

**DFAT Management Response to the Independent Mid-Term Review of the
Papua New Guinea Institutional Partnerships Program (PIPP)
July 2025**

DFAT commissioned an independent mid-term review (IMTR) of the Papua New Guinea (PNG) Institutional Partnerships Program (PIPP), conducted between November 2024 – August 2025. The IMTR evaluated overall relevance and whether the PIPP is achieving what it intended to. The review provided recommendations to strengthen PIPP’s implementation and its future direction, including beyond June 2026.

DFAT’s response to the recommendations are as follows:

Recommendations	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
<u>Opportunity</u> Enhanced strategic oversight within PNG Government <u>Recommendation 1</u> The Joint Oversight Mechanism should restart and be used proactively to surface and discuss GoPNG public service priorities. The results from this evaluation could be used to kick-start that process. Membership of the JOM should be discussed with GoPNG and Australian Government counterparts to ensure appropriate, high-level leadership. Consideration should be given to expanding membership to include Australian and GoPNG agencies with strong partnerships, as this would highlight their importance to key agencies such as PM&NEC and DPM.	Partially Agree	This mechanism was outlined in the original design. There has been one such meeting convened in February 2024 which DHOM chaired but it hasn’t convened since. To achieve the enhanced strategic oversight that was initially intended, we propose engagement with relevant Government of PNG senior leadership across the existing membership (12 agencies) through existing meetings. Consultations with PIPP deployees and sector leads have identified that it is not feasible to bring together a number of PNG Government high-level leaders together regularly, but that ongoing engagement with relevant department seniors is critical from the thematic leads.	We propose strategic discussions commence with smaller sector specific cohorts to ensure relevance is clear to the senior leadership within PNG Government.	Q4 2025
<u>Opportunity</u> Enhanced strategic oversight within Australian Government <u>Recommendation 2</u>	Partially Agree	IDCs currently occur twice yearly with an agenda that includes operational and strategic elements (the former is held at EL1 level, and the latter at SES Band 1 level). Operationally we address workplans, budgets, reporting cycles, risk	We will continue to hold an annual SES Band 1 IDC and implement an EL2-led IDC. SES engagement for operational matters is not warranted.	Q1 2026

Recommendations	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
DFAT's representation at PIPP Inter-Departmental Committee meetings in Canberra should be elevated to SES Band 1 level (at all times), and discussion regarding strategic issues in institutional partnerships between Australia and PNG should be the focus of these meetings. The findings of this evaluation could be used to precipitate this higher-level WoG strategic engagement.		management and changes in administrative policies or processes. Strategically we have addressed the PNG Development Partnership Plan (DPP) consultation and implementation processes, the Australian Government response to PNG's 50 th Anniversary (and how we can use that within PIPP programming) and most recently the IMTR findings and next steps.	Going forward, this meeting could continue 6-monthly and follow sector specific strategic meetings in PNG. This would provide an opportunity to consider the strategic issues of interest to the Australian setting, and include a paper that is updated ahead of each meeting which flags relevant whole of government events/meetings so agencies can collaborate and have visibility across the membership.	
<u>Opportunity</u> Enhanced Capacity to Support Program End State <u>Recommendation 3</u> DFAT in Port Moresby should consider investing further resources (~EL1 level) in the strategic management of PIPP, including driving greater sectoral and WoG coordination. At present, the resources do not exist at Post to do this. Tasks could include managing the development of sector strategies (in economics to begin with); gradually aligning PIPP work plans and MEL with DPP outcomes; augmenting existing enabling services; engaging with GoPNG agencies in public service priorities; following up on JOM outcomes; developing strategic communication products; actively monitoring non-PIPP agency activities; investigating the feasibility of new partnerships (e.g. Bank of PNG and APRA); and establishing and managing AGE and non-AGE social and workplace networks.	<u>Disagree</u>	At this stage, we are unable to allocate additional FTE to Port Moresby Post to manage PIPP. Canberra will work to ensure increased FTE is available for PIPP at desk. It is critical to have PIPP managed out of Canberra. The alignment of the workplans and MEL with the DPP in mind have commenced. The program is using PIPPSS to support this in the first instance. We are seeking to engage an M&E specialist to refine our MERLA framework ahead of the extension. Following up/tracking the outcomes of the strategic meetings in recommendations 1 and 2 should be jointly managed with action items/input from relevant sector leads flowing into IDCs. The social and workplace networking elements are most effective when face-to-face with the PIPP deployee cohort as well as the AHC sector leads.	Staffing resources will be invested where possible, with overall program management remaining in Canberra. PIPP program managers in Canberra should travel regularly to bolster engagement with sectoral teams at Post. The Division's senior managers will consider how best to allocate resourcing to PIPP.	June 2026

Recommendations	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
<u>Opportunity</u> Ensuring Continuity of Institutional Partnerships <u>Recommendation 4</u> DFAT should begin the design of the next phase of the PNG–Australia institutional partnerships program as soon as possible, considering the June 2026 end date of PIPP. This design should involve DFAT, GoPNG and Australian WoG partners. The design process could be used as a mechanism to engage GoPNG in the process, while also elevating Australian WoG engagement. The design should focus on 1) scoping the level of ambition for Australian–PNG institutional partnerships on both sides and defining appropriate end-state outcomes; 2) analysing the political-economic and institutional factors that may constrain the achievement of outcomes; 3) producing a strong program logic with clear and well-defined end-of-program and intermediate outcomes; 4) testing the pros and cons of the PIPP/non-PIPP AGE distinction and assessing other models (e.g. core partnerships, tiered partnerships etc); 5) accurately modelling demand for support services (as much as possible); 6) establishing workable governance arrangements; 7) ensuring programmatic and operational support services are adequate and will support strategic ambition and effective delivery (particularly M&E); and 8) aligning M&E and reporting to DPP outcomes and priorities.	Agree	The current phase of PIPP was designed to include an extension opportunity. Based on the outcomes of the processes in the action plan and given the increased demand on funds and the possibility of expanding the membership. It is likely that planning will lead to spending the allocated budget in less time. Accessing the extension will provide time to re-design for the next phase in line with current and emerging PNG and Australian Government priorities.	We accept this recommendation with the planning and consultation to commence in Q4 of 2025.	June 2026

[Ends]