs milestones and processes across many countries, including Vietnam. A global, single online application system will be in place in early March 2011. As a result, management arrangements for ASDiV phase 2 will need to reflect these changes.

2. <u>Vietnam-specific design issues</u>
2.1.   Targeting

In 2010, AusAID Vietnam piloted a **targeting** approach in the ADS promotion and selection by using five profiles. This approach was built on a mechanism, in existence since 2004, of having a Priority Public Institutions (PPI) category for applicants nominated by 15 GoV ministries and a non-PPI category. The five profiles include: i) *local government officers; ii) rural development workers; iii) central government officers; iv) University lecturers and researchers and; v) English teachers*. Priority consideration has also been given to candidates with disadvantaged background (i.e. ethnicity, disability, poorest areas).

The profiling approach was only implemented for the 2010 round, but there are already some questions that need an answer:

- The number of GoV ministries participating in the PPI program increased from 4 to 15 agencies between 2004 and 2010 to accommodate the expanding GoV and Whole-of-Government (WoG) partners' interests. As such, providing intensive organisational support to these agencies on an individual basis as derived from the 2008 design, and monitoring the support, has been a challenge. In the interim, in 2011, AusAID Vietnam expands the PPI category (which accounts for 40% of total scholarships) to almost all central ministries and equivalent agencies (i.e. up to 33) to enable more competition for scholarships from a larger pool of candidates. Additional support, currently provided to 15 agencies, will be offered to all but on a consolidated basis. The MTR will examine the different approaches used, and if necessary suggest an alternative way to ensure better outcomes from the current so-called 'PPI program'. We are also keen to learn experience from the PPI or similar models used by AusAID in other scholarship programs in the region (e.g. Philippines, Indonesia).
- The profiling approach used in 2010, with five profiles, was highly resource-intensive. For simplification purpose, in 2011, we re-group them into three profiles (local government and rural development workers, central GoV agencies, and University lecturers/researchers). The use of this profiling approach, in achieving the desired outcomes as envisaged by the 2008 design, will need to be examined by the MTR, and modified as appropriate.
- The current Country Strategy (2011-2015) has three broad strategic objectives: infrastructure, HRD and environment sustainability. Aid activities on health and rural development (including ethnicity issues) are being phased out. How can scholarships be used to respond to these shifting priorities of the Country Strategy while being assessed independently under the HRD pillar? Where possible, from the literature review and in-country consultation process, the MTR will highlight key HRD needs of Vietnam that we should focus our support under the HRD pillar.

2.2.   Alumni strategy

The ASDiV Managing Contractor has implemented a range of alumni support activities, such as social gathering and professional development events, small grants scheme (where alumni are provided up to A$5,000 each for their post-study activities). However, the benefits that AusAID can get from these activities are unclear. The Contrator's Alumni Strategy will need to be reviewed to enhance that aspect.

2.3.   Management

At the moment, AusAID maintains a parallel structure of two managing contractors, for scholarship program administration and English language training (ELT). As per the existing program administration contract, subject to the Managing Contractor's effective performance by the time of the MTR, the contract can be extended to cover the remainder of the ASDiV Program. Meanwhile, the ELT contract will expire by the end of 2011. The MTR will assess these factors and recommend a cost-effective management arrangement, including whether or not to expand the existing program administration contract and a new contractual arrangement for ELT.

III.   Mid-term Review Mission Objectives

- To independently assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the pilot phase (2009-2011) of the ASDiV Program, including management arrangements for scholarship program administration and ELT, approaches used in key processes and activities.
- Based on assessment findings and analysis of the changing aid environment and corporate requirements, make recommendations to modify, if necessary, key elements of the ASDiV second phase design (2012-2016), such as the PPI program, alumni and M&E strategies, to enable ASDiV achieve its development objectives.

IV.   Methodology

The key methods include, but are not limited to:

- Review background and other relevant materials;
- Consult with internal and external stakeholders, including AusAID Hanoi, AusAID Canberra, the Managing Contractors, key GoV ministries, Whole-of-Government partners and other Vietnam-based international scholarship providers;
- Discuss with selected Australian education providers, alumni, PPIs and scholarship awardees from the 2010 selection round;
- Analyse findings and make recommendations to AusAID Hanoi.

V.   Scope of Work

The review team will undertake the following assignments:

- Assess the overall ASDiV Program progress against its goal and objectives;

- Critically assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the following subjects entailed from the 2008 ASDiV design in achieving the stated objectives:

  - the targeted approach by using profiles in the 2010 promotion and selection round;

  - the PPI approach and arrangements;

  - the on-going promotion, M&E and alumni strategies;

  - management arrangements for program administration and ELT.

- Review the experience and models used by AusAID in other country scholarship programs such as Philippines, Indonesia;

- Assess the performance of the current ASDiV Managing Contractor, in particular the efficiency and effectiveness of technical inputs provided and roles played by its key professional personnel;

- Review the changing external aid environment and corporate requirements, and analyse implications to the ASDiV program focus and management. Examples of corporate changes include the new Vietnam - Australia Country Strategy with

HRD becoming a strategic objective rather than a cross-cutting theme, AusAID Canberra-led consolidation process, greater focus on monitoring and communicating impacts of scholarships;

- Based on assessment findings and analysis, provide recommendations to modify, as appropriate, the focus, approaches and management arrangements for the second phase, for example:

  o Recommend whether or not to provide intensive organisational support to few (or part of) agencies, including proposing a support framework and agencies at central and regional levels for AusAID's consideration;

  o Suggest whether or not to maintain the parallel managing contractor structure for program administration and ELT;

  o Suggest whether or not to continue, and the cost-effectiveness in doing so, the contractual arrangement with the current Managing Contractor.

The team will:

- Liaise with AusAID Hanoi, through the Team Leader, to finalise the work program, meeting schedule and logistical arrangements (if any);

- Undertake initial planning, division of tasks, and review of relevant documents, some of which are listed in section VIII below, prior to the in-country mission;

- Attend a briefing session in Hanoi with AusAID Hanoi;

- Attend meetings with key GoV agencies involved in overseeing (i.e. MOET, MPI) and implementing (i.e. PPIs) the ASDiV Program;

- Hold discussions, either via face-to-face meetings or emails as appropriate, with AusAID Canberra, Whole-of-Government partners, other international scholarship providers, selected alumni, Australian education providers and 2010 scholarship awardees;

- Present findings in the form of an Aide-Memoire to AusAID Hanoi, GoV representatives, and Whole of Government partners;

- Provide a draft report to AusAID within 10 working days of completion of the in-country mission;

- Submit a final report taking into account comments on the draft report from AusAID and other stakeholders within five working days upon receipt of AusAID's comments.

VI.   Skills Required and Team Composition

Individual consultants in MTR are required to have:

- Strong knowledge and experience in HRD, institutional development and organisational capacity development, especially in a developing country context
- Sound knowledge of the delivery and operation of donor-funded scholarship programs
- Knowledge of AusAID's systems and policies as an advantage
- Excellent analytical, evaluation and writing skills

Team Composition

1. ***Team Leader – International HRD specialist:*** The Team Leader will be responsible for providing strategic guidance and direction to the MTR team. S/he will take the lead in providing HRD/organisational analysis

and addressing any gap of the current ASDiV program by modifying, as appropriate, the second phase design (2012-2016). S/he is responsible for quality control of the final report, in coordination with inputs from the other member, to fulfil the scope of work set out in these TORs. S/he will take the lead in presenting the MTR Aide-Memoire to GoV, AusAID Hanoi and related stakeholders.

2. ***Local M&E specialist:*** S/he will be responsible for providing M&E inputs, insight knowledge on Vietnam public institutions, systems and local context, and interpretation/translation services as required by the Team Leader. S/he will support the Team Leader in drafting and finalisation of the report.

VII.   Duration and Phasing

Individual MTR team member is anticipated to spend:

- 2 days travel time to and from Hanoi (for non-Vietnam resident)
- Up to 4 days desk review of the background materials prior to the in-country mission
- Up to 5 days in Hanoi
- 4 days report drafting and finalisation (plus 2 day for Team Leader)

VIII.   Outputs

- Detailed work plan agreed with AusAID before the mission starts
- An Aid Memoire, summarising initial findings and recommendations, to be presented to GoV, AusAID and related stakeholders by the end of the in-country mission
- A draft report provided to AusAID Hanoi in electronic version within 10 working days of completion of the mission
- A final report provided to AusAID Hanoi in both electronic version and hardcopy within five working days upon receipt of AusAID comments on the draft report

IX.   Recommended reading materials

- ASDiV Program Design Document (2009-2016)
- Scope of Services for existing Managing Contractors (Coffey Ltd, ACET)
- ASDiV 2009 and 2010 Annual Plans, Reports and other subject reports (e.g promotion, selection, PPIs, alumni, M&E, etc) by Coffey Ltd
- English Language Training Review Report (June 2008)
- Annual English Training Plans (2007-2010) by ACET
- Vietnam-Australia Development Cooperation Strategy 2011-2015
- AusAID Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance
- Draft Vietnam Socio-Economic Development Plan 2011-2015
- The 2010 Vietnam Competitiveness Report, Prof. M.Porter, Havard Business School, November 2010
- Philippines and Indonesia Scholarship Program Design Documents

Annex 2: Methodology

This evaluation had three phases with the amount of consultancy time (15 days for the team leader and 13 days for the in-country consultant) distributed fairly evenly across the three phases of preparation, in-country visit and reporting following the visit.

1. Before the in-country visit: preparation for the visit to Vietnam including review of documents, the preparation of the evaluation plan and some evaluation questionnaires for use during interviews, some preliminary interviews and visits to the Managing Contractor by the in-country consultant and with AusAID personnel setting up the interviews with a wide range of stakeholders.

2. In-country visit of five days during which a little less than 4 days were used to conduct interviews, and a little more than one day to prepare, present and discuss the aide memoire.

3. After the in-country visit, continuing with some follow-up interviews in Vietnam with provincial universities and alumni and in Australia with university liaison staff for the Vietnam scholarships program and with AusAID corporate scholarships staff and preparing the final report taking into account feedback received in relation to the Aide Memoire.

The evaluation was based on a combination of review of documentation, interviews and evaluator knowledge of/experience with other AusAID scholarship programs and capacity development programs more generally.

Document review focused on

- ASDiV Program documentation – design documents, contracts, plans, annual reports and M&E reports
- ELT program documentation – scope of service, plan, report
- Country documentation – Vietnam socio-economic and other contextual information
- ADS and related program documents from other countries in the region (Philippines and Indonesia)
- AusAID corporate documents on scholarships and M&E for scholarships, Australia Awards

Interviews were individual and group; face to face and telephone with stakeholders. A list of organisations from which interviewees came is at the end of this annex. Interviewees brought the following types of perspectives:

Clients and target groups

- GoV agencies with high concentration of ADS (MoFA, MPI, MoF, SBV, MONRE). Two other agencies with large numbers of scholars (MARD and MOIT) were also invited.
- Other GoV central agencies some of which had been engaged with the scholarship program for several years and some of which had just become involved
- 2010 Applicants (17 either by telephone or face to face, including 2 unsuccessful applicants)
- Alumni
- Provincial universities re University lecturer and researcher profile and rural issues

Oversight/Strategic Direction, Management and Implementation

- AusAID management and staff
- Key Government agencies overseeing and implementing the program (MOET & MPI) and VIED within MOET as the administrator of the very large scholarships program that co-ordinates scholarships given by many donor countries.

