

2019 Review of the Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility DFAT Management Response

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action plan
Recommendation 1: The Facility should be renewed for a further four years of applied research on the outcomes of Australia Awards at a global level, focusing on Australia Awards alumni of more than three years post-award.	Agreed in principle	Approval of any renewal of the Facility is a decision for the relevant delegate.	To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.
a) The detail of the next four years should be developed and documented in a Global Tracer Facility Phase 2 Implementation Plan, responding to the full set of recommendations of this review.	Agreed in principle	DFAT will take into account the findings and recommendations from this review and the process suggested for the development of the Implementation Plan in the design of the next phase of the GTF.	To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.
b) The Phase 2 Implementation Plan should be completed by late 2019 and provide the basis for a contract extension between DFAT and ACER before the current contract expires in May 2020.	Agreed in principle	DFAT and ACER have commenced development of a Phase 2 Implementation Plan.	To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.

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<p>Recommendation 2: As a fully ODA-funded mechanism the Facility should remain focused on Australia Awards alumni. In doing so, it should work with SCB to develop and maintain meaningful links with other post-award monitoring and evaluation activities (e.g. for global alumni) and contribute to DFAT efforts to enable cross program learning.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT agrees that the GTF should remain focussed on Australia Awards alumni.</p> <p>DFAT will consider ways to increase links with other post-award monitoring and evaluation and cross program learning.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: In Phase 2 the Facility should review the research design in light of all recommendations in this review. Any changes to the research design should still maximise consistency with past surveys while also considering additional areas for inquiry. The Facility should maintain the level of qualitative data collected by the Tracer Survey.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT will review the research design in the design of the next phase of the GTF. DFAT agrees with the importance of maximising consistency with past surveys.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4. The Facility should expand its range of studies to include comparative studies which examine the different outcomes resulting from different program components between individual Australia Awards programs, such as varying levels of on award support, or differences in the post-award opportunities provided to alumni.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT will consider whether comparative studies can be undertaken by the GTF, noting the potential additional cost involved and that this is a departure from the current case study model of focussing on a single country.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 5: Phase 2 should establish a technical peer review mechanism to bring additional technical and thematic perspectives into the planning and finalisation of the Facility’s work in areas such as gender, disability, and program design. This could be done by utilising DFAT thematic expertise and/or by bringing in specialist technical advice.</p>	<p>Agreed in part</p>	<p>DFAT has increased engagement with geographic areas in planning and reviewing the work of the GTF. DFAT will consider ways to continue and increase this engagement in the next phase of the GTF. DFAT does not currently consider that external input would be required, given the technical expertise available through the GTF and within DFAT.</p>	<p>A process of increased consultation with posts has commenced.</p> <p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: In Phase 2 the Facility should consider including Case Studies which examine the experiences and outcomes of less successful awardees or alumni, but should do so in close consultation with country programs and MCs as these studies may be more appropriately done by individual programs.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT will consider ways to examine the experiences of less successful awardees and alumni, including through country programs.</p> <p>Awardees and alumni are currently asked about barriers and difficulties they face through the on-award surveys and through the GTF case studies. This information is used to inform policy and programming decisions.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF and into discussions with country programs.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 7: Scoping of Phase 2 should include careful consideration of whether the Facility is a suitable means to track Australia Awards alumni and update their contact details. The Facility should certainly not become the primary mechanism for this work.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>The GTF is not currently the primary mechanism to track Australia Awards alumni, and DFAT agrees this should remain the case in Phase 2 of the GTF.</p>	<p>DFAT is working to improve its systems in relation to the Global Alumni Network.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8: If the Facility does continue to contribute to Australia Awards alumni tracking, updated alumni data should be routinely provided directly to DFAT posts and managing contractors, as well as held centrally in SCB.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT agrees that updated alumni data collected through the GTF should feed into other DFAT global alumni systems, subject to any privacy requirements.</p>	<p>DFAT is working to improve its systems in relation to the Global Alumni Network.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: Phase 2 of the Global Tracer Facility should continue to offer Australia Awards programs the option to commission ad hoc studies, and this should be better publicised within DFAT and with managing contractors.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT agrees that the option to commission ad hoc studies has been a useful feature of the GTF. If this feature continues, DFAT will consider ways to further publicise this, noting that many country programs also have the ability to commission country specific studies through their managing contractors.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 10: Investing significantly in processes and relationships to support greater and more effective use of the Facility’s outputs must be at the core of Phase 2. Development of the Phase 2 Implementation Plan should involve an active group of internal clients and stakeholders. The Plan should establish a robust and ongoing mechanism for sustained engagement across Australia Awards programs. Consideration should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consulting Australia Awards programs (DFAT and MCs) in the preparation of each year’s Annual Plan, including on decisions about case studies and other work for the coming year, so the workplan can maximise its utility for programs while also retaining the consistent global approach; b) Systematically seeking program feedback on relevant Facility outputs, as well as SCB feedback. 	