

**VIETNAM-AUSTRALIA PARTNERSHIP
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

FINAL DESIGN DOCUMENT

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VIETNAM-AUSTRALIA PARTNERSHIP HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Vietnam-Australia Partnership on Human Resource Development (the “Program”) includes delivery of the well-established Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS) program and support for alumni; supplemented by Short Term Training and a number of sub programs (to be identified); a Women in Leadership program; and ad hoc interventions (to be identified) to support ongoing sector programs.

Vietnam has a population of around 90 million. In barely more than two decades, political and economic reforms have transformed Vietnam from one of the poorest countries in the world to a lower middle-income country.

Vietnam has ambitious plans to become an industrialised country by 2020. With more than 50 per cent of the population under the age of 30, a skilled workforce is crucial to support Vietnam’s economic modernisation.

Promoting human resources and skills development (particularly skills for modern industry and innovation), is one of three breakthrough areas highlighted in Vietnam’s Socio-Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) 2011-2020. The Vietnam Manpower Development Master Plan 2011-20 indicates a need to more than double the trained/skilled workforce by 2020.

The scale of education and training required to meet growth targets is substantial and will require investment and reform at all levels from basic to higher education. Quite simply, the current education system is unable to meet demand in terms of quantity or quality.

Since the mid-1970’s, approximately 4000 Australia Awards Scholarships alumni have returned to Vietnam after successfully completing their tertiary studies in Australia. Perhaps another 40,000 alumni have been privately funded.

The opportunity to study in Australia provides Vietnamese scholars exposure to world-class education, research and training institutions; as well as increased experience and understanding of Australia. For many Vietnamese alumni, the experience has been life changing in both technical and personal development. Equally, the large body of alumni also provide opportunities for strengthening Australia’s economic, political and social engagement with Vietnam.

In developing this design, the team reviewed evidence from recent Vietnam program reviews, “lessons learned” documents, discussions with stakeholders including alumni, Government of Vietnam ministries and DFAT; as well as the experience of a number of similar programs in the region.

The Vietnam HRD program to date has delivered a fairly standard scholarships program with a focus on long-term awards predominantly at Master level, with

fairly broad eligibility. Evidence from other programs suggests simply building a critical mass of scholarship recipients within a target organisation is not necessarily a sufficient catalyst for change or effective utilisation of alumni's knowledge and skills.

Creating the 'right' conditions for alumni to improve their organisations is a challenge. It is proposed to test a number of strategies, involving different HRD modalities, to help improve workplace productivity by providing access to both structured support as well as flexible, responsive assistance to address emerging needs.

The "Above-the-Line" Goal for the Program is that *Vietnam accesses and uses high level professional and technical knowledge, skills and competencies.*

The Program seeks to achieve three End-of-Program Outcomes (EPOs):

- 1. Male and female alumni use new skills and knowledge to make positive contributions to selected priority areas*
- 2. Stronger workplace enabling environments for skills utilisation in selected priority areas*
- 3. Australia and Vietnam have stronger, sustainable links in selected sectors/agencies*

The delivery approach assumes a more strategic role for DFAT Hanoi in policy analysis and dialogue working cooperatively with the Contractor to identify priority areas for sector and institution engagement to advance Australian aid objectives.

Firstly, Australia Awards Scholarships are at the core of the Australia Awards HRD Program, aligned closely with sector and geographical priorities in the new Aid Investment Plan (AIP), 2015-20. The Program design proposes a more tightly focused approach and aims to enhance the targeting and competitiveness of Australia Awards Scholarships.

It is proposed there be two categories of Australia Awards Scholarships: one an open untied category (70% of awards), eligible on a competitive basis to applicants from central/provincial government agencies, universities, the private sector, NGOs and INGOs within specified (AIP) priority sectors; and the other tied (initially 30% of awards, to be reviewed annually) to specific target institutions.

Australia Awards Alumni would be supported to strengthen their contribution to the workplace through pre-and post-reintegration support including, 'soft' skills training, small grants, seminars and workshops.

Secondly, it is proposed to develop and pilot one or two sub programs encompassing more intensive integrated HRD support directed at selected target institutions. The sub programs would offer a balance between long-term scholarships (core assistance) and other HRD modalities. That is, target institutions would receive priority support, not only through access to tied Australia Awards Scholarships, but also through access to a package of flexible integrated HRD assistance.

The provision of integrated HRD activities would seek to go beyond the delivery of tertiary qualifications to enhance workplace productivity, build relationships, promote promotion pathways for men and women, and strengthen program outcomes (specifically, EOPOs 2 and 3) in priority sectors through a broader range of flexible capacity building interventions and delivery modalities, including formal and ad hoc short-term training for both technical and 'soft' skills (in Australia and/or Vietnam); technical assistance to access Australian ideas and expertise; and informal learning opportunities including workshops, seminars and visiting lecturers. Target institutions would need to be identified and sub programs designed by the Contractor in close consultation with DFAT Hanoi and endorsed by the Program Coordinating Committee (PCC).

Thirdly, while priority would be accorded to the selected target institutions, flexible HRD modalities would also be available in a timely and responsive way to support ad hoc, or one-off, demand driven thematic requests relevant to any of the pillars and sectors under the new AIP. Opportunities to enhance and support ongoing programs would typically be identified by DFAT sector teams (and the Contractor) through their engagement with counterpart agencies. The Contractor would be responsible for activity implementation, including sub-contracting where appropriate.

Fourthly, to the extent possible, the Program would seek to leverage other DFAT global programs (AAF, AVID, NCP) and whole of government partners in promoting program outcomes. This would simply involve being aware of and maximising opportunities to build upon existing or planned initiatives to further facilitate linkages/partnerships between Vietnamese and Australian organisations.

Fifthly, Australian aid policy objectives on gender equality and women's empowerment and on social inclusion are addressed throughout the design, including through specific strategies to address disadvantage, provision of leadership training programs delivered in both Australia and Vietnam, gender responsive approaches to M&E, reintegration activities and Contractor personnel.

Identification of target institutions and sub programs will require further preparatory work by DFAT Hanoi and the Contractor to determine demand, commitment and the scope of interventions. The Contractor will be responsible for preparing a plan within 6 months of mobilisation outlining the proposed approach to identification, preparation and implementation of sub programs, Short Term Training; the Women in Leadership program; and ad hoc activities.

The plan will include stop/go points whereby the Contractor undertakes an initial assessment of potential sub programs for consideration by DFAT Hanoi; and it will be guided by sector and geographic priorities as determined through the AIP preparation process; discussions between DFAT Hanoi and the GOV; and available budget.

It is proposed sub programs be identified from within one or both of the following options:

- a) universities (faculties) in priority areas of geographical and sector focus – a number of universities across the country have strong historical links to Australia Awards. Targeting more established, financially stable universities may provide more immediate benefits. However, as the Program is Official Development Assistance (ODA), it will target universities that also include a focus on *disadvantage* – with a substantial number of students from rural and ethnic minorities. In this way there may be scope to link and support the AIP pillar expected to focus on agriculture, community and social inclusion.
- b) Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) - despite efforts by the Government of Vietnam, the TVET system remains complex, with multiple stakeholders, inefficiencies and duplication of effort and resources. HRD support for TVET could involve a range of delivery modalities, including scholarships (Cert IV Diploma in Workplace Training and Assessment), technical advice in areas of Australian expertise, including support for the establishment of Sector Skills Councils or short-term training, particularly for managers and administrators. This could be linked to ‘centres of excellence’ colleges, many of which already have established links with a number of Australian TAFE institutes.

Available funding and decisions regarding the desired balance between short and longer term activities will determine the extent and timing of new activities that can be implemented.

The Contractor will be responsible for the design and sub-contracting of HRD activities, drawing upon the sector knowledge, policy and analytical support of DFAT, Hanoi. The Contractor will manage implementation of the Program via a Facility model. This will involve relatively fixed expenditure for management of the Australia Awards Scholarships component (promotion and selection, English language training, pre-departure, departure, on-award management, reintegration and alumni activities) alongside flexible expenditure in support of identified sub programs, short term training and emerging needs.

The Contractor would submit a proposal to DFAT Hanoi for approval outlining design activities and objectives, implementation schedule, estimated cost and the approach to sub-contracting. A simple tasking note from DFAT Hanoi would authorise the Contractor to proceed.

Provision is made for an expanded role for the Contractor in managing the new phase of the HRD program. In particular, the Contractor will require capacity to manage and sub contract a range of new delivery modalities; the Contractor will require knowledge and access to a network of expertise within Australia relevant to the AIP pillars; and will assume responsibility for a range of volunteer, New Colombo Plan (and potentially) aid small grants in-country activities.

A partnership will be formalised with MOET through establishment of a Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) to provide joint oversight of the program. The

PCC will be a forum for discussion of program performance and effectiveness, and for adjustment of strategic and operational priorities for the program.

Partnerships will also be established with selected target institutions in key sector sub programs. The PCC will decide whether to invite these partners as observer members of the PCC, bringing additional perspectives and opportunity for further building relationships.

Risks need to be monitored regularly, balanced against the likely benefits, and risk levels and/or strategies adjusted accordingly. Overall, the risk assessment of the Program is low.

The fundamental risk is that alumni are unable to utilise their skills and knowledge after return. The design places increased emphasis on selecting the 'right' awardees from the 'right' organisations and providing additional support to improve workplace productivity.

The enhancements in the design offer a range of modalities and sub programs to address 'utilisation' risks through a more strategic and focused approach.

However, with innovation comes increased uncertainty. As lessons are learnt iteratively with new modalities, the future Program must ensure a timely and appropriate response to any emerging risks.

Glossary

AAAN	Australia Awards Alumni Network
AAF	Australia Awards Fellowships
AAS	Australia Awards Scholarships
ACIAR	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIP	Aid Investment Plan
AVID	Australian Volunteers for International Development
CGA	Central Government Agency
CSO	Civil society organisation
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EOPO	End of Program Outcome(s)
GDVT	General Department of Vocational Training
GoA	Government of Australia
GoV	Government of Vietnam
HRD	Human Resource Development
ICT	Information Communications Technologies
IELTS	International English Language Testing Service
INGO	International non-government organisation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KOICA	Korean International Cooperation Agency
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, War Invalids, and Social Affairs
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
NCP	New Colombo Plan
NGO	Non-government organisation
PhD	Doctorate of Philosophy
PWD	Persons with disabilities
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SBV	State Bank of Vietnam
SCB	Scholarships and Alumni Branch
SEDP	Social-Economic Development Plan
SEDS	Social-Economic Development Strategy
STT	Short-term training
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VDIC	Vietnam Development Information Centre
WB	World Bank
WOG	Whole-of-government

AUSTRALIA-VIETNAM
AUSTRALIA AWARDS HRD PROGRAM 2016-20

1 ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

1.1 Country and Sector Issues

In barely more than two decades, political and economic reforms have transformed Vietnam from one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita income below \$US100 in the early 1980's, to a lower middle income country with per capita income in 2014 approaching \$US2000, leading the World Bank to acclaim Vietnam as a development success story.

While there has been remarkable progress in addressing the Millennium Development Goals and reducing poverty - the World Bank estimates the national poverty rate has fallen below 10 per cent - clearly the reduction in poverty is not equal among regions and population groups.

Vietnam has a population of around 90 million, across 54 different ethnic groups, with the majority Kinh accounting for around 85 per cent of the population. Over 70 per cent of the population lives in the rural sector. Chronic poverty persists in disadvantaged areas, particularly in the rural Northwest region, in many ethnic minority groups and among people living with disability. In terms of inequality across the country, whether income, poverty, literacy, or most other social measures, ethnicity is a common denominator, and disadvantage is compounded for women and girls.

Vietnam has ambitious plans to become an industrialised country by 2020 and economic integration, internationally and regionally, is a central element of Vietnam's economic development strategy. The external sector is an important engine of growth. Driven by improvements in basic literacy and numeracy over the past two decades and employment and income generation opportunities in Vietnam's traditional labour-intensive manufacturing exports and more recently higher-value products, increasing numbers of rural men and women workers are moving from lower productivity agriculture into higher productivity non-farm jobs.

Promoting human resources and skills development (particularly skills for modern industry and innovation), is one of three breakthrough areas highlighted in Vietnam's Socio-Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) 2011-2020.