- Australian Whole of Government Agencies in Vietnam
- ASDiV Managing contractor (Coffey)
- ELT contractor (ACET)

External sources

- Re other alumni programs: Scholarship programs of the UK, USA, Germany
- VGAC

The types of issues that were addressed in interviews with each of the various types of stakeholders are at attachment 1.

Strengths and limitations of the methodology

With limited time available, the review could not investigate any of the issues in depth. The team relied heavily on the secondary data provided by the Managing Contractor and considered that the quality of the data was more than acceptable for the purposes of this MTR. The team leader's prior experience with other AusAID scholarships programs and her involvement with scholarships at AusAID corporate level helped to make efficient use of the time available and enabled an informed perspective to be brought to the task. On the other hand experience with other scholarship programs could also have introduced some preconceived ideas that may not be appropriate in the context of Vietnam.

Inevitably the sample of interviewees will affect the responses and while a wide range of stakeholders participated in the evaluation there is always the possibility that some key stakeholders were omitted. It was difficult for example to reach individual alumni and unsuccessful applicants. Only two or each responded to the many attempts to contact a much larger group. Moreover the numbers of awardees that we reached while possibly sufficient for identifying some key issues were not sufficient to draw quantitative conclusions (and were never intended to be given the scope of the evaluation).

Too few alumni were able to be contacted to even identify the most pertinent issues for active and inactive members. However some alumni issues were explored in other ways through interviews with ACET (an alumni organisation for all alumni of Australian Universities) other international alumni organisations, information provided by ASDiV about activities and participation rates, and viewing the alumni data base. Also some of the people that we interviewed in other capacities (e.g. central agencies) were themselves alumni.

There is a danger with a limited number of interviews that excessive reliance will be placed on the views of single individuals. To counter this risk, when this report makes statements about stakeholder opinions, unless otherwise indicated, it does so only if three or more people expressed this view or a similar sentiment.

One potential source of bias arises from language and the possibility that some people may choose not to participate because of language concerns. Translator services were provided to allay these concerns and seem to have been effective. The second group interview was more effective than the first after learning from the experience of the first and adapting the process.

It is likely that there was a bias towards the urban and central government interests since we were unable to visit the rural regions and therefore depended largely on information from the MC reports and some telephone interviews with applicants and with provincial universities.

Attachment 1: Overview of issues discussed during interviews

Issues for discussion with AusAID HRD team and Mark Palu, Counsellor

There are many issues to be discussed and we will probably require at least two meetings. The first meeting will be to provide an overview (but not a lot of detail). In addition to meeting and greeting, obtaining insights and information from AusAID, the purpose of this meeting is to provide some direction to the review concerning topics of greatest interest, given that we have only a short time to conduct the review. The questions below are to indicate topics of interest about which the team may wish to talk.

Strategic context and continuing relevance of the program

1. Given the change in the objectives and foci of the Australia-Vietnam Country Strategy, how well does the current design support the new country strategy?
2. HRD as a Strategy Objective could be used to justify the use of scholarships in a very wide (almost unlimited) range of contexts as long as they relate to development. How do you set priorities so that scholarships and enabling support (before, during and after the scholarships) are not spread too thinly to effect organisational changes that will contribute to development outcomes? (note the expansion to 22 PPIs). What are some alternative ways that are being considered?
1. What do you have in mind when in TORs 2.1 for this MTR you say that additional support currently provided to 15 agencies will be offered to *all* (?) but on a *consolidated* (?) basis and when you suggested asking MOET and MPI: What types of smaller organisations should be considered for additional intensive organisational support by AusAID e.g. part of central agencies, regional universities etc (please refer to section 2.1 of the TORs)
2. Can you comment on whether the current design and role statements and distribution of resources across tasks for scholarships program administration personnel are well suited to deliver organisational support?

Other questions about role of development scholarships

3. What do you see as the relationship between scholarships and other approaches that PPIs might use for organisational development? How does this influence the way in which AusAID makes decisions about scholarships as the most appropriate modality and choice of scholars? (relative focus on individual competency and organisational development, use of scholarships as part of an OD/HRD package). *See also issue 4 for with the Program Administration MC.*
4. In Vietnam, what do you see as the relationship between Development scholarships and other Australia Awards such as Endeavour Awards of DEEWR and what are the practical implications for running the AusAID scholarship program?

Design

5. What has surprised you about the way the new design for the scholarships program has played out in practice compared with what was intended? E.g. Profiles approach, PPI, selection and screening processes; engagement with Alumni? Relationship between program administration and ELT?
6. What are your responses at this stage to the adaptations of the design recommended by the MC? (e.g. collapsing profiles 1 and 2 and 4 and 5; changing

PPI definition and aligning PPIs with Profile 3, expanding the number of PPIs; treating PhDs as a separate category; Interview processes and JSCs; AusAID prioritising HRD needs to align with the country strategy; IELTS requirements, recommendations concerning levels of courses – undergraduate, diploma, masters by course or research, PhD)

<u>Implementation</u>

7. What do you see as working particularly well (practicable, efficient, fair, likely to produce the desired outcomes and unintended negative outcomes) in the ASDiV program? With respect to:
    a. Scholarships program administration (promotion, selection, mobilisation, follow-up while studying; reintegration assistance; alumni: data base, professional and social activities, e-networking, small grants)
    b. ELT
    c. The integration of the Scholarships program administration processes and ELT processes?
    d. Personnel performance; project management; M&E; analysis, learning and adaptation
8. What concerns do you have about the way the program is being implemented and its potential to achieve intended outcomes?
9. How well have the issues that were raised in the 2008 evaluation of ELT been addressed?
10. How would you describe the relationship and quality of communication between AusAID (yourselves) and the MC? And ACET?
11. What would you see as the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining the parallel contractor structure for program administration and ELT? What issues should be explored with the MCs for program administration and ELT?

Issues for discussion with AusAID Sector Teams

1. What do you see as the relationship between the scholarship program and the Australia-Vietnam Country strategy:
    a. In practice
    b. In principle (your understanding of how it is supposed to work according to the Design Document)
    c. Ideally (how you would like it to work)
2. Have you noticed any changes over the last year compared with previous years in the way sector teams have been involved in the scholarship program?

Issues for initial discussion with Managing Contractor for ASDiV

1. Walk through the processes from start to finish, identifying strengths and weaknesses along the way with design. Having the meeting in the Coffey office will afford opportunities to look at the systems in place, as needed.
2. Discuss the recommendations included in the 2nd annual report and the trade-offs involved in adopting them.
3. Discuss the issue of increasing PPIs, spreading support more thinly and the possible impact of doing so with respect to the effectiveness of the program in terms of scholars being able to contribute to organisational outcomes

(organisational improvements and development outcomes) after returning from scholarship.

4. Discuss the issue of what is needed to increase the likelihood of organisational outcomes arising from scholarship experiences and what roles the MC could play (given that changes to the design might be possible). Some examples include increased assistance with organisational assessments and organisational development plans, HRD plans; reintegration plans, facilitating liaison between scholars and their organisations during study; assisting organisations and their scholars with reintegration, use of learning (including career paths, incentives, creating a receptive work environment with colleagues etc) that allow them to do so and maintaining and strengthening relationships. Scholarships as an integral part of wider organisational development strategies using a variety of HR and OD activities; issues around critical mass of people and packages of HRD activities.

5. Explore the nature of the working relationship with ACET, and the strengths and weaknesses of having two contractors (i.e. regardless of who they are).

Issues for discussion with ACET

1. Walk through the processes from start to finish, identifying strengths and weaknesses along the way and possible areas for improvement.

2. Discuss the nature of the improvements that have been made following the evaluation conducted in 2008 (Valerie Haugen)

3. Explore the nature of the working relationship with Program Administration contractor, and the strengths and weaknesses of having two contractors (i.e. regardless of who they are)

Issues for discussion with Australian Whole of Government Partners

1. How does the way in which the AusAID development scholarships program is being administered support the programs that you are running with your Vietnamese counterparts?

2. What has been your involvement if any in setting priorities for scholarships?

3. What role would you like to play in setting priorities? How might this be done?

4. What other aspects of the scholarships program would you like to engage in to support the programs you are running with your Vietnamese counterparts (e.g. mobilisation activities, alumni activities, liaison with scholars and their institutions while in Australia)?

Issues for discussion with AusAID Scholarships Section.

These issues were identified following the visit to Vietnam and reflect issues that arose during the visit.

1. Are there any plans for global online registration and tracking of applications with unique identifiers that would allow tracking of students right through and beyond their scholarships? (following up on Vietnam's interest in online tracking)

2. Where are things up to with respect to any corporate policies on alumni organisations and what implications are there for any decisions that Vietnam may wish to make about its alumni program (e.g. whether to have a broader

alumni organisation that includes both scholarship holders and self funded students? Option of having a chapter within a broader organisation).

3. Given that ASDiV has recently removed the requirement to include career path and action plan information in their application forms and removed the expectation of active involvement of HR departments in identifying suitable applicants how might this approach align with AusAID Scholarships Section's desire to introduce reintegration plans as a means of fostering organisational and country impacts of scholarships?

4. Flexible modes: how are things progressing here at a corporate level? Given the interest expressed by Vietnamese government agencies in short term training opportunities, internships etc, is there any prospect in future of having more flexibility for movement of funds between long term scholarships and other shorter term options, such as short term training either in Australia or in-country e.g. using Australian universities and others.

5. Can you provide any feedback about how you see the Vietnam program as performing over the last year or so following the implementation of the most recent design, perhaps in comparison with approaches used by other programs. Are there aspects that seem to run particularly smoothly from Corporate perspective? not so well?

Issues for discussion with Key Government agencies overseeing and implementing the program (MOET & MPI)

Ministry of Education and Training:
1. What are the Government of Vietnam's main human resource development priorities by 2020?
2. What types of smaller organisations should be considered for additional intensive organisational support by AusAID e.g. part of central agencies, regional universities etc (please refer to section 2.1 of the TORs)
3. What other issues would you like to raise for consideration in the follow-up phase of the ASDiV program?