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT has increased engagement with geographic areas in planning and reviewing the work of the GTF. DFAT will consider ways to continue and increase this engagement in the next phase of the GTF, including in the preparation of the Annual Plan.</p>	<p>A process of increased consultation with posts has commenced.</p> <p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 11: Phase 2 of the Facility’s work should be re-shaped with a closer eye on utilisation by DFAT and MCs.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Simplifying the description of methodology so it is more widely accessible, and replicable (technical methodology documents should be retained for reference as needed); b) Providing every country program with a Country Report from future Tracer Surveys; c) Combining Case Study Reports with Country Reports where possible and meaningful. 	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT and the GTF continue to work to improve the presentation and utilisation of GTF reports. The current case study format has been amended to present a simplified description of methodology in the body of the report, with further detail included as an annex.</p> <p>Consideration is being given as to how to present relevant findings from the global survey in the case study reports. Where the sample size permits, a Country Report is currently produced. DFAT will consider how to further improve GTF reporting to support utilisation by DFAT and MCs.</p>	<p>DFAT and the GTF will continue to consider and amend the format of reports, including through amending how the methodology is presented in Year 4 case studies.</p> <p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12: In developing the new Global Australia Awards Strategy and the associated Global M&E Framework, SCB should ensure that the work of the Facility is fully integrated into global arrangements for M&E.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT has used the work of GTF as a key input to the global M&E arrangements (2018 & 2019 APPRs). It is anticipated that this will continue in the future.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 13: The Facility and SCB should develop an internal communications and engagement plan to clearly map out formal and informal engagement across DFAT and MCs, and to ensure resources and responsibilities for this is clearly defined between SCB and the Facility.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>The annual plan for the GTF maps out the work for the year ahead, including setting out expected timing and geographic and thematic focus for case studies. This document is shared across DFAT. DFAT will consider ways to further improve planning and engagement for the future work of the GTF.</p>	<p>Currently undertaken through the preparation and sharing of an annual plan.</p> <p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 14: Working with SCB, the Facility should produce a wider range of communications products targeted at the DFAT and MC audience (i.e. not public communications or public diplomacy outputs, but utilisation-focused outputs) designed to assist with internal dissemination and utilisation of Facility outputs, especially those with rich qualitative data which cannot be conveyed in infographics. These could include short video presentations of each report, staff presentations in Canberra (videoed for posts and MCs), webinars, or brief audio podcasts, to complement the more comprehensive written reports and infographics.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT agrees that program managers within DFAT and MCs should be targeted as a key audience for GTF products. In line with the recommendation, the GTF has conducted a staff seminar in Canberra on the Year 3 Survey results.</p> <p>DFAT will consider the range of communications products to be produced as part of the future work of the GTF. This will include consideration of resources and users' preferences and the overall Australia Awards communications strategies.</p> <p>It is anticipated that these are likely to take the form of policy papers rather than more resource intensive communications products such as video presentations, webinars and audio podcasts.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 15: The Facility should routinely engage with the communications team in SCB so it can maximise the value of its work for public diplomacy and communications, including in the preparation of its Annual Plan. The Facility should not become a primary mechanism to deliver public-facing communications products.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>The GTF currently engages with the communications team in SCB in relation to its publications and communications work. It is anticipated that this will continue in the future.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>
<p>Recommendation 16: Phase 2 should continue to include scope for ACER to utilise a sub-contracted service provider for specialised survey and coding work.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT will consider the requirement for and use of sub-contractors in the future work of the GTF.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>
<p>Recommendation 17: In Phase 2, the Facility should aim to complete case studies with a two-person team comprised of one ACER staff member and one researcher or consultant from the country or region of the case study. This will simultaneously reduce cost and create opportunities to deepen the understanding of context for the case study, while also creating professional opportunities for researchers and evaluators in partner countries.</p>	<p>Disagree</p>	<p>DFAT has previously considered this approach and does not agree that it reduces costs and with the short duration of the research, only provides minimal professional opportunities for any in-country researcher/consultant.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 18: The Phase 2 Implementation Plan should plot an explicit cycle for the planning, approval and publication of Facility outputs, with clear roles and responsibilities within DFAT, and a streamlined timeline.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>The annual plan for the GTF maps out the work for the year ahead. DFAT will consider ways to further improve planning and to clarify roles and responsibilities for the future work of the GTF.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 19. Phase 2 should bring in technical expertise in gender equality and disability inclusion in scholarships, training and professional development, to strengthen the Facility’s consideration of these issues in work planning, study design, and analysis and reporting.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>Technical expertise on disability inclusion has been used in planning for a Year 4 case study that is focussed on disability inclusion. DFAT will consider ways to further strengthen the consideration of gender equality and disability inclusion in the future work of the GTF.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>
<p>a) Consideration should be given to introducing a third gender response category in all data collection, and the introduction of the Washington Group short-set of disability questions.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT will seek to continue to improve the collection of data that measures the diversity of the Australia Awards participants, including in relation to sex, gender equality and disability status.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the GTF.</p>