With more than 50 per cent of the population under the age of 30, a skilled workforce is crucial to support Vietnam's economic modernisation. Continued strong economic growth will require increased labour productivity and a workforce with the skills to match the job market. The scale of education and training required to meet growth targets is substantial.

While job-specific technical skills are most highly valued, employers also identify a lack of 'soft' skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork and communication.

In Vietnam now, the higher education sector, including technical and vocational education, is characterised by a growing unmet demand, and there is a disconnect between the demands of the labour market and the quality of delivered courses. Access to higher education, and particularly to the higher quality institutions, is also inequitable, particularly for people with disability and those based in rural areas. In 2007, 30.5 per cent of Master degrees and a mere 17.1 per cent of PhDs were awarded to women.¹

1.2 Strategic Setting and Rationale for Australian Engagement

The Vietnam Manpower Development Master Plan 2011-20 indicates a need to more than double the trained/skilled workforce to 44 million by 2020, representing 70 per cent of the total workforce. The Master Plan focuses primarily on setting HRD targets for increased formal university/college education and training, although in reality addressing skills development will require investment and reform at all levels from basic education to higher education².

In addressing HRD, Vietnam's development partners have to some extent concentrated their activities on specific education and training sub-sectors. The World Bank, ADB and UNESCO are lead donors in primary and secondary education; the World Bank, ADB and bilateral donors (through scholarships) including Australia (150 in 2015), Japan (30) Belgium (30), New Zealand (30) and USA (Fulbright program) are lead donors in higher education; and ADB, Germany, Japan, and Korea are lead donors in TVET.³

With multiple stakeholders, there is considerable potential for duplication of activities in the education sector. DFAT meets regularly (formally and informally) with key donors and development partners in Vietnam to discuss coordination/harmonisation and emerging education and training issues; and MOET leads/coordinates the Education Sector Group.

In terms of higher education (undergraduate and postgraduate) the Government of Vietnam (Project 911⁴) is the largest provider of scholarships (Annex 1). Since 2010 around 20,000 awards have been granted, about half for overseas study⁵, including some 100 annually for postgraduate study in Australia. At any time, around 100,000 Vietnamese students are undertaking tertiary study abroad. Almost 29,000 Vietnamese students are currently enrolled in an Australian education institutions (including around 12,000 participating in higher education⁶ (excludes TAFE and ELICOS), mostly self-funded.

Vietnam currently has over 200 colleges and over 100 universities. The Master Plan target is to increase the number of colleges by about one-third and more than double the number of universities by 2020; and to have more than four

¹ World Bank. (2011). Vietnam Country Gender Assessment: 29.

² Skills Development Report, World Bank, 2014.

³ Gender disaggregation of these figures was not available.

⁴ In accord with the Manpower Development Master Plan the second phase of the project continues until 2020.

⁵ MoET negotiates cost sharing arrangements with universities in more than 20 countries, including Australia, usually involving the waiving of fees.

⁶ Data from *International Student Data by Nationality, Vietnam, as at year-to-date October 2014*, GoA, DoE, pp 7, 8, December 2014

universities and more than ten vocational training schools meeting international standards and 30 per cent of university lecturers with doctorate degrees by 2020.

The Government of Vietnam has also allowed a growing openness of the Vietnam tertiary education system. There are now over 400 joint-training programs in Vietnam (mainly at Masters level, but including 12 at PhD level). Australia (with around 20 institutional linkages) trails the USA, France and the UK.

In addition to Masters/PhD training, there is also renewed emphasis on developing quality TVET in Vietnam. The Vocational Training Development Strategy 2011-2020 seeks to develop vocational training that will satisfy labour market needs; deliver skilled employees to improve national competitiveness; and attain parity in some occupations with developed countries in ASEAN to promote regional (and further) workforce mobility. It is notable that the Strategy and recent TVET Law does not give attention to different occupational pathways for men and women, and access to TVET for people with disability and remote area residents does not feature.

Vietnam has sought to strengthen its international cooperation in TVET working with multilateral agencies and key donors including Japan, Korea and Germany. GIZ has promoted centres of excellence to pilot and demonstrate TVET initiatives and Japan tends to provide and locate support in areas that have potential benefits to Japanese industry in Vietnam. The Australian model of TVET (including its demand-driven, competency-based and industry skills councils approach) is well regarded by MOLISA as a relevant model for Vietnam.

Despite Government of Vietnam achievements in basic education there remains a shortage of workers with the right skills. The World Bank (2012) reported two-thirds of international firms surveyed indicated the TVET and general education systems do not meet the skill needs of their workplace.

Many young men and women lack the basic “employability” skills and are not ready for work or apprenticeships; there is limited capacity, especially among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to offer high quality apprenticeships; and employers are often reluctant to invest in in-house training or collaborate with other businesses to develop skills given the risk that competitors will “poach” trained employees.

Within the formal education system in Vietnam, both in higher education and TVET, policy and curriculum development and implementation procedures remain highly centralised⁷. But, quite simply, the current education system is unable to meet demand in terms of quantity or quality.

Many higher education institutions suffer from poor quality of teaching and research, a deficient curriculum, out-dated training and assessment techniques for Masters and PhDs, and lack of funding for infrastructure, salaries and research.

⁷ Primary responsibility for higher education, TVET and public service capacity development lies respectively with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET); the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA); and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA).

The TVET sector is a major challenge. There is a need for stronger leadership and commitment. Academic education is still more highly valued in Vietnamese society than technical and vocational training. Typically, TVET programs are not industry driven; teaching quality is inadequate and few teachers are equipped with practical experience; there is no national qualifications framework; the sector is fragmented; and there is variance in the quality of training and graduates. Many ministries operate their own training institutes and set their own 'qualification' standards.

Although sex-disaggregated data is fragmentary, it does suggest women have much lower levels of enrolment in both higher and TVET sectors. Additionally, there is a marked sex-segregation in fields of study that results in limiting the range of occupational options. Men are more likely to enrol in engineering, manufacturing and services-related courses, and women are more typically students of education, accounting and social sectors. Effort is needed to promote women's access to more skilled, remunerated and influential roles in the modernising economy.

Mirroring the experience of a portion of female Australia Awards alumni, women in Vietnam are less likely than men to be promoted to senior levels in the public and private sector. In spite of the Law on Gender Equality (2006) stipulating that men and women should have equal access to promotion, women account for only 7 per cent of all government department directors and 12 per cent of vice-directors.⁸ Furthermore, Vietnam was ranked 76th out of 108 countries in a 2015 study on women in business and management by the International Labour Organisation.⁹

To address development challenges there is a need for a well-educated, skilled workforce in the public sector, the private sector and among civil society leaders, educators, and researchers. Support for study opportunities overseas can make an important contribution. Australian education institutions are well placed to provide the educational outcomes demanded by the Vietnamese workforce.

The opportunity to study in Australia not only provides Vietnamese scholars with increased experience and understanding of Australia, but also exposure to world-class education, research and training institutions. For many Vietnamese alumni, the experience has been life changing in both technical and personal development.

Alumni also represent a significant resource in promoting Australia's economic and public diplomacy objectives in Vietnam through the opportunity the scholarship program offers to strengthen people-to-people and institutional linkages in both the public and private sectors.

⁸ UNDP. Women delegates in the Vietnam National Assembly: From Participation to Representation. (2014)

⁹ International Labour Organisation. Women in Business and Management Gaining Momentum. (2015)

1.3 Current HRD Program

The Australian Government delivers HRD in Vietnam through a number of programs and funding arrangements. These include initiatives funded through the bilateral program, notably Australia Awards Scholarships managed by DFAT in Vietnam, and initiatives funded from global budgets and managed from Canberra.

1.3.1 Australia Awards – Scholarships (AAS)

Australia Awards provide the opportunity for scholars to develop critical skills and knowledge; attain internationally recognised tertiary qualifications; help address the skills gap in Vietnam; and provide an academic and social experience that strengthens bonds with Australia. Scholarships have also facilitated establishment of an influential network of leaders, reformers and advocates across Vietnam; and are viewed as an important economic diplomacy tool for Australia's engagement with Vietnam. With an ongoing interest in Australia, these alumni are a significant resource, potentially able to offer important perspectives, insights and opportunities for strengthening Australia's public and private sector engagement to promote growth and development in Vietnam.

The number of annual awards peaked in 2011 (266) and has since steadily declined to an expected up to 100 proposed at commencement of the next 5-year phase of assistance.

Australia Awards are greatly valued by the Government of Vietnam, particularly in regards to quality, responsiveness and relevance to Vietnam's HRD training priorities (both Masters and PhD). Currently (2015), eligibility is broad, with a large number of client groups. Over 30 central government agencies are targeted¹⁰; along with local government agencies, local NGOs and provincial enterprises from all provinces; and lecturers and researchers from all tertiary education institutions.

English Language Training (ELT) is provided to those conditional awardees needing additional assistance to gain the required IELTS score to be admitted to their chosen course of study.

The current program has been very successful in achieving gender equality. As compared with the early intakes of the Australia Awards Scholarships program, when the balance of awards favoured men, women have consistently outnumbered men in scholarship awards annually since 2003. In 2014, women in fact outnumbered men in both applications and awards, across all scholarship categories. The ratio of applications has hovered at 60:40 favouring women for the past three years; however the balance of awards has also steadily increased for women over the same period - from 55 per cent (2012), to 56 per cent (2013) and finally to 62 per cent (2014).

Social inclusion and equity objectives have also been achieved with priority provision of Australia Awards Scholarships to 'disadvantaged groups'¹¹ (rural

¹⁰ In recent years, it has proven difficult to identify sufficient quality candidates from central government agencies and greater emphasis is now placed on working with the more responsive ministries (around 12-14 agencies account for the bulk of central agency awards).

¹¹ Under the *Equity of Access Fund* conditions, the HRD Program definition of "Disadvantaged" includes individuals from

residents¹², people from ethnic minority backgrounds, and people with disability). Proactive initiatives include establishment of an Equity of Access Fund, to provide support to people with disability involving: access to assistive technologies; additional access to ELT; provision of extra tutorial support; funding for carers, and accessible travel and accommodation within Australia.

An Equity of Access initiative is providing greater access for people with disability and rural disadvantaged to scholarship and alumni opportunities. It has produced effective outcomes, as evidenced by the gradual increase/ stability in the number of applicants and awardees who have identified as having a disability: from two applicants/two awardees in 2012, sixteen applicants/eight awardees in 2013, and nineteen applicants/seven awardees in 2014.

DFAT Scholarships Branch (SCB) is responsible for overarching policy guidance for delivery of Australia Awards programs globally; the Program Contractor will need to comply with all policies current at the time (e.g. Program Logic, Scholarships Handbook, Global M&E Framework) and respond in a timely and appropriate way to any policy changes.

1.3.2 Global and Other Programs

Australia Awards Fellowships (AAF), Australia Awards provided through the Department of Education and Training (Endeavour Awards) and ACIAR are globally competitive. AAF are funded and managed centrally by DFAT, as are other HRD programs including Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID), and the New Colombo Plan.

Vietnam has also been successful in accessing an average of more than 70 Australia Awards Fellowships (AAF) in each round from June 2007 (Annex 6). In the most recent round (#14), Vietnam was awarded a total of 160 AAFs. Australian institutions initiate the Fellowships, which provide flexible short-term opportunities for in-Australia study, research and professional development with an Australian partner, but do not necessarily lead to formal academic qualifications. Since inception of the scheme in mid-2007, more than 1000 Vietnamese have received Australia Awards Fellowships (involving equal numbers of male and female participants). Graduates are considered Australia Awards alumni. AAF participants have come from over 150 Vietnamese organisations, with the majority from university/ research institutions (around 40 per cent), government (around 30 per cent), and hospitals (around 20 per cent). However, to date, Fellowship awards have not always been aligned with the Vietnam country program priorities.

1.3.3 Alumni

Since 1975, approximately 4000 Australian scholarship awardees have returned to Vietnam after successfully completing their tertiary studies in Australia. Perhaps another 40,000 alumni have been privately funded¹³.

one of Vietnam's listed disadvantaged districts / provinces, or persons with disability.

¹² Defined as living in a government designated 'rural disadvantaged' district.

¹³ To date there have been no DFAT studies in Vietnam or globally, to suggest differences in attitude of privately funded alumni versus scholarship awardees, for example, in terms of people-to-people linkages and economic and public diplomacy benefits.