Ministry of Planning and Investment:
3. What are the Government of Vietnam's main human resource development priorities by 2020?
4. What types of smaller organisations should be considered for additional intensive organisational support by AusAID e.g. part of central agencies, regional universities etc (please refer to section 2.1 of the TORs)

Issues for discussion with Central agencies that participated in the PPI program 2004-2010

1. What did you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the approach taken by the AusAID's Priority Public Institution (PPI) program which was in place between 2004 – 2010?
2. What feedback can you provide us of your experiences so far with the current alternative arrangement for the Central Government Agency Profile in the 2011 Round?
3. What are your Agency's key needs that should be considered for additional intensive organisational support? What types of support would be needed?
4. Do you have any suggestions to improve ADS/ALAS promotion, selection and alumni reintegration at your Agency?

 (2 groups: first one with high numbers of scholars and second with lower number of scholars)

Issues for discussion with Central agencies that are new to the program

1. What feedback can you provide us of your experiences so far with the current arrangement for the Central Government Agency Profile in the 2011 Round?
2. What are your Agency's key needs that should be considered for additional intensive organisational support? What types of support would be needed?
3. Do you have any suggestions to improve ADS/ALAS promotion, selection and alumni reintegration at your Agency?

Issues for discussion with Regional Universities

1. Can you comment on the approaches that have been used by the AusAID scholarships program to promote the scholarships with your university?
2. If your university has submitted applications for scholarships can you comment on your experience with the process of submitting applications and the selection processes that followed?
3. How could scholarships be used to best effect in terms of contributing to the work of your university?
4. AusAID through the company that manages the scholarships program runs activities (seminars, social activities etc) for alumni of Australian Universities, including those who have received scholarships? Have you heard about the activities?
5. Have you, or to your knowledge others at your university, participated in any of these activities?
6. What types of activities for alumni of Australian Universities would be of interest to you? (e.g. seminars, conferences, social activities, internet networking)
7. What types of topics would be of interest? E.g. general interest topics such as macro-economic outlook for Vietnam; more specialised sectoral topics
8. Small grants are available for such purposes as organising alumni activities, presentations at conferences, research activities . How might your university use these to promote the work of your alumni from Australian Universities?

Issues for discussion with scholarship programs of other countries (UK, USA, Germany)

1. What feedback can you give us about what you have seen of the ADS program with respect to its processes for :
   - Promotion
   - Selection
   - Targeted support
   - Alumni activities
2. Have you any suggestions for the ADS program arising from your experience with your own and other scholarship programs?
3. What types of programs do you have for alumni and what are their strengths and weaknesses? Discuss how contact is maintained, interest generated.

Issues for discussion with 2010 applicants (both successful and unsuccessful)

1) which aspects of the promotion and selection process worked well for you?

2) which aspects did not work so well?

Prompts relating to the various stages of selection, advice about outcomes and mobilisation assistance:

- Processes for finding out about the scholarships and how to apply for them;
- Clarity about eligibility
- The application process - completing the forms, getting endorsement from their organisation, assistance to prepare an application, locate it within the HRD objectives of their organisation, within the profiles,
- The various stages of screening and how they were informed about decisions that had been made about their application
- Assistance to identify relevant courses (for shortlisted applicants)
- The interview process (for shortlisted applicants)
- The final advice
- As appropriate, the information and support to get them ready to go to Australia (mobilisation)

Issues for discussion with alumni (from past program)

Contact with the MC for re-integration support since returning to Vietnam: types of support received (including small grants etc) and how useful they were.

Alumni organisation activities: what they are aware of, have participated in and would like to participate in.

Interview questions for use with Australian Universities that take scholars from Vietnam

1. How well are Vietnamese scholarship holders supported (prior to and following arrival) in the practical aspects of moving to Australia, settling in?

2. How well are they prepared for their studies in Australia? e.g. choice of appropriate courses, ELT, cultural expectations

3. How well are they supported by the managing contractor in Vietnam during their studies?

4. What do you see as the respective roles of people like yourself in the university and those of the managing contractor in Vietnam?

5. How would you describe the relationship between yourself (representing the university) and the Scholarships Manager in Vietnam?

6. Any suggestions for improvement in the support given to Vietnamese students?

7. Any suggestions for improvement in the relationship between yourself and the managing contractor especially those that would make life better for the Vietnamese students while they are in Australia?

8. Any other issues you would like to raise.

List of people consulted FOR THE MTR April – May 2011

No.	Organization
	Managing contractors delivering the program:
1.	ASDiV
2.	ACET
	Central government organizations in Vietnam:
3.	Ministry of Finance
4.	Ministry of Planning and Investment
5.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
6.	State Bank
7.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
8.	Ministry of Education and Training
9.	Party Central Organization Committee
10.	Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs
11.	Ministry of Public Security
12.	Ministry of Construction
13.	Ministry of Transport
14.	Vietnam News Agency
15.	Voice of Vietnam
16.	Vietnam Television
17.	State Audit
	Vietnam Universities:
18.	Binh Dinh College
19.	College of Education, Hue University
20.	Faculty of Economics, Hanoi National University
21.	An Giang University
22.	Tay Nguyen University
23.	Tay Bac University
	Other scholarship programs in Vietnam:
24.	Fullbright (USA)
25.	Chevening (UK)
26.	GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit)
27.	**VGAC (Vietnamese Graduates from Australia Club)**
	AusAID and Australian Whole of Government Partners and AusAID:
28.	AusAID sectoral and other staff in Hanoi
29.	AusAID Scholarships Section Canberra

30.	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)
31.	Austrade
32.	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
	Australian Universities receiving Vietnamese students :
33.	Australian National University
34.	James Cook University
35.	University of Melbourne
36.	University of Queensland
37.	Victoria University

Annex 3: Relationship between evaluation questions for this MTR, recommended evaluation questions for scholarships and AusAID standard evaluation criteria

Evaluation questions for this MTR derived from Terms of Reference	Recommended evaluation questions for scholarships	Standard AusAID evaluation criteria for an MTR
Q1How well is the program progressing in relation to its goal and objectives Q4 How effective and efficient has program implementation been	1. Is the program on track to achieve selected output targets in regard to each relevant objective?	Effectiveness
Q4. How effective and efficient has program implementation been	2. Are awardees satisfied with selected aspects of their award-related and personal experiences, both in-country and in-Australia?	Efficiency and Effectiveness
Not addressed in the MTR	3. Are Higher Education Institutions/Australian Host Organisations meeting their Key Performance Measures?	Efficiency
Not addressed in the MTR. Reintegration plans not yet introduced in Vietnam and no graduates have returned	4. Are key milestones of employee reintegration plans (or workforce integration plans) being met in regard to each relevant objective?	Effectiveness

Q1How well is the program progressing in relation to its goal and objectives Q2 Effectiveness and efficiency of targeting profiles Q3 Effectiveness and efficiency of PPI All address the likelihood of this occurring given the way in which the program is currently being implemented, Report recommends how to strengthen the contribution of alumni to their organisations and home countries. Q5 Do the ASDiV design and implementation arrangements continue to be relevant in the face of changing external aid environment, corporate requirements and the current Australia Vietnam DCS? Addresses the current difficulties of identifying relevance	5. Are alumni contributing to the development of their home country or developing countries of their region in regard to each relevant objective?	Relevance, Impact, Sustainability
Q4 How effective and efficient has program implementation been Discusses the alumni strategy and extent to which alumni are staying in contact.	6. Are alumni maintaining linkages with Australia and networking with other awardees?	Effectiveness
Q1How well is the program progressing in relation to its goal and objectives Q2 Effectiveness and efficiency of targeting profiles Q3 Effectiveness and efficiency of PPI All address the likelihood of this occurring given the way in which the program is currently being implemented. Report recommends how to strengthen the contribution of alumni to their organisations and home countries	7. Have alumni strengthened capacity of their organisations to contribute to the development of their home country or developing countries of their region in regard to each relevant objective?	Relevance, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability
Q1 Q1How well is the program progressing in relation to its goal and objectives One of the three objectives relates to gender and is discussed in the report	8. Have awards promoted gender equity or other relevant cross cutting issues?	Gender equality

Annex 4: Illustrative reworded objective 1 if priorities for HRD were partly aligned with the pillars

Vietnam has additional higher learning and leadership capability at central, regional and local levels from Australian scholarships and learning placements that is being used by graduates and their organisations to contribute to priority development areas

> 1.1. *Improving the quality of Vietnam's human resources in HRD and HRM leadership, other institutional strengthening, and for tertiary education* (possible addition: and for institutional strengthening to become a market driven economy)

> 1.2. *Developing better transport infrastructure and policy to support economic integration*

> 1.3. *Increasing rural access to clean water and hygienic sanitation*

> 1.4. *Advancing climate change adaptation and mitigation (focusing on Mekong Delta)*

> 1.5. *Developing more sustainable and resilient systems in agriculture, forestry and fisheries.*

2. For further guidance for program implementation including the identification of relevant fields of study, more clearly articulate priorities within objectives 2 to 5 relating to Infrastructure for Development and Environmental Sustainability in the Country Strategy by reference to the detailed AusAID sectoral work plans, in discussion with counterpart organisations as needed and by reference to emerging issues under objectives 2 to 5. Likely fields for inclusion for objectives 2 to 5 are Engineering (including that relating to Water and Sanitation and Transport), Economic policy, Technology, Environment, Climate Change, Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries.

3. Set priorities within the HRD objective to a similar level of detail as for objectives 2 to 5 in the Country strategy. In so doing ensure that some reference is made to enhancing capacity of universities (to align with profile 3) and enhancing HRD and HRM capability in the interests of sustainable development in organisations for future use of scholarships. Likely fields for inclusion are those relating to management and in particular HRM/HRD; Educational management and pedagogy Some consideration might also be given to institutional strengthening for movement towards an industrialised market driven economy, a priority of the Vietnamese Government. Some key elements within this would need to be identified. These items are reflected in the suggested rewording of objective 1a) above so that it gives more guidance for setting priorities within HRD.

4. When refining priorities give some preference to applications coming from agencies that are the counterpart agencies (government and non-government, universities etc) with which AusAID is most actively engaged around objectives 2 to 5 in the Country strategy. These agencies could be at central or local government levels but could also be universities, NGOs or private sector. This preference could be by means of weighted criteria and/or by more proactively seeking applications from them in association with other AusAID sectoral initiatives (perhaps providing assistance to prepare them), and/or by including them in the small group of priority organisations.

A suggested (but notional) distribution of scholarships is:

i. 50% of scholarships to be directly related to objectives 2 to 5 under pillars 2 and 3 (Infrastructure development and Environmental Sustainability), possibly with some further indicative distribution between these two pillars. Using the current number of 225 this would be approximately 112 scholarships.

ii. About 60 of these would be committed to a small number of PIs distributed across the 3 profiles (see recommendations in relation to evaluation question 3), and the remaining 52 would be open.

iii. Of the remaining 50% of scholarships, approximately 30% would go to TESOL and university lecturers and researchers (with some preference for those working in Country Strategy priority areas, some to go towards improving pedagogy and educational management, again with some preference to fields relating to Country Strategy Objectives 2 to 5). Elsewhere the possibility of an increase in the number of PhDs has been suggested. If accepted there would need to be some adjustment to the distribution of scholarships across these 4 categories.

iv. The remaining 20% would go to the HRD objective with particular encouragement (proactive marketing and personal contacts) given to organisations to submit applications that relate to development of HRD and HRM capability and possibly institutional strengthening for movement towards an industrialised market driven economy. However this 20% would also be open to other policy areas such as health included in the AusAID corporate list.

A matrix portraying this distribution appears after the recommendations. In summary:

- Approximately 35% of scholarships would go to CS objective 1 (revised to become more specific for the purpose of this program). Within these, about 25% would go to PIs most of which will relate to CS Objectives 2 to 5.

- 65% of scholarships would go to Objectives 2 to 5.

- Through CS Objective 1, about 20% of all scholarships would be open to other policy areas that are not the focus of the current CS e.g. Health.

- Approximately 40% of scholarships would go to PIs, 40% to non-PIs but related to country strategy objectives 2 to 5 and 20% would be open to other areas that are not the focus of the Country Strategy, primarily through Country strategy objective 1.

Indicative matrix of distribution of scholarships

	Program objective 1 *Vietnam has additional higher learning and leadership capability at central, regional and local levels (as appropriate) from Australian scholarships and learning placements that is being used by graduates to make personal contributions to priority development areas* Profiles 1(30%) & 2(40%) 6 to 9 PIs	**Program objective 2** *Vietnam has additional PhD qualified university teachers and researchers using new qualifications to improve quality of teaching and research programs in Vietnam universities that in turn train students and researchers in fields and disciplines that support development work in the priority development areas; and has additional post-graduates with qualifications in TESOL who use the skills to improve quality in TESOL teacher-training to support the national program to expand skills in English language.* Profile 3 (30%) 2 to 3 PIs
Country strategy objective 1 (a more detailed version) *HRD for competency in HRD and HRM leadership, for other institutional strengthening, for tertiary education (technical, pedagogy and educational management),* Mainly open	20% of 225 scholarships open to all agencies for developing HRD, HRM and other institutional strengthening Approx 45 scholarships • 25 for HRD and HRM • 20 for other institutional strengthening up to 10 to go to PIs	15% of 225 scholarships for tertiary education technical skills – mainly PhDs, for pedagogy and for educational management, and TESOL Approx 34 scholarships • Up to 10 to go to PIs • Remainder open
Country strategy objectives 2 to 5 *Developing better transport infrastructure and policy to support economic integration* *Increasing rural access to clean water and hygienic sanitation* *Advancing climate change adaptation and mitigation (focusing on Mekong Delta)* *Developing more sustainable and resilient systems in agriculture, forestry and fisheries.*	50% of 225 scholarships Approx 112 scholarships • 60 to PIs • 52 to non PIs	15% of 225 scholarships for tertiary education in fields related to objectives 2 to 5 and/or pedagogy for those fields i.e. to support development work in the priority development areas Approx 34 scholarships • Up to 10 to go to PIs • 24 to non PIs

Program objective 3 relates to gender equity and is cross cutting

Annex 5: considerations for engagement with organisations - Philippines Human Resource and Organisational Development Facility. Excerpt from Annex D in 2009 Design Document

Aside from the considerations noted above, the following points may help to guide decisions on identification of specific KPOs (Key priority organisations) as well as helping to determine the extent or nature of engagement:

- o Commitment, existence of champions/ leadership (including potential leadership); evidence of progress for those who are already engaged with PAHRODF and AusAID programs; willingness to commit to a program of interventions, if needed, rather than simply discrete training events;

- o Willingness to apply learning (e.g. through REAPs and other mechanisms), including willingness to commit time and resources to mentoring, supervision etc (as a condition of engagement);

- o Willingness to participate in M&E for their initiatives and PAHRODF as a whole;

- o Availability of resources; willingness to mobilise and commit resources to reforms;

- o Values, norms, organisational ethos (e.g. on HR issues and other organisational practices); commitment to Integrity Development Action Plan (anti-corruption);

- o Incentives and motivations influencing organisational behaviour;

- o Organisational structures, networks, partnership to work through;

- o Organisational history and relationships;

- o Organisational understanding of what's needed for change; and

- o External factors that may affect the utilisation of new competencies or organisational capacities – e.g. transparency & accountability, political influence

- o Some of these considerations may also be targeted in the interventions if there is some evidence of opportunity to do so.

Annex 6: What's changed between last round and current round (Applications in 2011) of the cycle from promotion to reintegration?

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
Targeting				
Five Profiles Profile 1: Local Government officials Profile 2: Rural Development Workers Profile 3: Central Government Officials Profile 4: University Lecturers and Researchers Profile 5: Tertiary English Language Teachers PPI program formed the bulk of Profile 3	The previous 5 Profiles have been consolidated into 3, but incorporate the same target groups: Profile 1: Local Government Officials and Development Workers (combining Profiles 1 & 2) Profile 2 - Central Government Officials (formerly Profile 3 and the PPI program) Profile 3 - Tertiary Lecturers (including TESOL lecturers) and Researchers (combining Profiles 4 & 5)	Fewer Profiles makes the following processes more simple: Marketing Fewer enquiries from applicants over what Profile they belong to Sorting applicants into Profiles when screening Reporting results	Streamlining of targeting means that applicants are clearer about which Profile they belong to	

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
15 Central Government Agencies (CGAs) belonged to the PPI program	Increase of CGAs from 15 to 30 and absorption of CAG group (formerly PPIs) into new Profile 2	All CGAs are now treated the same in screening. In the former PPI program some CGAs were not included as PPIs but still came under the then Profile 3 Easier sorting into Profiles for screening Fewer enquiries for ASDiV to answer on what Profiles or PPI applicants below to	Applicants and organizations are no longer confused about PPI and Non-PPI CGAs	The doubling of the number of CGAs will probably mean small numbers of awardees for most participating CGAs (particularly the former PPIs). The smaller numbers will reduce the critical mass of future alumni which is a necessary pre-condition for organizational change *MTR comment: Also HRD support will be spread much more thinly and will also reduce likelihood of change. More than critical mass is needed*
Applicants from research agencies belonging to PPIs were included as PPI applicants	Applicants from research institutions belonging to CGAs now apply under new Profile 3 for tertiary level lecturers and researchers as they are no longer categorized as belonging to a CGA	This makes sorting applicants from research institutions into Profiles and screening them easier	CGAs do not have to advertise the scholarships among their subsidiary institutes. The CGA's HRD plans need relate only to staff managed centrally	More opportunity for researchers from CGA-related research institutions to submit applications and hopefully the institutions will receive more scholarships
Promotion				

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
Two separate campaigns for ALAS and ADS	There is one promotion campaign for the ADS/ALAS	Time and resources are saved	Less confusion by applicants, organizations and the general public about the two scholarships *MTR comment: Still some confusion with people thinking that ALAS will take the place of other ADS*	
Two different posters printed Two mail-outs Advertising twice on commercial websites and in print media	One poster and one pamphlet One mail-out One set of advertising	Promotion messages are easier to portray as they are more coherent and consistent		
Application process				
Separate application forms for ADS and ALAS	Common application form for ADS and ALAS (an additional section for ALAS)	One application form simplifies the application process	Both ADS and ALAS applicants need only pay attention to and use a single application form	

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
Application forms for ADS only in hard copy Applications for ALAS on-line only	Applications online except that Profile 1 can submit either online or hard copy All Profiles must submit one hard copy of application form and documents to ASDiV	ASDiV will have to enter information on Profile 1 eligible applicants, who submit only hard copies, onto OASIS. This will require additional staffing resources ASDiV will still have to handle paper applications from all applicants as they will be used for photocopying for assessors and for checking authenticity of copies of supporting documents	On-line applications are causing some technical difficulty for those who have not used on-line processes before or who are less competent in computer usage	
Application forms for ADS in English and Vietnamese For ALAS in English only	Applications in English only	ASDiV no longer has to handle two sets of application forms so should save time in assessing. One language version will result in more consistency and accuracy of information when applications being screening	Many applicants with good English will now only write one application in English Many applicants (especially from Profile 1) with lower levels of English will write much of their application in Vietnamese as before and have someone translate into English for them, but overall they should spend less time on writing the application	

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
Applicants only have to nominate field of study on application	Applicants have to nominate course title and CRICOS code on application	Relevance of nominated course to applicant's work duties/academic background and CGA's HRD Training needs can be more easily checked during screening Once shortlisted there is a risk that some candidates will seek to change courses and universities for various reasons, which would increase the workload for ASDiV and universities.	Some applicants are having difficulty in finding and using CRICOS	
For ADS IELTS assessments done after initial screening For ALAS IELTS 6.5 required at application	Profiles 2 and 3 to provide IELTS assessments with application For Profile 1 IELTS assessment done after initial screening ALAS applicants still require IELTS 6.5	IELTS tests will not have to be arranged for Profiles 2 and 3 short-listed candidates so a reduction in ASDiV workload. It is more cost effective for AusAID	A significant barrier to submit applications for many Profile 2 and 3 applicants who do not have a valid IELTS for submission in time by 31 May Some applicants may be unwilling to pay the IELTS testing fee if they are not confident of the IELTS results	Lecturers in provincial/regional universities/colleges (specifically targeted in promotions and given some priority in assessment) will generally have greater difficulty in meeting IELTS requirements and thus ultimately numbers of these applications could be reduced thus smaller critical mass in these universities/colleges

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
ALAS had to submit a letter of offer with application	No requirement for ALAS to submit letter of offer with application	Applicants with letters of offer can be processed faster	Easier for ALAS applicants to apply with no Letter of Offer requirement	
Only PPI applicants had minimum GPA requirement (7.0)	Minimum GPA requirements for all applicants: Profile 1 (6.5); Disadvantaged Profile 1 (6.0); Profiles 2 and 3 (7.0)	Consistency in GPA requirement s within Profiles helps achieve faster screening as less time on consideration of GPA is required	Very few applicants will not be able to meet these relatively low minimum GPAs	
PPI applicants were nominated by the PPI employing agencies and had to submit a Career Path Plan with application	CGA applicants now apply directly on-line themselves but need Letter of Agency Endorsement to be eligible No Career Path Plan required	There is no need for HRD Advisers to hold workshop of Career Path Plans for CGA coordinators. Less work for ASDiV in assessing Profile 2 (CGA) applications as Career Path Plans are no longer submitted with application, but shorter Letter of Agency Endorsement will still need to be reviewed	No need to establish an a CGA panel to screen all applications for nomination to ASDiV No need for CGA coordinators to hold internal workshop for potential applicants on Career Path Plans Career Path Plans no longer need to be officially endorsed but Letter of Agency Endorsement still required for each application	*MTR comment: Increased probability that Scholarship experiences will not be part of a coherent HRD and OD plan*