All current alumni-support activities managed by the Australia Awards Scholarship Vietnam program align with one or more of the 16 “Tools to support engagement with alumni”.

The challenge in Vietnam is to transition to enhanced alumni demand and ownership to improve efficiency and sustainability of Australia’s support and engagement.

Alumni Tracer Studies

The *2011 Tracer Study* of Australia Awards¹⁴ found that in aggregate terms, almost all scholarship awardees were placed in study programs in Australia relevant to their areas of work; about 97 per cent of them were successful in their studies. After graduating, almost 90 per cent of alumni returned to live and work in Vietnam after completing their degrees. More than 90 per cent of returning alumni worked in areas relevant to their studies, and almost two-thirds returned to their previous employer.

About 80 per cent of returning alumni reported they were able to use their new skills in the workplace; 62 per cent transferred some of what they learnt to their colleagues; and 72 per cent reported having helped to improve their organisation. No significant differences were reported between men and women.

Overall, the 2011 Tracer Study confirmed the results of the 2011 Mid-Term Review of the (then ASDIV) program, that the Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS) program, and Australia Awards Fellowships (AAF) program were on track to produce an expanded group of Vietnamese graduates with relevant professional and technical skills.

In 2011, about 80 per cent of alumni had maintained linkages with Australians and other alumni since returning to Vietnam. Some alumni filled prominent government positions in Vietnam, with expected benefits to bilateral relations with Australia.

The *2014 Tracer Study*¹⁵ involved an electronic survey distributed to almost 2,400 alumni who returned from 1998 to 2012. About one-third of recipients completed the survey. Most respondents reported making important contributions to HRD, management systems, work procedures, programs or policies in their organisations; receiving support from supervisors; and significant career progress – which was reflected in promotions, higher salaries, greater responsibility or increased staff supervision responsibilities. However, in most instances men fared better than women. The following gender gaps were noted:

- Among recently returned alumni (2010-2012), men were almost 50% more likely than women to be in a management position and it was consistently higher in all of the 5 cohorts;
- Men were more likely to be promoted at work (51.7% of men, 40.9% of women);
- A greater percentage of male alumni returned to a higher position than

¹⁴ *2011 Vietnam Tracer Study of Australian Scholarships Alumni*, March 2014, DFAT.

¹⁵ *Australia Awards Vietnam - Alumni Tracer Study 2014 (DRAFT)*, October 2014, DFAT.

women (28.6% of men as compared with 20.4% of women); and

- For academics, men were more likely than women to report that their supervisors had supported them to a great extent.

Over 60 per cent of respondents said they had strengthened HRD in their organisation by transferring their skills to colleagues – both technical and broader employment skills.

While around two-thirds of survey respondents reported that they had a reintegration plan in place upon their return from Australia, such a plan could range from a formal Reintegration Action Plan (REAP) to a “vision for their future”.

In summary, there is evidence from the tracer studies, that individuals have benefited from Australia Awards (for example, through promotion, higher salaries); their acquired skills are valued by their organisation (for example, they have been promoted, given greater responsibility); and individuals believe they have contributed to their workplace (for example, using technical knowledge, transferring skills to colleagues).

There is less evidence (the State Bank of Vietnam (SBV) and Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) excepted¹⁶) where some individuals have been supported as part of a strategic HRD plan for developing the ministry. While HRD departments are targeted in the promotion of awards, it remains an individual decision to apply.

Whether part of a ministry HRD strategic plan or not, the impact of alumni on ministry outcomes is difficult (if not impossible) to measure accurately. There are many factors at play and success and contribution is not based on merit alone.

1.4 Lessons Learned

Australia Awards Scholarships have enjoyed a long-term, ongoing history in the Australian aid program, with many lessons learned along the way about effective scholarships management and implementation.

The design team reviewed the evidence from recent Vietnam program reviews, “lessons learned” documents, discussions with stakeholders including alumni, Government of Vietnam ministries and DFAT; as well as the experience of a number of similar programs in the region.

1.4.1 Outsourcing administration/roles and responsibilities

The rationale for outsourcing management of Australia Awards Scholarships since 2002 remains valid. Outsourcing the administrative workload required to manage a large number of awards (peaking at 266 in 2011) frees up Post resources to focus on more strategic activities to improve program effectiveness. With a complement of full time staff, a contractor also has the resources and time

¹⁶ SBV and MPI were the focus of the 2012 central government agency impact study as they are the two central agencies with the greatest number of Australia Award alumni - many of whom are now working in senior and/or management positions within those organisations, and playing a major role in policy development.

to take initiative or pursue objectives in a comprehensive manner, such as the current contractor's engagement of a Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Advisor and the development of the Equity of Access Fund to deliver on the social inclusion objectives of the program.

This is particularly important in the design of the new 2016-20 HRD program, given the restructuring/merging of roles within DFAT. There is some scope for further adjustments to existing management arrangements and outsourcing of tasks to the Contractor. In particular, it is proposed that the Contractor provide some in-country administrative support for the Volunteer and New Colombo Plan programs, and potentially support to other aid small grants programs.

1.4.2 Alignment with the Aid Investment Plan

The Vietnam HRD program to date has delivered a fairly standard scholarships program with a focus on long-term awards predominantly at Master level, with fairly broad eligibility.

At the time of design of the HRD Program 2016-20, the new Aid Investment Plan (AIP) is still under preparation and there is some uncertainty around the level of financial and staffing resources available to support delivery.

However, given the planned reduction in the number of long-term Australia Awards Scholarships available to Vietnamese applicants, it is timely for Australia Awards Scholarships to pilot targeting a smaller number of priority sectors and make greater use of more focused, integrated assistance and different delivery modalities in seeking to enhance HRD program outcomes in selected target institutions. DFAT management and sector teams, in consultation with stakeholders, will determine priority sectors through the AIP preparation process.

The new HRD program will also seek to leverage other Australian global programs (AAF, Endeavour Awards, ACIAR awards, New Colombo Plan, and Volunteers) as part of the strategies to enhance workplace productivity and skills utilisation.

1.4.3 Enhancing HRD

Scholarships help develop specialised skills, and tracer studies show alumni are able to contribute to their organisations, but a review of the AAS program in 2013¹⁷ noted the need to clarify the degree of expected development impacts and change in central government organisations attributable to alumni; similarly, to date, there is little data on the extent to which alumni from provincial locations are contributing to development in their province¹⁸.

While Australia Awards Scholarships are highly regarded in Vietnamese organisations, they are directed at individuals and awarded according to individual merit; and may not be strategically linked to organisational HRD priorities (assuming they exist), or higher-level involvement.

Agencies may be requested to provide a letter of support for applicants, but supervisors may also seek to discourage potentially 'good' applicants from

¹⁷ Lessons Learnt in the Scholarships Program in Vietnam –Final Report, Oct 2013, DFAT

¹⁸ Situation Analysis for Vietnam HRD Delivery Strategy, November 2013, March 2014.

applying, not wishing to lose a talented worker for several years. There have been instances of successful applicants either resigning from an agency to accept an award or withdrawing from the award following pressure from a superior.

Creating the 'right' conditions for alumni to improve their organisations is a challenge. Other HRD modalities (and favourable institutional conditions) may be able to complement the provision of scholarships and help improve the utilisation of skills and workplace performance.

Evidence from other programs suggests simply building a critical mass of scholarship recipients within a targeted organisation is not necessarily a sufficient catalyst for change or effective utilisation of alumni's knowledge and skills. In this sense, the value of scholarships as a capacity building tool across the aid portfolio has perhaps been under-utilised.

Consequently, this design builds on recognised strengths in the provision of Australia Awards Scholarships¹⁹, but also draws on the experience of other country programs in proposing a range of integrated activities or 'toolbox' of delivery options, supported by expanded Contractor resources, to assist Posts in making decisions about the mix of awards and HRD interventions that may more effectively contribute towards intended program outcomes.

This will involve piloting new approaches in the Program (initially on a small scale) providing greater flexibility in HRD delivery modalities to more effectively meet the demand for training and improved workplace productivity in selected target institutions. Additionally, this would provide the potential to identify "lessons learned" which could guide future HRD designs as well as provide immediate scope for dialogue with GOV partners about practical "non-threatening" approaches to workplace reform.

In delivering flexible HRD assistance, it is proposed priority be given to a package of integrated activities (to be designed by the Contractor) in selected target institutions (to be identified by DFAT Hanoi/Contractor), but would also be available to support ad hoc HRD needs identified in other organisations within the new AIP priority sectors, in a timely and responsive manner.

There are strengths, but also challenges associated with the design and delivery of targeted strategies and flexible modalities to promote better HRD outcomes. Demand and feasibility still needs to be determined in consultation with potential target institutions; and following implementation, time to evaluate and measure the ongoing appropriateness for delivery in Vietnam as a permanent feature of the program.

1.4.4 Gender Equality and Social inclusion

Since 2003 to date, women have outnumbered men in the Australia Awards Scholarships program. The higher number of women awardees is regarded positively in light of the lower proportion of women holding Master and PhD-level qualifications in Vietnam.

¹⁹ There are already a range of interventions to complement long-term scholarships, including ELT, pre-departure seminars, Equity of Access Fund and alumni support.

However, gender balance in awardee numbers is not a sufficient gender equality indicator on its own. It is necessary also to consider gender differences at the post-award stage, for example, in career development, promotion and remuneration. The preparatory study²⁰ for this design on Strategies for Promoting Leadership Pathways for Female Australia Awards Alumni in Vietnam also highlighted the predominance of men at senior levels, and HR practices favouring male promotion.

Further, while the preliminary findings of a regional review of disability policy²¹ indicated the Vietnam program was an example of best practice across the global Australia Awards Scholarships program, noting the proactive and committed personnel at Post and within the Contractor team and growing government and social attention to disability inclusion across Vietnam, disadvantaged groups still face challenges in accessing awards, due mainly to limited opportunities in secondary school to progress to undergraduate studies and because of limited English language ability.

The Australia Awards HRD Program 2016-20 will need to continue the momentum created to date; this will require specific programs to maintain progress on gender equality and address disability and social inclusion. To this end it is proposed the Contractor include a dedicated Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Advisor (or advisor team, if pairing a national and international consultant) in the implementation team. Care will also be needed to ensure any change in alignment of awards does not result in a reduction in the ratio of female awardees, given potential male dominance in a number of AIP sectors, particularly infrastructure.

1.4.5 Productive alumni engagement

There is increasing interest from the Australian Government in building alumni networks, both from a relationship and an evaluation perspective. There is a preference for local alumni networks to become self-sustaining²², but productive alumni engagement is likely to require at least some ongoing investment and support.

The 2013 Australia Awards Alumni Network Strategy, and the Alumni Scoping Discussion Paper 2014, provides the framework for alumni engagement under this design. The Contractor will be required to support DFAT in alumni engagement to ensure objectives of the Alumni Strategy can be met.

Where there is an evidence-based need (from reintegration workshops, M&E, tracer studies) additional pre-departure and on-return support to alumni will be provided, including professional development activities, designed to enhance skills utilisation and productivity in the workplace. Since 2010, the AAS program has piloted a Small Grants Scheme to improve alumni participation in the post-award phase. The Scheme, intended to increase alumni knowledge and skills, ownership, and linkages with Australia, provides funding to alumni for small

²⁰ Mia Urbano, DFAT Regional Social Development Specialist, 2015.

²¹ Disability Policy and Implementation Review of Australia Awards Scholarships, DFAT, December 2014.

²² Some Australian universities and other scholarship providers such as Fulbright and Chevening invest (often heavily) in resourcing local networks and providing funding support for events and activities.

research projects, training workshops, preparation of peer reviewed journal articles and presentations at conferences.

2 INVESTMENT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Logic and Expected Outcomes

The “Above-the-Line” Goal for the Vietnam-Australia Partnership on Human Resource Development is that *Vietnam accesses and uses high level professional and technical knowledge, skills and competencies*.

The Program seeks to achieve three End-of-Program Outcomes (EPOs):

1. *Male and female alumni use new skills and knowledge to make positive contributions to selected priority areas*
2. *Stronger workplace enabling environments for skills utilisation in selected priority areas*
3. *Australia and Vietnam have stronger, sustainable links in selected sectors/agencies*

The Program’s Theory of Change is shown in Figure 2.1 below.