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
Two years work experience required for all applicants except disadvantaged and university lecturers	Two years work experience required for all applicants including university lecturers but still excluding disadvantaged applicants	Fewer Profile 3 applicants from young lecturers will be received and thus require less screening	Many young lecturers not having 2 years work will not be eligible to submit applications	
PhD applications were eligible from all Profiles if they were lecturers, researchers or working in policy planning positions	Eligible PhD applications are restricted to lecturers and researchers in Profile 3	As PhD applications are restricted to one Profile comparative assessments will be easier	Some applicants wishing to apply for PhD studies from Profiles 1 and 2 will no longer be eligible to apply	
Lecturers under Profiles 4 and 5 could only apply for Masters by Research and not Masters by Coursework	Lecturers under new Profile 3 can now apply for both types of Masters degrees	There will no longer be a need for the Academic Adviser to advise lecturers who applied for Masters by Research to change to Masters by Coursework	There could be additional applications from lecturers who generally prefer to study Masters by Coursework	The option to apply for Masters by Coursework could encourage more applications from targeted provincial/regional lecturers
PhD applicants were required to submit at least one article in a scientific publication to be eligible	There is no requirement for submission of scientific article by PhD applicants but they are encouraged to do so. Short-listed applicants should bring copies of articles listed in the application form to the interview for verification	Less time will be needed for ASDiV assessment of a PhD application as no need to check whether article meets scientific requirement	There could be more PhD applications as scientific article requirement dropped	This could result in more applications from targeted provincial/regional lecturers who are less likely to have scientific articles published

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
Disadvantaged applicants had the option of applying for an undergraduate degree	The undergraduate degree option has been removed	There will not be any undergraduate applications for ASDiV to screen or report on thus saving time and effort in screening and reporting	Disadvantaged applicants will no longer be able to apply for an undergraduate degree	*MTR comment: Opportunities to train young researchers e.g. for ACIAR activities in rural areas will be reduced*
Screening, interviews and selection				
There was two stage initial screening process involving screening for eligibility and then assessment of all eligible applications for JSC 1	Because of time constraints to enable placement requests for Fast Track awardees to be sent to universities by 25 August (AusAID deadline) the screening process has been divided into two streams: i) Profiles 2 and 3 and Profile 1 ALAS applicants, and ii) Profile 1 applicants. There is only one month between close of applications and JSC 1 to shortlist Profiles 2 and 3 candidates so that the eligibility and assessment processes will be combined	ASDiV staff will be under considerable pressure to assess Profile 2 and 3 applicants within such a short period of time. Depending on the number of applicants less time may be spent assessing and cross-checking the assessment of each application	???	

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
All supporting documentation was checked during initial eligibility and assessment process	There will be less supporting documentation required at application.	Less checking of documentation will be required at initial assessment. Some documentation such as employment contract and proof of being disadvantaged will be checked at interview for short-listed candidates	Applicants have less supporting documentation to submit with application. Short-listed candidates will need to bring some supporting documentation to the interviews	
Interviews were held only for PhD, Masters by Research short-listed candidates and all Profiles 1 and 2 short-listed candidates All PhD candidates were interviewed before JSC2 so they could be all considered at the same time and not divided for interviewing for and consideration by JSC 2 and JSC3 as in DD	Interviews will be held for all short-listed candidates All PhD candidates will be interviewed by the same panel	As there is only one month between JSC1 and JSC2, there will be a need for 4 interview panels to work in parallel over a 2-week period to interview Profiles 2 and 3 short-listed candidates Two panels will be used to interview Profile 1 short-listed candidates. There is more time between JSC2 and JSC 3 when conditional awards for Profile 1 will be made	Short-listed candidates might feel that the selection process is fairer with all candidates now being interviewed	

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
All shortlisted candidates had individual consultations with Academic Advisers. Some candidates became confused between the academic consultations and the interviews	There will no longer be separate individual consultations undertaken by the Academic Advisers with each short-listed candidate, as applicants must nominate their course of study at application.	Academic Advisers will be available for consultation before applications close and in subsequent selection stages as required by applicants and will take part in the assessment and interview processes.	As applicants have to nominate course titles and CRICOS on application there will be considerably less opportunity for applicant consultations with Academic Advisers Applicants will no longer be confused between interviews and academic consultations	
There were three JSCs so that consideration of many short-listed candidates was divided between JSC2 and JSC3 and many candidates were deferred from JSC2 to JSC3 for final decision	Each selection stream will have only two JSCs – one for initial screening and the second for decision –making on awards	The selection processing will be streamlined and there will no need to defer consideration of candidates between JSCs	Candidates from Profiles 2 and 3 will know the final decision on awards earlier than last year	
University Information Sessions were held in June (in conjunction with Laos and Cambodia) and were thus only accessible for conditional awardees doing pre-departure English training	University Information Days were brought forward to mid-April for Vietnam only.	None	Bringing forward the Information Days allowed any potential applicant for the 2011 round to seek advice on courses from universities as well those conditional awardees from 2010 round doing pre-departure English	

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
Language preparation				
Up to 7 months pre-departure EL training was available for conditional awardees Special EL program up to a year was available for Disadvantaged short-listed candidates Up to 15 weeks additional EL training available in Australia to allow awardees to meet EL requirements of the course where accepted by a university	Up to 7 months pre-departure EL training is available for conditional awardees Special EL program up to a year is available for Disadvantaged short-listed candidates AusAID has yet to confirm its policy on EL training for the 2011 round	There could be an increase in IELTS Placement Tests from 2 to 3 tests depending on AusAID's policy towards the Fast Track IELTS 6.0 group	Increased pressure from some conditional awardees undertaking pre-departure English to meet higher IELTS scores required by university courses. Many students can only achieve 6.0 IELTS within the 7 months pre-departure training period but many courses require IELTS 6.5.	
Placement				

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
Two placement rounds: 2010 round Fast-track group placed in March 2011 for semester 2 start ELT group placed in August 2011 for semester 1, 2012 start	Three placement rounds: 2011 round Group 1 (Fast-track) will be placed in August 2011 Group 2 (IELTS 6.0 who do not achieve 6.5 with additional EL training and IELTS >=5.5) will be placed in March 2012 Group 3 (IELTS<5.5) will be placed in October 2012	Shorter period (3 weeks) for placement preparation for Fast Track Group 1	Increased pressure from Fast Track conditional awardees to obtain documentation required by universities because of the short 3-week preparation period	
Mobilisation				
Fast-track group mobilizes in July 2011 for semester 2, 2011 ELT group mobilizes either in January 2012 for semester 1, 2012 or June 2012 for semester 2, 2012	Group 1 (Fast-track) will be mobilized in January 2012 for semester 1, 2012 Group 2 (IELTS 6.0 who do not achieve 6.5 and IELTS >=5.5) will be mobilized in May/June 2012 for semester 2, 2012 Group 3 (IELTS<5.5) will be mobilized in January 2013 for semester 1, 2013	Mobilisation for 2011 round group 1 (Fast Track), and 2010 round ELT group will happen at the same time from September 2011 to January 2012. This overlap will increase the workload significantly for ASDiV, the universities, Vietnam Airlines, and DIAC office.	Group 1 Fast Track awardees and Group 2 will be able to commence studies in Australia 6 months earlier than in previous rounds in Semester 1, 2012 and Semester 2, 2012 respectively	

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
Support during scholarship				
PPI awardees were required to submit to ASDiV and their employer i) a Study Progress Report two weeks after the commencement of the second academic semester, ii) a Return Advice at least one month prior to the end date of the award and iii) a Post-return Report three months after returnees' resumption of work duties at their institutions	This practice will be continued in 2011. PhD awardees will now be required to submit a Study Progress Report every year, two weeks after the commencement of the second semester using a special PhD Progress Report template. More attention will be given this year by HRD Advisers to monitoring the progress of PPI/CGA awardees while studying in Australia	The HRD Advisers will devote more time to monitoring the study progress of PPI/CGA awardees through email, visits and awardees' written reports	PPI/CGA awardees, especially PhD awardees, can be better monitored and supported	
Reintegration				

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
Two Reintegration workshops were conducted by ASDiV HRD Advisers for the PPI returnees who returned to Vietnam after completing their studies in the first and second semesters to discuss their role as a Change Agent to their institution	Reintegration workshops are being conducted for all returnees twice a year (each cohort will attend one workshop). Attendance has been expanded to include <u>all</u> returnees not just PPI returnees	Because of the increase in numbers attending ASDiV staff will have to conduct more follow-up to receive confirmation of returnees attending the workshops	All returnees will be provided with an equal opportunity to attend the Reintegration workshops	*MTR comment: Very limited approach to reintegration that does not assist with difficulties in their operating environment. No follow through to human resource management or organisational development*
Alumni				
Emphasis was initially placed on strengthening active alumni groups (Business, Education, Public Priority Institution, Science and Technology, Agriculture and Rural Development), while attempting to re-activate inactive alumni groups (Health and Law). In second half of 2010 attention was focused on facilitating the cooperation among core teams of groups to work together on regionally based activities	It is proposed to further consolidate the alumni network by establishing a national alumni structure based on 'chapters' in the three main regions of Vietnam with a prestigious alumni as the Head of the organization	Working with a national level leadership and three regional 'chapters' instead of with a number of different alumni groups in each region will facilitate easier communications between ASDiV staff and alumni leadership and should save staff time	A higher profile, national alumni organization could attract more senior alumni to participate in alumni activities	

2010	2011 (underway or planned)	Administrative implications for ASDiV	Implications for applicants and their organisations	Likely effects on capacity of Scholarships to influence organizational changes and development outcomes
Initially professional development events on both technical and generic topics were organized to meet the needs of individual groups and where possible to facilitate inter-group activities, while there was a modest focus on social activities. In second half of 2010 emphasis was changed to organizing professional development events on generic topics only in order to attract participants on a regional basis	Focus is on larger, higher profile professional development and social events so as to attract wider range of alumni. Main event proposed for 2011-2012 is a national conference If active groups such as the Hanoi Business Group wish to hold social functions for their members, these functions will need to be wholly self-funded	With larger and fewer events ASDiV staff time is optimized while disparate efforts are reduced	Larger, higher profile events aim to attract wider alumni participation in the alumni network, especially more senior alumni	

Annex 7: Some issues relating to the Logframe and MEF

The logframe picks up on some but not all aspects of the program logic diagram and the MEF is structured around the evaluation questions. There has been some attempt to relate the logdrame and the MEF each other at the beginning of the 2010 Annual M&E report but the nexus is not complete and so does not overcome the problems. For example there is no reference to outcomes 2 or 4 from the logic diagram when discussing the MEF evaluation questions.

Neither the MEF nor the discussion of results against the logframe (linked to the program logic) include reference to two unnumbered but important intermediate outcomes for students to which the program can contribute (although to a lesser extent than it can contribute to the outputs) and that are a prerequisite for achieving the program objectives and ultimately the program goal. These intermediate outcomes are: awardees supported and monitored to achieve maximum educational success and alumni successfully complete study and return to Vietnam with new skills and knowledge. There is some attention to the second of these in the MEF but the information is somewhat buried and misplaced.