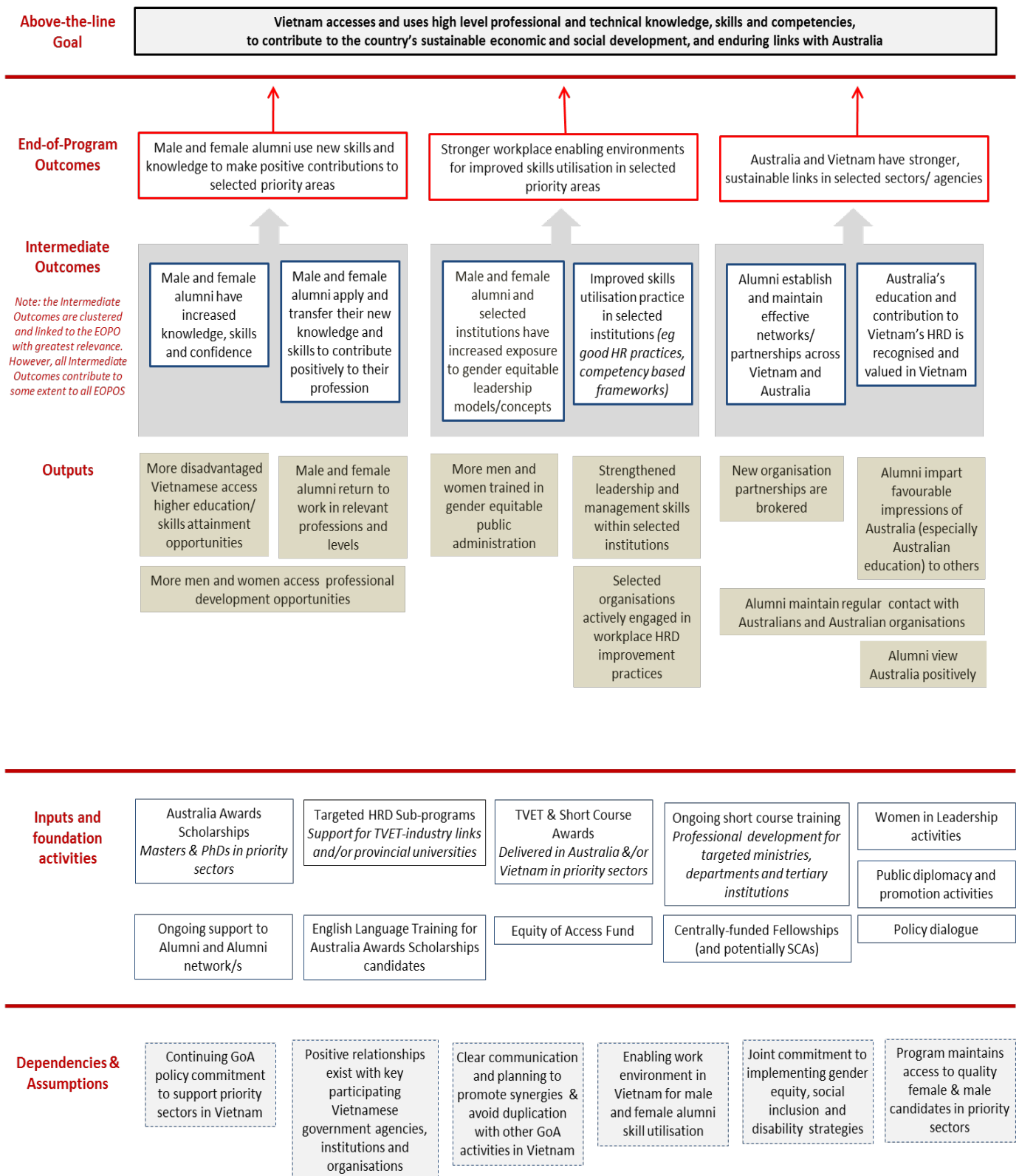
Expected outcomes were tested in a theory of change analysis workshop involving all key program stakeholders. The purpose of the analysis was to identify practical and sustainable strategies for adding value to the provision of long-term postgraduate scholarships; and to seek to strengthen the synergy between HRD interventions and sector pillars under the AIP.

The theory of change demonstrates that if the range of available HRD modalities outlined in the design is delivered in an effective way, then, subject to certain assumptions and appropriate risk management, the design outputs can be achieved. If design outputs are achieved and leveraged with other GOA programs then together they provide a pathway to realising intermediate outcomes. The end of program outcome follows logically from the successful achievement of the three intermediate outcomes; and in turn is one of a number of pillars contributing to the overall AIP goal.

The approach to effective delivery of available HRD modalities is outlined below.

The approach to the measurement of outcomes is described in Section 3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation.

Figure 2.1: Theory of Change



2.2 Delivery Approach

A number of strategies guide the delivery approach, shown diagrammatically in Figure 2.2. The approach assumes a more strategic role for DFAT Hanoi in policy analysis and dialogue working cooperatively with the Contractor to identify priority areas for sector and institution engagement to advance Australian aid objectives.

Firstly, Australia Awards Scholarships continue as the core of the Program, to be aligned closely with sector and geographical priorities in the new Aid Investment Plan. The Program proposes a more tightly focused approach and aims to enhance the targeting and competitiveness of Australia Awards Scholarships.

It is proposed there be two categories of Australia Awards Scholarships: one an open untied category (70% of awards), eligible on a competitive basis to applicants from central/provincial government agencies, universities, the private sector, NGOs and INGOs within specified (AIP) priority sectors; and the other tied (initially 30% of awards, to be reviewed annually) to specific target institutions²³ (to be identified).

Australia Awards Alumni would be supported to strengthen their contribution to the workplace through pre-and post-reintegration support including, 'soft' skills training, small grants scheme, seminars and workshops.

Secondly, it is proposed to develop and pilot one or two sub programs encompassing more intensive integrated HRD support directed at selected target institutions identified in the early phase of commencement of the new HRD program. The sub programs would offer a balance between long-term scholarships (core assistance) and other HRD modalities. That is, target institutions would receive priority support, not only through access to tied Australia Awards Scholarships, but also through access to a package of integrated HRD assistance.

The provision of integrated HRD assistance would seek to go beyond the delivery of tertiary qualifications to enhance workplace productivity, build relationships and strengthen program outcomes (specifically, EOPOs 2 and 3) in priority sectors. It will do this through a broader range of flexible capacity building interventions and delivery modalities, including formal and ad hoc short-term training; technical assistance to access Australian ideas and expertise; and informal learning opportunities, including workshops and seminars. Target institutions would need to be identified and sub programs designed by the Contractor in close consultation with DFAT Hanoi and endorsed by the PCC.

Thirdly, while priority would be accorded to the selected target institutions, alternative HRD modalities would also be available in a timely and responsive way to support ad hoc, or one-off demand driven thematic requests relevant to any of the pillars and sectors under the new AIP. Opportunities to enhance and support ongoing programs would typically be identified by DFAT (and the Contractor) through their engagement with counterpart agencies. The

²³ This still requires a transparent AAS selection process.

Contractor would be responsible for activity implementation, including sub-contracting where appropriate.

Fourthly, to the extent possible, the Program would seek to leverage other DFAT global programs (AAF, AVID, NCP) and whole of government partners, particularly ACIAR, Austrade and the Department of Education and Training in promoting program outcomes. This would primarily involve DFAT Hanoi and the Contractor being aware of and maximising opportunities to build upon existing or planned initiatives to further facilitate linkages/partnerships between Vietnamese and Australian organisations.

Fifthly, Australian aid policy objectives on gender equality and women's empowerment and on social inclusion are addressed throughout the design, including through specific strategies to address disadvantage, provision of leadership training programs, gender appropriate approaches to M&E, reintegration activities and Contractor personnel.

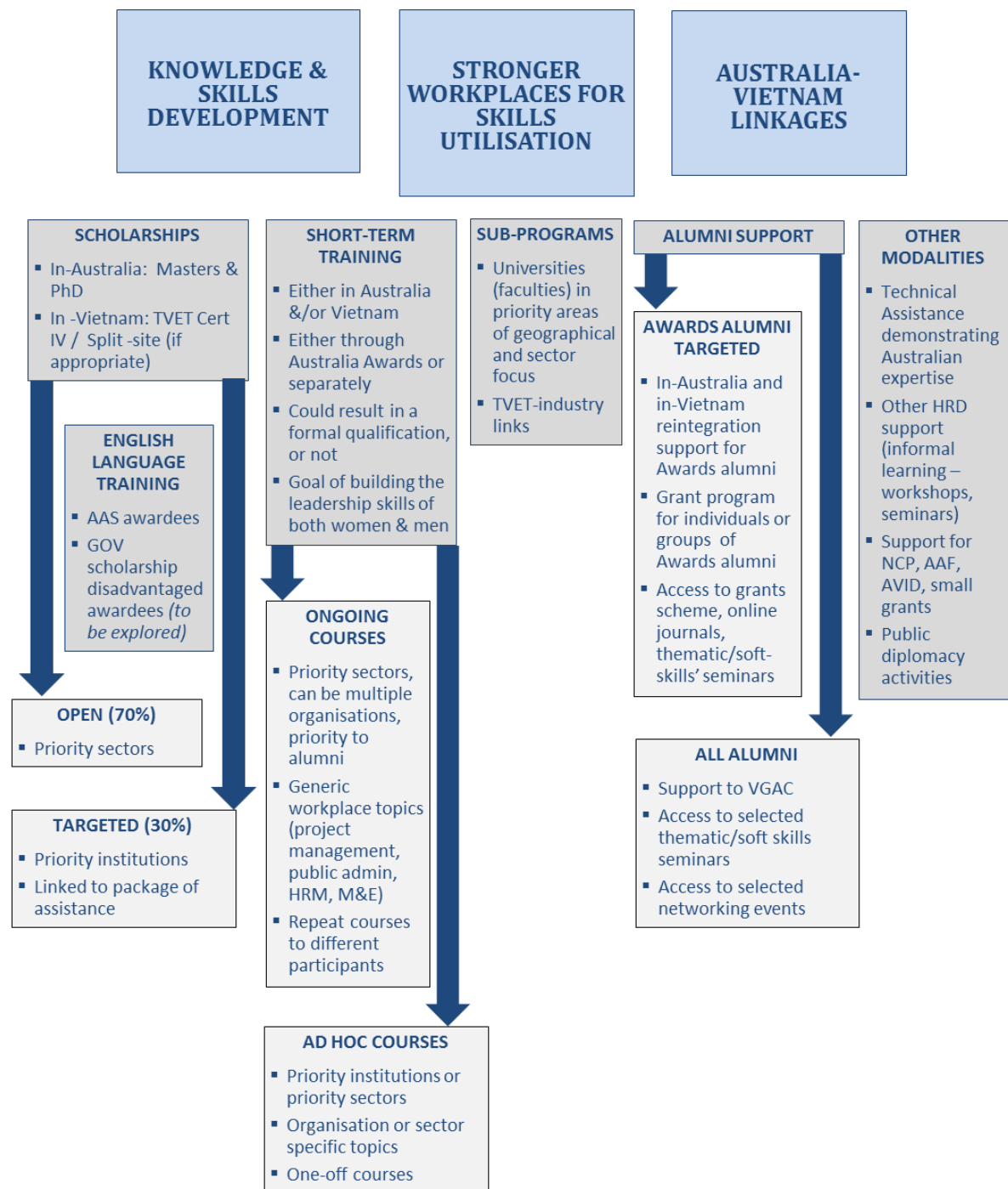
In summary, the proposed approach to implementation of the Program involves, at its core, delivery of the well-established AAS; supplemented by a number of structured sub programs (to be identified); and ad hoc interventions (to be identified) to support ongoing sector programs.

Identification of target institutions and sub programs will require further preparatory work by DFAT Hanoi and the Contractor to determine demand, commitment and the scope of interventions. The Contractor will be responsible for preparing a plan within six months of mobilisation²⁴ outlining the proposed approach to identification, preparation and implementation of sub programs, STT, the Women in Leadership program; and ad hoc activities. The plan will be guided by sector and geographic priorities as determined through the AIP preparation process; discussions between DFAT Hanoi and the GOV; and available budget.

Based on current (2015) advice, there will be limited funding available for implementation of additional HRD activities, aside from the AAS, prior to Years 3-5 of the program. Consequently, there is adequate time to thoroughly investigate sub program options. This should involve stop/go points whereby the Contractor undertakes an initial assessment of potential sub programs for consideration by DFAT Hanoi; subject to advice from DFAT Hanoi the Contractor would proceed to further development of preferred sub program options. In designing sub programs the Contractor will draw on the sector knowledge, policy and analytical support of DFAT, Hanoi.