For example "% of public sector alumni who return to their employers on return to Vietnam" (which is a partial indicator of the alumni successfully complete their study and return to Vietnam with new skills) is shown as the indicator to answer the M&E question are alumni applying knowledge and skills in their workplace (a poor indicator at best), linked only to outcome 1 (not outcomes 2 and 3).Collecting this information is important for evaluating and managing the program as a whole even though it may be less important as a measure of contractual accountability for the Managing Contractor.

Neither the program logic, the Logframe or the MEF adequately recognises the links between the various levels of output and outcomes in the program logic e.g. how selection of scholars (taking into consideration organisational factors) might affect extent of application of learning and how that application might contribute to priority outcomes. The M&E framework focuses more on the output levels related to MC accountability. When it does move to looking at outcomes it focuses on what individuals contribute and gives insufficient attention to the other factors (such as organisational factors and soft skills not related to technical competence) that will affect whether individuals can effectively apply what they have learnt.

Neither the program logic nor the ensuing MEF gives adequate attention to how to move the focus from the personal contributions of individuals to impacts at the levels of organisation, sector or region and how to contribute to priority development outcomes. To some extent this reflects the fact that objective 1 refers specifically to individual contributions. However it limits the thinking that needs to be undertaken to position scholarships within an overall HRD delivery strategy and the positioning of the HRD delivery strategy to serve the objectives of the country strategy.

Annex 8: Rates and types of active participation by alumni

ASDiV: Active Alumni Report

25 April 2011

I. Context

This paper attempts to analyze the number of active alumni participating in the Australia Awards alumni network in Vietnam. This figure could be considered as an important performance indicator to measure the effectiveness of the alumni program. Accordingly an alumnus is defined as being active if they participate in one of seven activities (see activities listed in table below). An alumni database function has been created to keep track of those who have participated in any of these activities.

II. Statistics

Statistics extracted from the alumni database indicate that there are **606 active alumni**. This figure excludes **55 new returnees** who attended re-integration workshops conducted by the Local and International HRD advisers. It is important to note that **606 active alumni have been counted once only** regardless of how many times/alumni activities in which they have participated. The table below shows the gross numbers and percentages of alumni participating in the seven activities.

Seq.	Activities	Number of attendees	Percentage
1.	Registered/attended conference, seminars, workshops, and alumni core team meetings	348	40%
2.	Registered for online academic databases	202	23%
3.	Have updated their information since June 2010	111	13%
4.	Registered to be a mentor	63	7%
5.	Taken part in alumni social activities including coffee talks, sport activities, charity activities, and network drinks.	92	11%
6.	Applied for/has been offered small grants	28	3%
7.	Supported ASDiV promotional activities	18	2%
Total		862	100%

Notes: There are duplications in the total number of 862 attendees since one alumnus may participate more than one alumni activity.

III. Analysis

Two issues below should be taken into consideration.

First, it is more appropriate to compare the total number of active alumni (606) to the total number of alumni who are contactable and currently in Vietnam (1995), rather than the total number of 3138 alumni records in the alumni database. The reason for this is that 36% (1143) of alumni records refer to those who were died, have no information, are overseas, have retired, and are untraceable. Please see the table and diagram below for more details.

Second, it is worth noting the high percentage (63%) of alumni who have either participated in professional development seminars/workshops (40%) or have requested and been given access to online academic databases (23%), compared to 11% of alumni who have participated in alumni social activities. This reflects the emphasis given to professional enhancement activities compared to social activities in the alumni program.

Alumni database analysis

Alumni Status	Total
Died	6
No Information	161
Overseas	357
Retired	117
Untraceable	502
In Vietnam	1995
Grand Total	**3138**
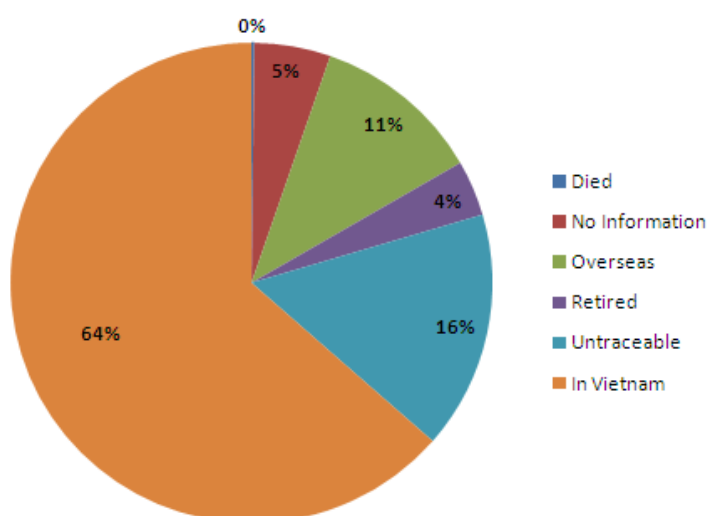
Annex 9: Full set of detailed recommendations from Evaluation Questions 1 to 5.

The four key recommendations are those that are included in the Executive Summary. The detailed recommendations provide guidance about how to execute those four recommendations.

Goal and Objectives

Goal

> Goal: a)[24]Economic growth and poverty reduction in Vietnam is facilitated by b)*access to* new professional & technical capacity & leadership skills contributed by c)*an expanded group of Vietnamese graduates* from Australian tertiary programs & study placements.

1.1 Reformulate the goal to more closely reflect the current country strategy and the new priorities that are to be set for HRD when developing the Delivery Strategy later in 2011. Some alternatives (depending on the approach adopted for setting priorities) include:

Achievement of HRD priorities identified within the Country Strategy objectives is facilitated by access to and use of new professional & technical capacity & leadership skills contributed by an expanded group of Vietnamese graduates from Australian tertiary programs, study placements and through other forms of HRD and HRM assistance. (Priorities will need to be set, especially with respect to the HRD objective)

Or

Achievement of the HRD objective of the Country Strategy is facilitated by access to and use of new professional & technical capacity & leadership skills contributed by an expanded group of Vietnamese graduates from Australian tertiary programs, study placements and through other forms of HRD and HRM assistance in relation to the following priority areas.....(to be defined).

1.2 Use the priorities that are to be set within the Country Strategy as the touchstone for prioritising fields of study, institutions, applications and for justifying decisions to agencies and individuals concerning requests and applications that do not fit as strongly within the Country strategy.

Objective 1

> Objective 1: Vietnam a)[25]has additional higher learning and leadership capability from Australian scholarships and learning placements b)that is being used by graduates to c)make personal contributions to the priority development areas in the country strategy.

1.3 Determine priorities within the HRD objective of the CS when developing the Delivery Strategy later in 2011 and reflect these in a revised program objective 1. Some options for consideration:

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[24] The breakup of the goal into parts a, b and c was done for the purpose of the MTR for clearer analysis.
[25] The breakup of this objective into parts a, b and c was done for the purpose of the MTR for clearer analysis.

- More clearly identify and prioritise Vietnamese stakeholder needs with respect to HRD. Choose a relatively small number of areas that are likely to be of ongoing concern beyond the life of the current CS, for which Australian offers comparative advantage, for which political engagement can be secured, and for which Scholarships and other HRD support are likely to be effective delivery modes taking into consideration such factors as need for critical mass.

- Restore the CS objectives 2 to 5 (relating to Transport infrastructure and Economic Integration, and Environmental sustainability) to the statement of program objective 1 and identify priorities within the CS HRD objective so that it provides more guidance (e.g. the focus of the HRD objective could be on improving the quality of Vietnam's human resources in HRD and HRM leadership, other institutional strengthening, and for tertiary education; or other priorities as identified in option a*)*. Annex 4 includes an example of what a reworded objective 1 might look like, using this approach to setting priorities and some possible implications for implementation.

1.4 This report reinforces the recommendation in Annex 5 of the ASDiV second annual report that AusAID (Corporate and Vietnam) reminds universities of the following
   i) update student's progress and completion on a regular and timely basis to ensure that the information on OASIS is accurate and up to date
   ii) report cases where students have returned to Vietnam without their degree being finalised
   iii) report promptly any information that could prevent students from completing their courses on time
   iv) seek AusAID Post's approval before taking any action that has cost implications.

1.5 Ensure that tracer and other follow-up studies collect information that will be useful for determining whether objective 1 is being met and for separating out any additional effects of the leadership development component of ALAS and ALAFs[26]. The follow-up processes should also enable some judgements to be made about:
   i) whether any contributions that scholars are making do in fact relate to the priority areas of the previous and current country strategies(recognising at this stage that many will have commenced their scholarship under the previous country strategy)
   ii) the extent to which they consider that their scholarship contributed to what they are doing (was it a major factor? A moderately significant factor? A minor factor? Not relevant?)
   iii) what factors (organisational and other) have facilitated or hindered their ability to apply what they have learnt. This information can provide insights that can be relevant to future selection of individuals and organisations and support for organisations

1.6 Develop a stronger theory of change to underpin the program and to accompany the program logic diagram which is necessarily stylised and abbreviated. Ensure that it:
   i) identifies the priority areas in which outcomes are to be achieved
   ii) shows the connection between selection processes and the likelihood of achieving priority outcomes

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[26] It is possible that AusAID Corporate will be conducting its own follow-up of ALAS and ALAF in ways that would allow disaggregation of data for Vietnam. In this case it may not be necessary to conduct additional follow-up with these two types of recipients.

iii) incorporates the organisational and other factors that will affect whether scholars are able to apply what they learn (especially for those scholars working in priority areas agreed between AusAID and the Government of Vietnam)

iv) is accompanied by a theory of action that shows how ASDiV will contribute to the later stages of the theory of change (intermediate and higher level outcomes in the logic model)

1.7 Use a theory of change that focuses on making real differences (not just whether scholars return to their organisations and receive promotions)

i) for selecting applicants whose scholarships are most likely to be able to make a difference to Vietnam, taking into consideration their operating contexts and program priorities and

ii) as a point of reference for providing HRD assistance before and after scholarships.

1.8 Place stronger focus on *managing* the scholarships program to achieve outcomes (application of learning and achievement of outcomes in priority focal areas and institutions) and not just on *measuring* the effects of the program and what individuals have achieved.

1.9 Recognise that the theory of change for scholars in 'open' categories may need to be weaker and expectations of success less ambitious for priority organisations receiving assistance

1.10 Once priorities for HRD have been developed as part of the Delivery Strategy, ensure that these priorities are communicated to scholars and their organisations and that applicants are targeted, selected and supported with a view to contributing to priority development areas and monitoring and evaluating their contributions with respect to priority development areas.