²⁴ Priority in the first month of mobilisation will be ensuring the ASS process is maintained. Further, until target institutions are identified all AAS will be untied.

Figure 2.2: Components of the Vietnam-Australia Partnership on HRD



Responsibility for the design and sub-contracting of HRD activities, whether sub programs, STT or small-scale interventions will rest with the Contractor. The Contractor would submit a proposal to DFAT Hanoi for approval outlining design activities and objectives, implementation schedule, estimated cost and the approach to sub-contracting. A simple tasking note from DFAT Hanoi would authorise the Contractor to proceed. PCC endorsement should be obtained for multi-year Australia Awards STT courses and for the design and implementation of sub programs.

2.2.1 Sub Program Selection

The institutional environment in Vietnam is complex and challenging. While the sub programs will seek to improve HR practices and workplace productivity in various ways, it is not realistic to expect to engage extensively with target institutions in strengthening internal HRD planning and/or policy development; or seek to achieve substantial organisational change. This would require a major reassessment of objectives, timeframe and funding of the Program.

It is proposed sub programs be identified from within one or both of the following options:

- a) universities (faculties) in priority areas of geographical and sector focus; and
- b) technical vocational education and training (TVET).

Selecting target institutions and sub programs to receive priority access to awards and additional HRD assistance, and the type of assistance offered, will depend on a range of factors. This should include an assessment of both favourable institutional conditions for further enhancing the utilisation of skills as well as constraints. HRD support to institutions, beyond Australia Awards Scholarships, is potentially a sensitive issue; demand is most likely to be stronger and the chances of success greater where there is trust through some existing partnership with the Australian Government.

As a minimum the sub program/institution should be within a priority sector of the AIP; and the institution should be in a position to benefit from a rolling package of support within the available budget and timeframe to enhance HRD program outcomes.

It should be an institution with a cohort of Australian alumni and capacity needs aligned with areas of Australian expertise that can add value and enable scholarships to be more effective within the institution.

There should be demonstrated demand and a level of commitment and interest in accessing relevant Australian experience to improve utilisation of skills and workplace productivity, with leadership willing to support the program.

The potential focus for sub program development is outlined below. A detailed list of factors to be considered in selection of institutions to participate in sub programs is included in Annex 3²⁵. As appropriate, sub programs could be

²⁵ The option of developing a sub program of HRD support to government departments was considered, but for reasons discussed in Annex 3, including already extensive access to support for re-structuring and improving HR practices under

commenced slowly, expand where results are being achieved, or be re-allocated as necessary.

a) Provincial and Regional Universities

Higher education (at the ministry level through MOET) has received considerable donor assistance in the past. The alternative of focusing HR improvements or capacity building directly in selected universities, targeting administrators, lecturers, researchers, may offer potential to enhance program linkages and address a range of aid policy objectives, including equity, leadership and gender on a larger scale than is possible now through individual annual scholarship awards; and do so in a way that avoids sensitive ministry level institutional and policy issues. Universities may also be more open to, and able to utilise, technical assistance or volunteers.

An integrated package of HRD support over a number of years could, for example, target agriculture and English language faculties, professional skills, research capacity, and international linkages. In this way there may be scope to link and support the AIP pillar expected to focus on sustainability, agriculture, women's livelihoods and community and social inclusion.

A number of universities across the country have strong historical links to Australia Awards Scholarships. Targeting more established, financially stable universities, for example, in Hue, Danang or in the Mekong Delta, may provide more immediate benefits. However, a point of difference might be to target universities that also include a focus on disadvantage – with a substantial number of students from rural and ethnic minorities in priority geographic regions (e.g. northwest) under the new AIP.

b) Technical vocational education and training (TVET)

Despite efforts by the Government of Vietnam, the TVET system remains complex, with multiple stakeholders, inefficiencies and duplication of effort and resources. There is a lack of effective collaboration between industry, government and training institutions.

MoLISA has indicated interest in Australian expertise. Independently, MoLISA funded almost 200 trainers from 45 training institutes (designated 'centres of excellence') to upgrade skills and obtain formal qualifications in Australia. Separately DFAT has co-funded Rectors from these same centres to upgrade management skills. There may be scope to build on this involvement and further encourage institutional linkages.

HRD support for TVET could involve a range of delivery modalities, including Diplomas and/or Certificate IV awards in Workplace Training and Assessment, technical advice in areas of Australian expertise or short-term training, particularly for technical college managers and administrators. Attention will be given to TVET offerings that cater to both men and women's interests.

the long running UNDP Public Administration (PAR) program, was not deemed an initial priority. Government departments will however, still have access to short term training and other HRD support, on an as needs basis.

The most common issue confronting TVET institutions and employers involves the quality of trainers, both in terms of up to date industry knowledge and pedagogical skills. It is envisaged that Diploma training, if identified, would be delivered by an Australian RTO²⁶ in-Vietnam with commensurate cost savings²⁷.

In building upon Australia's involvement in the TVET sector to date, there are other development partners (notably Germany) delivering HRD support in areas ('centres of excellence') that align well with Australia's national interest and where there is interest in working cooperatively to deliver economies of scale and avoid duplication of effort.

Within the available budget and timeframe, the Contractor will be required to explore potential niche areas of demand where initial small-scale assistance could be directed. Water supply is a potential sector option and one where there is known Australian interest and expertise.

A feasibility study²⁸ conducted in late 2014 recommended, as a potential initial entry point, technical assistance to support establishment of Sector Skills Councils in priority AIP sectors to examine skills gaps, curricula, incentives, and skills training mechanisms; together with in-country teacher training in Certificate IV Workplace Training and Assessment. This could be linked to strengthening leadership and management capacity in 'centres of excellence' colleges, many of which already have established links with a number of Australian TAFE institutes.

Support for reform, strengthening and inclusiveness of the TVET sector offers the most direct contribution the program could make in relation to private sector development²⁹. Strengthening linkages between government, industry and training colleges to create a trained workforce of men and women with relevant skills, is essential for modern industry and innovation, and to achieve Vietnam's growth objectives.

Investment in this sector would also provide scope for increased DFAT engagement with business and business sector organisations to provide greater understanding of further development opportunities for supporting private sector led economic growth.

Further investigation by DFAT Hanoi/Contractor is required to determine colleges/industry willing to participate within priority AIP sectors; the exact form of assistance; and scope for donor collaboration.

²⁶ RMIT recently completed delivery of a Master of Engineering course in Vietnam, demonstrating a capacity to deliver Australian qualifications in-Vietnam.

²⁷ Based on estimates provided by RMIT Hanoi, the cost for providing Cert IV Workplace Training & Assessment training courses would be approximately AUD 3,000 per participant, for a maximum of 20 participants per course. The course could be tailor made to be delivered in Vietnamese by in-country staff, with a course period of 10 days, which could be scheduled in a block (2 weeks x 5 days per week) or on a one-day per week basis.

²⁸ Feasibility Study of Vietnam TVET, November 2014. See Annex 17.

²⁹ Other opportunities to support private sector development exist through engagement with relevant alumni.

2.3 Delivery Modalities

Australia Awards Scholarships provided under the Program are estimated to account for around 80 per cent of the five-year budget; the remaining 20 per cent is available to fund other HRD modalities either through structured sub programs or ad hoc responsive support for priority sector activities.

The ‘toolbox’ of flexible HRD delivery modalities available, aside from AAS, includes the following options:

- formal and/or ad hoc short-term training (delivered in Vietnam and/or Australia), including blended training models to develop generic, technical and ‘soft’ skills;
- split-site or in-Vietnam formal training, where functional joint degree delivery programs involving an Australian and Vietnamese university *already exist and have operated successfully in the past*³⁰;
- technical assistance and on-the-job training, showcasing areas of Australian expertise to address specific issues³¹;
- informal learning opportunities, including workshops, seminars, study tours, work placements, visiting lecturers/keynote speakers/mentoring;
- utilising alumni networks to support development and community activities;
- facilitating linkages/partnerships between Vietnamese and Australian organisations (government, universities, TVET institutions, business and industry).

Australia Awards: Scholarships

Australia Awards Scholarships form the core assistance provided under the Program. From 2016 to 2020, the number of long-term scholarships offered annually is likely to decline from up to 100 initially to 50 or less over the five year period³². Scholarships will enable individuals in Vietnam to undertake a Master’s degree program or Doctorate studies³³, offered by an Australian university in Australia.

A target of 20 per cent of the total number of Australia Awards over the five-year program will satisfy the definition of “Disadvantaged” (individuals from one of Vietnam’s listed disadvantaged districts / provinces, or persons with disability).

Should any Australian university *currently* offer a dual or split Masters Degree collaboratively with a Vietnamese University, in one of the confirmed “Priority Sectors”, potential Scholarship awardees can seek to apply for that program. However, approval by DFAT Canberra may be required in any such situations and changes may be required to the annual Australia Awards Policy Handbook.

³⁰ Any joint degree program must also align with one of the AIP Priority Sectors

³¹ It is unlikely there would be scope or demand for long-term technical assistance.

³² This may be partially offset by an increase in STT, which to date has not been a significant feature of Australian Government support for HRD in Vietnam.

³³ Subject to the annual planning process, the program will allow up to 20% of awards for Doctorate studies.

Up to 12 months' English Language Training will be available to support high-quality candidates to reach the language levels required for entry into Australian universities. However, successful applicants from any of the designated *Equity of Access Fund* groups may be offered up to a further six months of intensive English Language Training in Australia.

Australia's comprehensive support for English language training, particularly for disadvantaged Vietnamese, is unique and highly regarded by the GOV. The Program may also explore the opportunity of knowledge exchange between Australia's and Vietnam's scholarships programs, and supporting the access for disadvantaged Vietnamese to Vietnam's scholarships program (for example, through English language training and/or provision of disability supports).

Australia Awards: Short-Term Training (STT)

Short course awards are defined as "opportunities for formal study or training, generally less than three months' duration, and no more than five months' duration, delivered by an approved Australian higher education provider (see Table A, B, C of the Higher Education Support Act 2003) or an Australian Registered Training Organisation".

Vietnam-specific Short-term Training (STT) included in this design *and* any global Short Course Award (SCA)³⁴ program managed by DFAT Canberra in which Vietnam could seek to nominate participants, is required to adhere to the current definition of short-term training.

Demand driven, short-term training is a well-established capacity building tool and if properly designed can provide an alternative, value for money approach, to enhancing workplace productivity. STT can be more responsive to current and emerging needs and provides potential for greater engagement with key officials and building relationships. The stronger the commitment to reform and the stronger the mutual trust and accountability between donor and recipient agency, the stronger likelihood interventions will be effective in developing and promoting skills utilisation.

STT can be purpose designed for Vietnam, nuanced in terms of content and delivery, to address specific local needs; and may include in-Vietnam and/or in-Australia components. As such it can complement AAS and AAF, both as part of a broader integrated program of HRD support to selected institutions or to meet common thematic demands from a number of Vietnamese institutions.

Short-term training provides access to training for women and men who do not meet the academic or English requirements to undertake postgraduate study in Australia or are unable to leave the workplace for extended study. Participants would typically include those in leadership and senior or middle management positions.

³⁴ Note that any SCA's undertaken by awardees from Vietnam are to be recorded within overall country and global Australia Awards databases; in contrast, STT activities and other *ad hoc* interventions are not necessarily considered as part of the overall Australia Awards program, for DFAT *Australia Award data recording* purposes. However, in principle and wherever applicable, any short courses are to be identified within and managed under the "Australia Awards" broader global program of SCAs.

Short-term training provides stronger opportunities for direct peer-peer learning and wherever possible, the courses will be delivered in partnership between an Australian and a Vietnamese organisation providing mutual benefits.

Short-term training can be designed around generic areas (for example, project management, public administration and human resource management, monitoring and evaluation) as well as customised to meet specific needs linked to priority sector programs within the AIP. It can be delivered in-Vietnam/in-Australia or through blended programs as currently supported by Australia under the Vietnam Development Information Centre of the World Bank.

However, STT can also create substantial workloads, both technical and administrative, to effectively meet requirements; and time lags between identification and delivery can affect participation. Key issues impacting the success of short-term training are detailed in Annex 4. This annex also includes information on course planning and design.

The Contractor, in conjunction with the DFAT Hanoi, will need to review, on an annual basis, the trade-off and demand between Australia Awards Scholarships, short-term training and other HRD delivery modalities.

The design provides for additional technical and administration support from the Contractor to support identification and design of short-term training, where appropriate, with courses to be delivered by Australian Registered Training Organisation (RTO) subcontractors³⁵. Australian universities can provide a wide range of short courses, either as RTOs, or in their own right as a tertiary institution.

Subject to budget availability, it is anticipated between three and five short courses of up to three months duration will be developed under the program, with each course delivered up to three times over Years 3, 4 and 5 of the program. This will facilitate quality of design and economies of scale. Most courses are expected to involve both an Australian and Vietnamese delivery component to provide opportunity for an “Australia experience”.

In some instances, even two to three month short courses will not be accessible for senior government administrators, key decision-makers in business, smaller voluntary organisations, and men but particularly women with family responsibilities. The design includes provision for blended training models and ad hoc shorter courses as part of a program of ongoing assistance.

In identifying the first set of STT courses to be delivered, the Contractor and DFAT should consider including some courses with a number of components of up to several weeks at a time, potentially offered only in Vietnam, using Australian institutions, expertise and presenters (blended training).

The Contractor, in consultation with the Post, will be responsible for the design and for sub-contracting delivery of short-term training. A global mechanism for

³⁵ A Registered Training Organisation (RTO) in Australia is an organisation providing Vocational Education and Training (VET) to students, resulting in qualifications and/or statements of attainment that are recognised and accepted by industry and other educational institutions throughout Australia. RTOs are recognised as providers of quality-assured and nationally recognised training and qualifications. There are currently around 5000 RTOs in Australia. (*Refer GoA Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).*)

contracting providers to deliver Short Courses is under consideration by DFAT Canberra. The Program will use the global mechanism when and if established; most likely in addition to the Vietnam HRD Program-specific Short-term Training opportunities.

Global programs

The AAF program builds and strengthens links between Australia and organisations in Vietnam by offering flexible short-term opportunities, which do not lead to academic qualifications, for in-Australia study, research and professional development.

The Program has no direct control over the design of global awards, but DFAT Hanoi should assess the relevance of awards offered to avoid duplication and ensure priority is given to AAF that are aligned with the AIP sectors and strategies, and preserves a gender balance. Based on previous AAF allocations, it is expected up to 100 Australia Awards Fellowships could be offered to Vietnamese applicants, annually (subject to budget decisions).

DFAT Hanoi should continue to discuss with DFAT Canberra its preference for opportunities in priority AAF topics that will assist in leveraging the Program outputs and outcomes. While having little direct involvement in the AAF, the Contractor can value add by providing advice to DFAT on linking potential Australian Host Organisations and priority sector agencies in Vietnam.

Similarly, the Volunteer program and New Colombo Plan provide opportunities for reinforcing an integrated approach to HRD. The Contractor will have a role in providing advice to DFAT on opportunities to leverage these global programs to support priority sector HRD programs.

Australia Awards: Alumni

Strengthening alumni networks is critical to the success of the global alumni strategy designed to strengthen people to people and industry links to enhance Australia's diplomatic, economic and international education interests³⁶. Increasingly, it is recognised that benefits will be optimised by inclusion of both Australia Awards alumni and self-funded alumni.

Individual alumni and alumni organisations are important resources for promoting and supporting HRD, as well as providing linkages and networks into both the public and private sectors. Australia Awards alumni associations in many countries support professional development and networking among alumni, and offer an opportunity for alumni to work collectively toward the achievement of their respective community, national or regional economic and social development goals. In short, with effective post-award strategies, alumni networks can be major contributors to achieving program outcomes.

Alumni activities for Australia Awards graduates will build on current alumni professional development initiatives, such as the Alumni Conference, Small Grants Scheme, Online Journal access, and workshops and networking activities;

³⁶ Effective Alumni Engagement—Concept Note, DFAT, November 2014.

and will also be able to take advantage of DFAT *global* Australia Awards alumni activities.

There are tens of thousands of Vietnamese graduates of Australian universities and other tertiary institutions – mainly self-funded. The VGAC has an estimated 6,000 “listed” members, and an extensive chapter network, but maintaining graduate interest in joining the organisation and sustaining membership numbers is challenging.

DFAT Hanoi plans to support the VGAC by locating an Australian Volunteer/s within VGAC in the first year of the 2016-2020 Vietnam HRD Program. This will include an assessment of capacity building options, sustainability strategies and transition issues when there is no longer in-country Contractor support available to alumni.

Technical Assistance and Other Delivery Modalities

Technical assistance, on-the-job-training/mentoring and informal learning opportunities, including workshops, seminars, study tours, work placements, ad-hoc short courses and visiting lecturers/keynote speakers are the most flexible and responsive capacity building opportunities offered by the design. These modalities would be delivered in-country involving Australian and/or Vietnamese providers. They could be part of a design package within sub programs or one-off assistance needs identified by sector programs.

In sourcing appropriate expertise, the Contractor will be required to have access to relevant networks and knowledge of potential Australian partners and capacity in priority AIP sectors.

Typically, technical assistance would involve short-term inputs to address specific thematic issues. It is not envisaged there would be demand for long-term TA placements within institutions. ‘Soft’ skills training in leadership, management and team building would most likely be delivered in one-two day programs using locally based providers (which may include Australian presenters). Blended training offers a potentially good model for both ad hoc and structured training: it could involve face-to-face training combined with practical assignments and video conferencing delivered separately over an extended timeframe.

Women in development - Leadership Training

The Tracer Studies from 2011 and 2014 highlighted the need to address barriers and constraints to women’s advancement in the workplace. Awardees study within a chosen discipline within Australia, but with little exposure to senior management figures and approaches to managing and leading teams. Women, in particular, have little exposure to female role models – given their low representation at senior levels in the public sector and universities.

The Program will develop a training course on leadership and management designed to promote competencies, exposure to professional and technical role models and support for gender equitable leadership models in participant’s organisations. This is envisaged to include both in-Australia and in-Vietnam components, with female awardees likely to have less time for these activities upon return to family responsibilities in Vietnam. In the preparatory study for

this Design, many female alumni also noted they would appreciate exposure to the more numerous examples of women in senior positions in technical and professional roles.

The Contractor will be responsible for developing the in-country leadership program.

Participation in the in-country leadership program would be open to both female and male alumni candidates working in priority AIP sectors, with preference given to Australia Awards alumni where demand exceeds available placements. The in-country leadership program is intended to foster consciousness and competencies in gender equitable leadership and management. Application would be via a competitive process, including demonstrated interest in promoting gender equitable workplaces. The course will involve:

- In-Vietnam delivery, including interaction with female and male public/private/academic sector leaders;
- In Australia on-award engagement strategy to facilitate awardee contact with male and female sector leaders in Australia;
- Mentoring/workshops/short courses/blended learning
- Academic and policy exchanges and guest lecture program

Additionally, the Contractor in consultation with DFAT Hanoi, will investigate the feasibility of targeting senior cadres in the civil service, by further supporting the Centre for Women in Politics and Public Administration (WiPPA)³⁷, based within the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics and Public Administration. WiPPA provides the most direct channel (among arguably few options) for supporting gender equality and leadership pathways for women within the public sector and public administration, in accordance with the needs identified in a preparatory study for this design³⁸. It also offers scope for supporting a politically accepted centre to work towards a greater acceptance of women as leaders among the most senior strata of political and public sector organisations.

The Academy provides intensive mode, 'political' training to senior civil servants. Building on previous donor support to WiPPA has the advantage that it reaches the decision makers, predominantly men, who are on track for political candidature in future and who have influence over public sector culture.

WiPPA's objective is to provide programs that advance gender equality in the public sector, particularly to promote the increased representation of women in leadership positions. It promotes a model of leadership that takes into account the 'historical biases' against women to attain their full potential.

WiPPA currently delivers modules on gender equality and gender equitable leadership in the mainstream political curriculum of the HCM Academy. WiPPA intends to expand its collection of evidence on the impact of the greater

³⁷ WiPPA evolved from a UNDP-MOFA project on women's empowerment and leadership.

³⁸ Strategies for Promoting Leadership Pathways for Female Australia Awards Alumni in Vietnam, Mia Urbano, 2014. See Annex 16.

representation of women in public sector leadership (at national and subnational levels in Vietnam) to inject into the curriculum.

The UNDP provided foundation funding to WiPPA upon its launch in 2013 and is currently planning a review of its first phase of support. UNDP is amenable to collaborating with DFAT on the review and scoping of future support, including how WiPPA can manage an expanded funding base.

Support to WiPPA, if assessed as feasible, could involve assistance in the design and delivery of evidence based short course training, research, and gender mainstreaming of the curriculum for the political elite on gender equitable leadership. It also offers the opportunity for academic partnership, exchange and guest lecturing with Australian academic and political institutions.

BOX 1: POLICY DIALOGUE

The design of the Vietnam-Australia Partnership on HRD assumes a more strategic role for DFAT Hanoi in policy analysis and policy dialogue working in concert with the Contractor to identify key sector partners and priority areas for engagement to advance Australian aid, economic and diplomacy objectives.

While the different Australian Government agencies involved in education in Vietnam – Australia’s Department of Education and Training, Austrade and DFAT – have their own agency-specific objectives, this combined Australian effort should build rapport, promote goodwill, and provide mutual benefits in the education sector between Australia and Vietnam. DFAT’s focus areas of policy dialogue include: higher education and TVET, social inclusion, and private sector development.

Opportunities for policy dialogue include GOV education and economic counterparts, private sector partners, Australian WOG partners and other development partners with common objectives in Vietnam. It is envisaged this will help build relationships and key sector knowledge through a deeper understanding of stakeholder interests; identify opportunities for collaboration/avoid duplication of efforts; and to anticipate and mitigate risk.

Potential support for reform, strengthening and inclusiveness of the TVET sector offers scope for engagement with business and business sector organisations to provide greater understanding of development opportunities for further supporting private sector led economic growth as well as supporting Australia’s international education interests.

Since the mid-1970’s, approximately 4,500 Australia Awards Scholarships alumni have returned to Vietnam after successfully completing their tertiary studies in Australia. Perhaps another 40,000 alumni have been privately funded. These alumni are a potentially significant resource for strengthening Australia’s economic, diplomatic and social engagement with Vietnam. Australia will utilise its strong network of alumni, volunteers, and New Colombo Plan alumni to leverage policy dialogue.

2.4 Budget and Resources

Available funding and the phasing of expenditure will determine the extent and timing of new activities that can be implemented.

Based on current experience, Contractor management, ELT and alumni activity costs, are expected to account for the majority of the available in-Vietnam budget in Years 1 and 2. The exact Contractor costs will be determined through a public tender process and will be influenced by the staffing mix proposed by the Contractor selected via that process.

Aside from AAS and alumni activities, it is expected there will be limited scope for new activities in the first two years of implementation. This likely delay in available budget does, however, provide the opportunity for detailed investigation and preparation of sub programs and analysis of the most appropriate delivery modalities for broader based HRD support to target institutions.

There are significant differences in the direct costs of delivering Australia Awards, as shown by the indicative costs summarised below (early-2014 estimates):

- Five-year PhD: \$295,000
- Two-year Masters: \$120,000
- Short-term Training (courses of 1-3 months): \$30,000 - \$45,000
- 1 year VET (Certificate/Diploma): \$58,000 (in-Australia)
- 2 year VET (Diploma/ Advanced Diploma): \$100,000 (in-Australia)

NB. In-Vietnam delivery of TVET would be considerably lower cost.

For planning purposes, the all-inclusive cost of STT has been estimated at AUD 7000/person week in Australia and around AUD 3000/person week in Vietnam. Consequently, for a typical short course of 3 months duration split evenly between delivery in Australia and Vietnam with 15 participants, the cost per course delivered is around AUD 900,000. Each course would be delivered three times in consecutive years (Years 3-5), giving a total cost of AUD2.7 million.

The identification of target institutions and the demand for a package of assistance (sub programs and/or STT) has yet to be tested, but clearly, within the available budget a smaller investment in (long-term) Australia Awards Scholarships, offering more short-term awards and/or in-Vietnam TVET awards or other HRD delivery modalities has the potential to reach a larger number of organisations and individuals. DFAT Hanoi, with assistance of the Contractor, and in consultation with the GOV will need to make decisions annually on the balance between various HRD delivery modalities.