1.11 Categorise applications according to the priority areas in the Country Strategy and those identified for HRD (when these have been specified in more detail) and as needed actively seek applications that relate to those areas (e.g. through AusAID sector staff)

Objective 2

Objective 2: Vietnam a)[27]*has additional* PhD qualified university teachers and researchers b)*using* new qualifications to improve quality of teaching and research programs in Vietnam universities c)*that in turn train* students and researchers in fields and disciplines that d)*support development work in the priority development areas*; and e)*has additional post-graduates* with qualifications in TESOL f)*who use* the skills to improve quality in TESOL teacher-training g)to support the national program to expand skills in English language.

1.12 Maintain objective 2 in its current form.

1.13 Consider increasing the percentage of scholarships that go to PhDs from the current 20% to say 25%, especially where those PhDS have a strong teaching role. This would add about AUD1,650,000 to the cost of the program, given a total of 225 scholarships. However, given a limited budget it may be a lower priority than using the same amount for a range of other flexible modes (such as increasing the capacity of PhD alumni at universities to improve pedagogy and other modes described in relation to Evaluation Question 5).

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[27] The breakup of this objective into parts a to f was done for the purpose of the MTR for clearer analysis.

1.14 Identify where there may be a need to strengthen pedagogy so that alumni with a teaching role can apply the technical skills they have learnt to teach others, as required by objective 2.

1.15 As part of the future delivery strategy for HRD, incorporate short courses in pedagogy to assist those who need them, especially in provincial universities and consider providing other assistance such as funds to develop teaching resources.

1.16 Ensure profile 3 includes some regional universities and consider the option of focusing on a small number (one to three) of regional universities for more active engagement e.g. to strengthen a particular field within a faculty, linked to the Country Strategy or to collaboratively carry out an organisational assessment with relevant sections in them to identify any road blocks for scholars applying their learning.

1.17 Target some key provincial universities including some that have potential outreach roles with respect to priority areas in the Country Strategy.

1.18 Consider the potential to establish long term projects to upgrade the performance of selected provincial universities to the point that they could enter into twinning arrangements with Australian or other universities.

1.19 Apply similar prioritisation criteria to new profile 3 – University teachers. Researchers and Teachers of English (old profiles 4 and 5) as this MTR recommends for application to the other profiles and the program as a whole (see recommendations relating to objective 1). Identify some priority fields for PhDs.

Objective 3

> Objective 3: Women constitute at least 50% of the additional graduates and leaders a)[28] *obtaining* and b) *using* new skills c) to contribute to development in the priority areas

1.20 Reword objective 3 to make it clear that gender equity is important. This does not mean that an exact 50:50 ratio should be sought but it does reinforce that the discrepancy between men and women should not become too great.

1.21 When rewording objective 3, incorporate reference to the need for gender equity across levels of study.

1.22 Breakdown Level of Study data by gender for future reports.

1.23 Work with organisations (one to one or one to a small group of organisations) in priority areas that have female scholars to prepare them to make good use of the knowledge and skills that the scholars have developed.

1.24 Identify where risks are greatest to target this work e.g. where women are in junior positions.

1.25 Assist selected organisations to identify barriers to using women effectively and identify how AusAID assistance might work on those barriers as part of an HRM plan.

Targeting Profiles

2.1 Once the CS HRD priorities (target groups as well as field of study) have been more clearly defined as part of developing the Delivery Strategy, reword the detail in the profiles and as needed their titles to incorporate these priorities

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[28] The breakup of this objective into parts a, b and c was done for the purpose of the MTR for clearer analysis.

New profile 1 would pick up on various government and non-government (including private sector) agencies whose collaboration is needed around regional and rural issues and that may be linked to profile 2 scholarships in related areas (e.g. transport policy at central level and transport implementation at regional levels) or scholarships given under profile 3 to universities working in related areas.

See references to profiles in recommendations relating to objectives – Evaluation Question 1.

2.2 Once profiles have been amended following clarification of HRD priorities, apply the details of the profiles (not just their titles) to attracting and prioritising applications and demonstrate in annual reports what has been achieved in relation to the details.

2.3 Clarify the communication concerning the profiles with a view to reducing the number of applications that do not fit any of the profiles

2.4 Clarify the circumstances under which, from the perspective of achieving development priorities, it would be appropriate for a provincial application to go through the central agency. For example if a particular issue had been identified that required a concerted effort across all levels of government and to which scholarships across all levels of government might contribute, then it may be more appropriate to have a co-ordinated response going through the central agency.

2.5 Retain some flexibility to offer PhD scholarships to government agencies under exceptional circumstances. This would only be done as part of a considered and defensible HRD plan developed with a priority organisation (see discussion of Evaluation Question 3) i.e. these would not be promoted as a separate category.

2.6 As part of setting priorities and rewording profiles, determine whether a pro-poor focus is to provide an additional filter as it has in the past and if so ensure that some reference to pro-poor as a discriminating criterion is preserved in the reworded profiles.

2.7 Within profile 1, consider more active engagement of a variety of sectors around an issue of joint concern.

The PPI approach

3.1 Reintroduce, for the application round that closes mid 2013, priority organisations that will receive intensive HRD assistance at all stages of the scholarship process. This will include assistance with HRD planning, integrated packages of HRD assistance, and support for effective reintegration and building on scholars' learning to effect organisational change and contribute to development outcomes.

3.2 Select about 8-10 priority organisations to work as partners with AusAID in line with CS priorities and taking into consideration other factors such as commitment and potential for productive engagement.

3.3 Pilot processes with 4 or 5 agencies over the next 12 months to firm up the number of organisations that can be supported in the manner proposed and the resources available to do so.

3.4 Reintroduce the expectation that scholarship applications will be linked **proactively** to HRD plans and ASDiV priorities (to be clarified as part of the Delivery Strategy) and encourage organisations to play an active role in soliciting applications from appropriate sections (if not people) in their organisations.

3.5 Provide intensive HRD support to priority organisations with their HRD planning processes and continue to provide less intensive consolidated support to non-priority organisations wishing to have their staff submit applications for scholarships.

3.6 Reintroduce expectations that all applicants will provide indicative action plans and that successful applicants will refine these as they progress through their studies, in consultation with their organisations. The final action plan is the reintegration plan.

3.7 If the ASDiV HRD program expands to include other activities such as short courses (not just for alumni but for others without scholarships) include action plans in those activities as well.

3.8 Reintroduce support specific to particular scholars and for their organisation for the implementation of reintegration plans in priority organisations.

3.9 Scholars and their organisations should monitor and report on the implementation of their reintegration plans for up to 2 years (according to the expected duration of the actions and their outcomes) following their return. This expectation should be built into the conditions of receiving a scholarship.

3.10 The 8-10 priority organisations could come from any of the three profiles and across sectors, not just public sector. They would be referred to simply as PIs (or some alternative term that AusAID may prefer, to avoid confusion with the PPI terminology)

3.11 The MTR recommends that:

- Approximately 40% of the scholarships go to PIs provided they can submit applications that are competitive in other regards with more open categories. Distribution across the priority organisations would be according to demonstrated relative need and likelihood of scholarship effectiveness rather than on the basis of formula.

- Of the remaining 60% of scholarships, the MTR recommends that:

  - 40% go to non-PIs but related to HRD priorities that are yet to be identified as part of the Delivery Strategy,

  - up to 20% be open to other areas that are not the direct focus of the CS objectives provided they serve a development agenda (e.g. relate to one of the MDGs).

    These figures would be AusAID in-house guidelines rather than publicly advertised quotas conveying any sense of entitlement.

3.12 The majority of the HRD advisor resources assigned to ASDiV should go to working more intensely with the 8-10 priority Institutions.

3.13 The residual resources should be used to continue with consolidated seminars/workshops on HRD and on reintegration.

3.14 Expectations concerning what can be achieved through workshops should be realistic and performance indicators chosen that will reflect this realism.

3.15 Consider opportunities to extend the consolidated support seminars to carefully targeted organisations in profiles 1 and 3.

3.16 For the remainder of 2011-2012, undertake the necessary groundwork to make the recommended changes in relation to priority organisations, with a view to introducing those changes for the application round that closes mid 2013. Groundwork will relate to:

- identifying and engaging with priority organisations (or groups of organisations)

- developing, piloting and refining HRD advisory support processes

3.17 Seek formal and genuine commitment to partnership arrangements as part of the process of selecting the 8 to 10 organisations and consider the potential to tie

incentives (such as additional short courses and other assistance) to demonstrated commitment.

3.18 Develop or adapt other tools for gauging appropriate levels of engagement and support for HR and OD capacity development in particular organisations.

3.19 Assess current resourcing (level and skills) within the Managing Contractor to carry out the HRD role envisaged and if needed strengthen that internal capacity (e.g. through professional development, visits to and/or brief internships in other scholarship programs that are applying wider HRD approaches).[29]

3.20 Review the assessment of ASDiV resources and the feasibility of working with 8 to 10 priority organisations following the piloting of proposed HRD support processes during 2011-2012. As alumni activities become more independent (see recommendation 4.42) consider the potential to redirect some of the alumni officer resources to HRD functions (e.g. to conduct consolidated seminars).

Program implementation

Ongoing promotion

These recommendations are in addition to (and/or reinforcing) the suggestions that the Managing Contractor provided in the 2010 Annual report:

4.1 Continue to use a wide range of promotional activities and mediators such as HRD co-ordinators, Universities and PPCs but focus attention on targeted areas in line with priorities that are to be clarified for the program.

4.2 Continue to use returned scholars actively whenever opportunities arise and not just in briefing sessions. In particular develop vignettes around very successful alumni and use these to promote the program.

4.3 Draw on Australia's comparative advantages to promote the scholarships e.g. Australia is recognised as having competitive advantage in relation to ELT: all heads of foreign languages courses in Vietnam are ADS alumni.

4.4 Good news stories can be extracted from M&E longitudinal studies and other tracking processes to communicate success. However it is critical that M&E efforts seek a balanced picture and not be diverted just to discovering good news stories.

4.5 Engage further with Austrade efforts to promote quality of Australian Education and elevate the reputation of and demand for ADS and ALAS scholarships amongst high quality candidates.

4.6 Establish an online scholarships forum with other scholarships programs through which potential applicants and alumni could exchange information about scholarships programs. This would capitalise on word of mouth and online communication as prominent communication modes but would need to be quality controlled through, at minimum having links to websites of the various scholarship programs so that potential applicants could check the facts.

4.7 Continue to work with local authorities and co-operate with PPC well in advance of applications closing to gain access to local communities and research centres that are outside the universities

4.8 Engage with Australian volunteers especially those working in the regions

4.9 With limited resources and likely diminishing returns relative to amount of effort expended, consider whether it is worth the effort to pursue the most remote

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[29] This recommendation should in no way be read as suggesting that ASDiV lacks the necessary HRD capacity. The MTR was simply not in a position to make that assessment and simply flags the issue as one to consider.

members of the target audience more vigorously or is better to reach them through multiplier effects by giving scholarships to provincial universities under profile 3.

4.10 As an alternative to scholarships in those remote or disadvantaged areas, consider the use of short courses as an entry point.