The majority of Contractor in-Vietnam costs (and management responsibilities) associated with Australia Awards Scholarships are fixed. These will not vary much whether the number of awards is set at 100 or 50 although there may be some management savings from the proposed reduction to two categories of awards only.

Should there be a further reduction in the number of long-term awards, there will be some in-Australia savings, although existing scholarship award costs will

extend into the next phase. Hence significant savings would not occur until quite late in the next program.

Provision should also be included for an expanded role for the Contractor in managing the new phase of the HRD program. In particular, the Contractor will require capacity to manage/sub contract a range of new delivery modalities including short-term training, technical assistance, including on gender equality and social inclusion, and informal learning approaches as well as specified in-country management tasks for the volunteer program, New Colombo Plan, and potentially aid small grants.

Annex 5 provides an indicative list of principles for determining contractor responsibilities in relation to volunteers and the New Colombo Plan, excluding activities already undertaken by partners. The Contractor will be responsible for liaison with DFAT Hanoi, two core partners and host organisations to support in-country management and administration, country strategy and planning processes, facilitate coordination and synergy between core partners, and ensure cohesion between AVID support and other HRD support managed by the Contractor. The final decision on Contractor responsibilities for the AVID program will be determined during the first three months of program implementation by DFAT Hanoi, in consultation with the Contractor, core partners, and DFAT Volunteer Section.

Similarly, the Contractor will have a role in assisting DFAT Hanoi promote the New Colombo Plan in Vietnam³⁹. Specific responsibilities will be confirmed by DFAT Hanoi, in consultation with the Contractor, during the first three months of program implementation, but is likely to include activities to promote awareness and raise the profile of the NCP in Vietnam among key stakeholders (Annex 5).

Note: NCP activities are not ODA eligible and the Contractor's role in NCP is dependent on the availability of funding from a budget source other than the aid program.

The Contractor will establish and maintain a program management office in Hanoi, sufficient to accommodate program staff, including during times of temporary staffing increases, and all necessary office facilities.

The Contractor will be responsible for delivery and management of a high quality program. The program will be managed and implemented in-Vietnam by a team of professional and administrative staff.

The Contractor will propose an appropriate staffing structure, utilising a mix of international and national staff with the necessary skills and experience. The exact mix of personnel inputs will be determined in order to provide all the required functions listed in the Statement of Requirements. Key Contractor staff requirements are outlined in Annex 15.

2.5 Contracting Strategy

³⁹ NCP funding is not eligible as ODA, and program implementation is primarily the responsibility of the participating universities in Australia and Vietnam.

A number of contracting approaches were considered.

The GOV has experience of managing small scholarship programs of development partners including Belgium, New Zealand and Japan. The focus is on selection, with limited placement options for awardees. Management by the GOV would provide maximum ownership, but it is not a role the GOV has sought (it would place a significant administrative cost on GOV partners); there would be a loss of Australian identity and public diplomacy opportunities; and importantly, it would be less able to meet the design requirements in terms of social inclusion objectives, ELT, alumni support and customised HRD activities, involving a range of delivery modalities, to achieve program outcomes. It is not considered a viable option.

Nor is in-house management an option, given the scale of the program and the resource intensive administrative and management workload required⁴⁰, when there is increasing demand for Post resources to focus on more strategic and analytical responsibilities.

It is proposed therefore, implementation of the program be undertaken by a Contractor, delivered via a Program model. The Program would provide a focal point for all Australian HRD assistance and offers maximum efficiency in progressively developing and implementing HRD through a range of delivery modalities. This would involve relatively fixed expenditure for management of the scholarships component (promotion and selection, English language training, pre-departure, departure, on award management, reintegration and alumni activities) and in-country activities related to the Volunteers program and New Colombo Plan; alongside flexible HRD expenditure in support of sub programs, STT and timely responses to identified ad hoc and emerging needs.

The Contractor will provide the operational and administrative resources that are necessary to implement the program, as well as access to tertiary education advisory expertise. This approach will ensure that DFAT can focus its resources on the strategic direction, analysis, partnership and policy issues of the program. The English language training services required as part of the program will be delivered by the Contractor, or by a subcontractor engaged for that purpose. Such services will not be managed as a separate contract with DFAT.

⁴⁰ In addition to the fulltime expatriate Team Leader, the current Contractor has 13 fulltime local staff plus access to short-term expatriate expertise in M&E, Gender and Social Inclusion and HRD.

3 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 Management and Governance Arrangements

The governance approach emphasises promotion of Australian interests through active DFAT consultations, engagement and policy dialogue with GOV education and economic counterparts, private sector partners, Australian WOG partners and other development partners with common objectives in Vietnam. It is designed to help build relationships and key sector knowledge through a deeper understanding of stakeholder interests; identify opportunities for collaboration/avoid duplication of efforts; and to anticipate and mitigate risk.

Management and governance arrangements will accord with GOV regulations on ODA management.

Project Coordinating Committee (PCC)

Subject to confirmation by the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), the key central agency counterpart for delivery of the HRD Program is the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET). A partnership will be formalised with MOET through a Subsidiary Agreement and establishment of a Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) to provide joint oversight of the program by senior DFAT and GOV officials. DFAT will strive for gender balance in representation on the PCC.

DFAT and MoET will be responsible for strategic planning and review of the investment, including the allocation of scholarship awards by level, sector focus and between the two categories of awards; and approval of award recommendations. Administrative and operational matters will be the responsibility of the Contractor. The PCC will not be involved in the selection process.

Partnerships will also be established with selected target institutions in key sector sub programs (to be identified). There may be value in inviting these partners as observer or ad hoc members of the PCC⁴¹, bringing additional perspectives and opportunity for building relationships.

Annually⁴², the PCC will be a forum for discussion of program performance and effectiveness, and for adjustment of strategic and operational priorities for the program. For example, sector priorities and the proportion of awards targeted to strategic partner organisations should be reviewed annually by the PCC; as well as new HRD activities and/or new partnerships and sub program activities.

The Contractor will play an important role in PCC meetings through technical and management advice/input and M&E activities. The Contractor will also act as secretariat and maintain a record of decisions and discussions.

PCC meetings will be timed to ensure that decisions made about the strategic and operational priorities for the coming year, are reflected in the subsequent

⁴¹ Arrangements should be determined by the PCC as sub programs are developed and approved by the PCC. Given the broader HRD objectives of the program, this could include inviting MPI representation on the PCC. MPI has responsibility for bilateral aid coordination.

⁴² More frequent meetings may be determined by the PCC.

program planning process, scholarships promotion and selection processes, short-term training and other HRD activities.

The Contractor will prepare Terms of Reference for the PCC, in consultation with DFAT Hanoi and MOET. The PCC will comprise representatives from DFAT Hanoi and relevant GOV officials. Terms of Reference should focus on the strategic role of the PCC in setting key program parameters; consideration of emerging issues and implementation risks; and review of program performance and effectiveness.

DFAT Post

The HRD Unit in DFAT Hanoi Post, headed by a First Secretary, has responsibility for oversight of the education and HRD program (including the global programs AAF, AVID and NCP).

The design encourages devolution to the Contractor, to the extent possible, of all administrative tasks; retaining only the minimum necessary for contract and financial accountability. This will facilitate a change in focus, for the HRD Unit to take on increased responsibility for policy analysis and engagement with relevant stakeholders.

The HRD Unit should take an active role with the Contractor in analysing the scope for deeper engagement with key sector partners and sub program development.

GoV Responsibilities

MoET is the key counterpart for strategic and policy decisions regarding the program. As sub programs are developed other partners may be increasingly involved.

Contractor Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Contractor are described throughout this design document and in the draft Statement of Requirements. The Contractor will provide personnel, resources and management services to undertake all relevant planning, sub program development, coordination, sub-contracting and alumni and administration services necessary for the effective implementation of the Program. The Contractor will work in collaboration with DFAT and the GoV to achieve Program outcomes.

Contractor performance will be assessed through annual Aid Quality Check (AQC) review and Partner Performance Assessment (PPA) processes, while the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF) will probe core issues related to program execution; this will provide evidence on the effectiveness of program implementation.

3.2 Activity Implementation

The implementation approach described below covers the core program of Australia Awards Scholarships and Alumni as well as non-AAS activities. The processes for delivery of scholarships and pre and post award support to alumni are well established; some small refinements only to current implementation practice are proposed.

3.2.1 Australia Awards – Scholarships

The scholarship program has a strong reputation for being effectively implemented and managed. Program implementation to date has provided a strong foundation for the implementation of a new awards program, which is aligned more closely with meeting Vietnam's broader HRD needs.

The implementation and management process is described below.

Annual Planning

The annual planning and implementation process for Australia Awards Scholarships will begin at roughly the same time that the round for the previous year is completed. This will assist in ensuring that the scholarships cycle aligns with the global timelines for scholarships' management, and that DFAT's other programs in Vietnam are aware of the key dates in awards management, and their potential participation in related activities. Annex 2 provides a detailed schedule of timing of Scholarship implementation tasks.

The HRD team at Hanoi Post will annually consult with managers of DFAT's other programs and initiatives in Vietnam, to identify how the awards can best support DFAT's overall AIP implementation, and to avoid program gaps and duplication.

Promotions and Communication Plan

Each year, as part of the annual planning process, the Contractor will draft a Promotions and Communications Plan. The Plan to be submitted to DFAT Hanoi in September will confirm and expand on approaches proposed earlier in the (January) Annual Plan. The Promotions and Communications Plan will detail activities the Contractor will undertake to promote all Program opportunities, with an emphasis on Australia Awards Scholarships opportunities, to appropriate audiences in Vietnam, and will require approval annually by DFAT Hanoi. The effectiveness of the previous promotions and communication activities will be assessed in the Annual Report, although it may not be fully apparent or able to be evaluated until later in the Awards cycle.

Promotion of non-ASS opportunities will involve raising awareness among priority sectors/institutions, as advised by DFAT Hanoi. This support will require a formal request from the institution rather than individual application as for AAS.

The Contractor will provide promotional material that adheres to Australia Awards branding guidelines to conduits in targeted institutions; and arrange for civil society and private sector umbrella organisations to distribute materials to its members and member organisations. Promotion should also involve online resources, including the AA-A website, email notifications, and specialist media with a user cohort / readership of potential quality applicants. Information in appropriate form should also be distributed to rural, remote and disadvantaged localities.

The plan should outline how the Contractor will maximise disability-inclusiveness in its promotion and communications outreach.

The Contractor must ensure sufficient, trained and client-responsive personnel are to be available to answer inquiries from potential applicants – in person, online, or by telephone.⁴³

Screening and Shortlisting

The Contractor will check applications for completeness and against agreed eligibility criteria. Non-compliant applications from marginalised groups, or applications that are missing minor requirements may be considered further, if a potential quality candidate may be lost through a minor oversight, or borderline exclusion criterion.

Table 3.1 lists suggested eligibility criteria that will need to be confirmed by the JSC at commencement of each annual selection cycle. All eligible applications will be ranked – within separate categories – Open and Targeted.

The Contractor will also check applications to identify potential candidates who may be eligible to receive assistance from the Equity of Access Fund, either at application, interview stage, for ELT or while on-Award in Australia.

A provisional shortlist of 150% to 200% of the expected number of awards for each category will be interviewed. A minimum of two interview panels will be established – which may comprise DFAT, Alumni, Contractor, independent experts – in line with Australia Awards Selection Guidelines.

Review of rankings by the JSC and selection of applicants for interview will take account of the program target that 20 per cent of awardees are selected from “disadvantaged” groups.

Table 3.1: Suggested minimum eligibility criteria⁴⁴

- Undergraduate degree (for Masters applicants)⁴⁵
- Master’s degree (for PhD applicants)
- Minimum two years’ relevant work experience in Vietnam
(except “Equity of Access applicants” who require one year only)
- Not be seeking a second Masters or PhD degree
- Minimum GPA of 7.0 (except Equity of Access candidates who require a minimum GPA of 6.0)
- Letter of reference with stamp / seal from the applicant’s current or previous employer
- Copy of the applicant’s work contract
- Summary research proposal for PhD and for Masters by research applicants.