4.11 Consider options other than undergraduate studies in Australia for developing the types of research capacity that would be useful in the context of ACIAR's work where this work relates to development objectives. (Other sectors within AusAID may have similar needs). This could be by short courses or supporting a local university to develop specific skills to train such people.

Application and selection process

4.12 Ensure that information on the ASDiV website, including that provided by the international academic advisor, is regularly updated. This may require one on one contact with scholarship co-ordinators at the universities.

4.13 Given that some students are having difficulty accessing or using CRICOS information, consider ways in which the information might be easier to access and more directly draw attention to its availability during as part of promotional activities.

4.14 Ensure that HRD co-ordinators are aware of the CRICOS information and how to access and use it.

4.15 Introduce an online applications tracking process that applicants can access using a password and that will have the capacity to be a continuing online interactive access points for successful applicants around such matters as reintegration plans.

4.16 In addition to profile titles, and consolidated list of AusAID priorities identify Vietnam specific priority areas (once clarified), in the Vietnam specific application form to provide further definition within the generic AusAID list in the general application form.

4.17 Carefully monitor the impact on universities of the new application processes to ensure that the workload for them in terms of assessing students and providing conditional acceptance does not substantially increase through unsuccessful and successful applicants alike seeking such assessment and acceptance.

4.18 Monitor the success rates of the lower levels of IELTS and those requiring a special EL program of up to a year. If there is evidence of substantially increased failure rates then consider raising the entry level, removing the special English provisions and encourage further EL acquisition locally (e.g. arranged by authorities in the provinces or by TESOL courses, including those by alumni) before applying for scholarships.

4.19 Clarify in writing for universities the requirements around bridging and other ELT courses when they arrive in Australia. This may also be a useful topic for discussion at the meeting of AusAID Canberra, Posts and Universities in October 2011 in Canberra.

4.20 If there is continuing evidence of widespread difficulties experienced by profile 1 applicants with respect to submitting applications in English, allow them to submit in either English or Vietnamese. The MTR team was unable to tell how widespread the concern was.

4.21 Identify ways in which the number of trips to Hanoi and HCMC might be reduced or combined with other activities or visits to regions

4.22 Consider funding assistance in cases of special hardship especially in the latter stages of the selection process.

4.23 The MTR endorses the use of interviews with all eligible applicants as agreed for 2011, subject to the process proving to be feasible.

M&E strategies

4.24 Refine the performance indicators once the priorities for the program have been clarified and include more indicators relating to the application of learning to contribute to reform processes and development outcomes.

4.25 Amalgamate the logframe and MEF to overcome redundancies and avoid confusion. Use the program logic, expanded to identify organisational and other factors that will affect outcomes, as the theoretical framework for organising agreed performance indicators and identifying others as needed (e.g. concerning the relative contribution of the scholarship experience, the collective impacts of clusters of scholarships and other HRD and sectoral activities – see recommendations 4, 6 and 7). The evaluation questions can all be retained and positioned within the program logic framework so that the logical connection between them can be emphasised rather than each question being treated as standalone.

4.26 Cross reference the M&E items to the criteria for QAI and to the standard AusAID Scholarship questions to make it easier for AusAID M&E staff to extract the information.

4.27 Reword outcome 3 in the program logic to more accurately reflect objective 3 and to reflect any changes that are made to objective 3 (e.g. in the light of the changes recommended by this MTR).

4.28 Develop and pilot processes for capturing the collective impacts of scholarships in organisations, sectors, regions or other appropriate units of analysis. This can be done with returned scholars from previous programs. The MTR notes that cluster evaluations are planned and endorses this direction.

4.29 Work with the alumni strategy to improve the data base and in particular to ensure that contacts will be available for the important elements in a sampling frame that would be developed for tracer studies.

4.30 Reinforce with all new awardees and their organisations the expectation that they will participate in follow-up processes on returning from their scholarships.

4.31 Engage priority institutions (yet to be identified) in the M&E of scholarships and other HRD activities with a view to assisting them to develop M&E systems and capacity, aligning the M&E processes used by AusAID for scholarships with those of institutions and ultimately being able to draw more directly on their M&E information. This engagement should commence at the point of working with them to develop or refine their HRD plans by raising questions about how the results of the plans will be evaluated. In particular, ASDiV should engage priority organisations in processes of following up on the impacts of scholars by assisting/guiding them to monitor and support reintegration plans and continuing to monitor the implementation of HRD plans.

4.32 Ensure that data collection instruments seek information that is relevant to the specific features of the different program objectives and profiles

4.33 Ensure that data collection instruments enable some conclusions to be drawn not just about whether alumni have had an impact but the extent to which their scholarship experience contributed to their ability to have an impact.

The alumni strategies

4.34 Develop a program objective to correspond to outcome 4 in the program logic diagram, amplify it by reference to support to alumni to apply and disseminate what they have learnt and Suggested wording for the objective is:

Alumni return with and maintain linkages and positive perceptions of Australia that contribute to strengthening the Vietnam – Australia bilateral relationship and are supported to enhance their contribution to development objectives by applying what they have learnt and through diffusion of learning to others.

4.35 Clarify the theory of change around the alumni activities, showing how it links to the goal of the program. Link alumni activities to that theory of change, while accepting that some (especially the large social events) will simply be about bilateral relationships.

4.36 In consultation with the proposed national alumni structure, further clarify the intent of the Alumni program and identify important selling points and benefits for alumni.

4.37 Use incentives and various forms of recognition to encourage participation and updating of data base.

4.38 Continue to work on completing and maintaining the data base especially for graduates over the last 10 to 15 years.

4.39 Consider introducing an on-line data base that can be accessed by scholars to update their details. This data base could also be used to update progress with reintegration plans and associated information once these requirements have been established. It could be a continuation of the online application and application tracking process.

4.40 Inform universities of upcoming alumni events in which they may wish to participate and identify ways to extract university specific reports on their alumni, with permission from the alumni.

4.41 In consultation with the proposed national alumni structure, continue with a range of activities to address different interests and needs. A suggested portfolio of activities is:

- one high profile social event per annum and one high profile professional conference per annum, rotating amongst the three major locations.

- Continue to support seminars but run fewer of them, their main purpose being networking.

- Include reintegration support activities under the proposed new program objective 4. Some would be general activities such as seminars and workshops on returning home and some would be more intensive, specific to priority organisations (see Evaluation Question 3).

- Consider running more 2 to 3 day training programs on soft skills such as negotiation, HRM especially at middle to senior management levels and leave some spaces open for non-alumni (e.g. 30% of spaces). Include the possibility of alumni inviting their peers, supervisors or other relevant people in their organisation.

- Continue to foster the use of small grants especially for projects that achieve multiplier effects arising from the scholars' learning and for reinforcing scholars' development e.g. training programs delivered by scholars; establishing research networks, continuing connections with Australian Universities.

- Consider running short courses on how to give good presentations and run training programs for those alumni who wish to make presentations or run training programs on what they have learnt.

4.42 Support the establishment of an Alumni Co-ordinating structure with a view to it ultimately (say 3 years time) operating largely independently but with some financial assistance from AusAID and reduced need for a dedicated alumni officer in ASDiV. Consider the potential to redirect some of the alumni officer resources to HRD functions (e.g. to conduct consolidated HRD and reintegration seminars).

4.43 Establish formal relationships between the Alumni co-ordinating structures, ASDiV and VGAC (assuming VGAC continues to be funded by Austrade) for sharing of information, joint activities and achieving efficiencies. One possibility would be to have AusAID alumni as a chapter of VGAC and for AusAID and Austrade to jointly fund it. Joint activities would mostly be for the large events that are primarily directed to the bilateral relationship aspect of the objective.

Technical inputs of the ASDiV Managing Contractor and roles played by key personnel

4.44 Emphasise to successful applicants the importance of making links with other non-Vietnamese students and others, while continuing to provide information to Vietnamese scholars about Vietnamese networks in Australia that can help with accommodation and other matters.

4.45 To ensure continuation of ASDiV's good reputation with respect to the advice it gives students, regularly update the information about courses available to students using a variety of methods (website, international advisor, information fairs for universities etc.

4.46 Ensure that all queries from universities are promptly acknowledged and a course of action to address them is identified even if they can't be immediately answered.

4.47 Discuss the issue of streamlining decision-making processes concerning suspensions further with UQ and possibly with other posts that they nominate as having more efficient processes.

4.48 Provide clear information about the names of Vietnamese students and consistently use AusAID ID (OASIS) numbers.

The separate management arrangements for program administration and ELT

4.49 The separate arrangements for contracting the delivery of the scholarships program and the delivery of ELT should be maintained for the foreseeable future.

Continuing relevance of ASDiV design and implementation

Changing aid environment

Recommendations to improve internal systems for HRD and HRM and M&E are included in the discussion of Evaluation Questions 3 and 4 respectively. As noted in those discussions, this involves a shift in focus (especially for a small number of priority institutions) from individuals as recipients of scholarships to organisations *and* individual recipients and how the two work together to achieve organisational change agenda and development outcomes .

Relevance to new Country Strategy

The continuing relevance of the goal and objectives in light of the new CS has been discussed in relation to Evaluation Question 1 and the continuing relevance of profiles in

relation to Evaluation Question 2. Some recommendations have been made concerning possible changes to the goal, objectives and profiles.

Choice of priority organisations also needs to be guided by the CS and, as discussed in relation to Evaluation Question 3, to date this has been difficult to do. When discussing the Alumni strategy and the M&E program logic in relation to Evaluation Question 4, the addition of a fourth objective relating to alumni has been recommended.

Corporate directions

Increasing focus on outcomes and impacts has been discussed in relation to achieving objective 1 under Evaluation Question 1 and the importance of having and implementing a theory of change that actively links scholars' learning to organisational change and development outcomes.

ASS directions to use targeting profiles have been discussed under Evaluation Question 2. Corporate consolidation of ADS and ALAS and online application processes have been discussed under Evaluation Question 4.

Flexible modes

This report has referred to the potential to make greater use flexible modes when discussing of types of HR support that ASDiV could provide to priority organisations (see Evaluation Question 3).

5.1 Widen the activities under HRD beyond scholarships to include flexible modes.

i) Draw up a menu of flexible modes, the circumstances under which each would be particularly useful (including use in combination with other modes) and identify what is currently available through various sources: Australian aid, other donors, Vietnamese providers.

ii) Use this menu in discussions with priority organisations around their HRD needs and when considering the relative value of scholarships and other modes.

iii) Include budgets for flexible modes when the Delivery Strategy for HRD is developed and when submitting future budgets and forward estimates.

iv) In the meantime, consider various possible sources of funding within Post and AusAID Corporate for these flexible modes, where their potential value can be demonstrated. Possible sources within Post would be sectoral programs when they have identified specific HRD needs and using some of the small grants currently allocated to the alumni program for flexible modes that will complement scholarships in priority institutions or in relation to priority issues.