⁴³ The *Promotions and Communications Plan* should include allied strategies to promote the two other components of Australia Awards: Short-term training and Alumni

⁴⁴ The criteria in the Table are suggested only; annual planning and consultation processes may result in changes aimed at better achieving overall program outputs and outcomes.

⁴⁵ While it is expected that all Undergraduate qualifications will be “Formal” Bachelor’s degrees, the Program should retain some flexibility for accepting “Informal” degrees from outstanding “Disadvantaged” candidates.

Selection

The selection process must be transparent and fully merit-based.

All interview panels will receive a detailed briefing from the Contractor to ensure consistent approaches, across all interview categories and locations. Each selection panel will provide the JSC with a ranked list of shortlisted awardees, by gender.

The interview panels may discuss the interview assessment during the interview period to ensure consistency of assessment between panels, and agree on recommendations for JSC. Moderation and final selection of awardees will occur at JSC. Moderation will consider geographic and sector balance, as well as gender equity and social inclusion policies.

English Language Training

Australia Awards Scholarships candidates are to be *requested* to provide evidence of their English language ability in their OASIS applications, and to produce the relevant original IELTS or TOEFL test score document if selected for interview.

Where a shortlisted candidate has not previously sat an English Language test, or where the test is more than two (2) years old, the Contractor will arrange for the candidate to sit an IELTS prior to interview⁴⁶.

IELTS test results will be provided to each interview panel and the final selection report will then include details of any pre-course English Language Training required for successful award applicants.

Table 3.2 lists minimum suggested IELTS scores for different applicant profiles. These will be confirmed by DFAT and MOET for each selection round⁴⁷.

Table 3.2: Minimum IELTS Test Scores Required at Interview

Applicant profile	Minimum (overall) IELTS score
Central Government Agency applicants	5.5
Provincial Government Agency applicants	4.5
Major City University applicants	6.5
Regional University applicants	5.5
Domestic NGO applicants	5.5
International NGO applicants	6.0
Private sector applicants	6.5
Equity of Access applicants	4.5

Conditional awardees (a) whose IELTS score meets the minimum requirement, and (b) whose requested university will accept the awardee's English language levels are classified as "Direct-Entry" awardees and can be mobilised for a Semester 1 start to their studies.

⁴⁶ For "Disadvantaged" applicants, no IELTS score is required on application; however, the IELTS selection test result must meet minimum Profile requirements.

⁴⁷ Although encouraged, a "current" IELTS test score is not required at application, but if the candidate is to be considered further, the minimum relevant scores must be achieved by the applicant at the Contractor-arranged IELTS test.

Conditional awardees who do not meet the English language requirement of their chosen course at an Australian university will undertake pre-departure English Language Training in Vietnam of up to 12 months. Conditional awardees with IELTS of 4.5 (Equity of Access applicants) would likely require more than 12 months ELT⁴⁸. In-Australia ELT will be considered additionally to in-Vietnam ELT for disadvantaged conditional awardees on a case by case basis.

Where it reduces program costs and inconvenience to the candidate, the Contractor will arrange for ELT to be undertaken in accredited training facilities in the candidate's home location.

Placement and Mobilisation

Following participation by Direct-Entry awardees (and those awardees from the previous year who have successfully completed their English Language Training) in the awardee Placement Briefings and University Open Days (in July-August), the Contractor will request placement at an Australian institution for each candidate.

The Contractor will arrange for candidates to complete an Australian student visa application, including medical test, for submission to the Department of Immigration and Border protection (DIBP). Staged mobilisation of candidates will then proceed, including arrangements to participate in a pre-departure briefing (PDB) in early December⁴⁹, at agreed locations in Vietnam, as is cost-effective.

The Contractor will ensure that awardees are provided with sufficient information to prepare them for their studies and living experience in Australia. This involves conducting comprehensive PDBs, as well as encouraging awardees to undertake extensive research and connecting with alumni or on-award scholars.

The involvement of spouses in workshops is a key strategy for supporting the reintegration of female alumni. The Contractor will include sessions in the PDB on achieving a better balance of work and home responsibilities to enable and encourage women to pursue their professional and leadership potential.

The PDBs (which must involve alumni presenters and extensive opportunities for interaction with program personnel and earlier graduates) are expected to help awardees to settle quickly into Australia and the institution, thereby enhancing their ability to complete their studies within the duration of their award.

On-Award Support

Once awardees arrive at their institution in Australia, their academic support and pastoral care is the responsibility of the host institution as part of each institution's service contracts with DFAT.

⁴⁸ Each conditional awardee's starting level of ELT will be determined by a combination of their IELTS test score *and* a placement test implemented by the Contractor.

⁴⁹ For those awardees who *do not* complete their ELT until some time in the first half of the following year, placement (and a second PDB) will take place in June-July.

However, the Contractor will liaise with institutions and DFAT regarding award variations, support reintegration and facilitate reporting of welfare incidents. Subject to DFAT approval and funding availability, the Contractor will develop initiatives to enhance the awardees' in-Australia experience and support achievement of the program's development outcomes. Such activities may include: targeted work placements (where possible within Australia Awards Policy)⁵⁰; industry networking; and building more meaningful links between the awardees and Australians.

Many awardees do not necessarily form or maintain linkages with Australian students or their institution's staff. While this is a challenge facing Australia Awardees from many countries, the Contractor should support receiving universities – where possible and realistic - to encourage the institutions to identify and implement strategies to increase the Vietnamese awardees' engagements with a broader range of Australian students than at present.

The Contractor will work with alumni and their local Vietnamese student organisations in individual universities to support the graduates' re-entry to Vietnam. An essential component of this re-entry support will be a series of *Reintegration Seminars* conducted in multiple locations (potentially Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane) within the six months prior to their return. Such Seminars will form the first part of a two-part reintegration program, with the second part being held in Vietnam (again in multiple locations) within the first six months of the graduates' return.

For those awardees who committed to develop and maintain a Re-entry Action Plan (REAP), the in-Australia and in-Vietnam Seminars will provide the opportunity to discuss their REAPS with Contractor representatives, supervisors, and other awardees/ graduates – and adjust them to reflect any changed workplace or sector environments.

Post-Award Support

Data from the Vietnam program indicates the overwhelmingly positive perceptions of alumni's Australian experience after they return home.

Following return to the workplace, some challenges facing alumni skills' utilisation may be beyond the program's influence, e.g. unsupportive ministry or employer. However, the Contractor has an obligation to endeavour to ensure that the GoA investment results in continuing positive outcomes.

Welcome Back (or "graduation" ceremonies) should be held in selected population centres, and graduates from the previous 12-month period supported to participate in these events. Wherever possible, such events should be conducted in concert with other DFAT, alumni or VGAC activities, to achieve a reasonable value for money outcome.

⁵⁰ Section 12.5.3 of the Australia Awards 2015 Policy Handbook states that: "Work attachments must be undertaken during the awardee's period of studies such that the total period of the scholarship does not exceed the length of the course of studies as registered in CRICOS. Work placements should not result in an extension to the scholarship".

Invitations should include alumni spouses, families, employers/ supervisors, and relevant stakeholders, as appropriate. Involvement of local media should be encouraged in the event, and wherever possible, senior DFAT Post personnel and GoV officials should also be encouraged to participate.

Research on the Australia Awards-Vietnam program suggests that graduates use a range of reintegration strategies to assist their re-entry into their home country work, social and community environments. Where REAPs have been applied, graduates should produce an updated plan within three months of return to their workplace. The Contractor should evaluate the effectiveness of REAPs and consider complementary strategies to engage with supervisors and employers to support alumni in utilising and transferring their newly acquired skills.

Australia Awards - Fellowships

The Contractor may be required to promote the availability of globally funded AAF in priority sectors and targeted organisations, as advised by DFAT – and for other AAF local support activities. AAF alumni will be eligible to access all Australia Awards alumni services and support (Table 3.3, Column A).

3.2.2 Australia Awards - Alumni

Since the mid-1970's, approximately 4000 Australia Awards Scholarship alumni have returned to Vietnam after successfully completing their tertiary studies in Australia. Perhaps another 40,000 alumni have been privately funded. These alumni are a potentially significant resource for strengthening Australia's economic, diplomatic and social engagement with Vietnam.

Alumni Engagement

Alumni engagement is an integral component of the program design; although it should not be assumed alumni will necessarily prioritise Australia Awards alumni association activities, as most alumni might be expected to focus on work, community and family commitments once they return home.

Alumni of STT courses, Fellowships and global Short Course Awards (if re-established) will be able to register as Australia Awards alumni, provided the program they undertook was delivered by a registered Australian Training Organisation.

While Vietnam's decentralised nature, with a number of large population centres – Hanoi, HCM City, Danang, Hue – presents challenges in reaching many alumni, the geographic-chapter organisation of the current VGAC body does allow for some services to be offered to provincial graduates of Australian institutions.

The Contractor will provide a dedicated staff member, responsible for Australia Awards alumni activities, including: association support, alumni database updating; alumni communications, networking and professional development.

VGAC is accessible to all Australian alumni; and while it is not planned to formally support establishment of a separate Australia Awards alumni organisation, any decision to do so, rests with the alumni concerned.

Australia's alumni networks consist of potentially disparate groups with varying levels of engagement and interest. Establishing new, or strengthening and

expanding existing alumni networks of scholarship and private alumni is critical to the success of a global alumni approach.⁵¹ On this basis, specific support will be primarily provided to Australia Awards Scholarships alumni. However, encouraging privately-funded graduates to participate in alumni networks has the potential to significantly expand the reach and scope for engagement on economic and diplomatic issues of benefit to both countries.

The issue of using GoA funds to support non-Australia Awards alumni with reintegration, further professional development and through support to VGAC, is yet to be resolved at a global level; however, the Contractor should develop strategies for consideration by DFAT Hanoi that includes opportunities to support the VGAC and for non-Award graduates to participate in DFAT-funded activities, perhaps including through cost sharing arrangements.

Alumni Database

DFAT Canberra has developed the Australian Global Alumni Network⁵² to support an interactive global network of alumni and provide up-to-date details on alumni for DFAT Canberra, Posts and implementing agencies. The Network database currently holds more than 40,000 alumni records through an automatic data transfer of complete student records from on-award student management systems. The Network not only records Australia Awards alumni but also other GoA-sponsored alumni (such as Endeavour and ACIAR program alumni).

The global network's other key features are expected to include: alumni personal profiles, the ability to capture alumni biography, identify high-profile alumni, capture alumni used for media purposes, and access to operational and statistical reporting, including dashboard reports. The ultimate goal of the program is to "allow all Australia Awards alumni to interact with each other in a digital environment", while the online tool is expected to be used also to publish information related to Australia Awards activities such as conferences, professional development workshops and other Australia Awards news.

Until the Australian Global Alumni Network is operating to its planned full capacity, the Contractor will manage a Vietnam-specific Australia Awards program alumni database, with the capacity for the data to be migrated to the global network once it is fully operational.

Tracing Alumni

Strategies to assist in maintaining up-to-date alumni contact details include: improving access to continuing professional development for registered alumni, such as through online resources; access to a small-grants program; and no- or low-cost participation in post-award conferences and workshops.

In maintaining and utilising alumni data, DFAT and the Contractor should be cognisant of the 2014 GoA legislative changes in relation to individual and organisational privacy⁵³.

⁵¹ DFAT Effective Alumni Engagement – Concept Note, November 2014

⁵² DFAT *Effective Alumni Engagement—Concept Note*, November 2014

⁵³ DFAT and its contractors, must comply with the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) contained in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (Privacy Act). <http://www.dfat.gov.au/privacy.html>

The Contractor will ensure that Australia Awards alumni can access a range of services, which should include those identified in Table 3.3 Column A.

Contractor Alumni Services

The Contractor will have the following responsibilities for alumni support under the program:

Table 3.3: Contractor Alumni Services

A: Contractor services & support to Australia Award Alumni	B: Contractor support available to <i>non-Award</i> VGAC members <i>at cost</i>
Liaison with VGAC re Award alumni members of VGAC	Participation in soft-skills seminars
Contractor staff position for Award alumni support	
Database management and maintenance	
Reintegration Seminar	
Welcome back / graduation events	Access to online Journals
Annual or Biennial Conference participation at no cost	
Soft-skills seminars	
Small grant scheme for individuals and groups	
Podcasts, webinars, on-line forums	Participation in Annual or Biennial Alumni Conference
Online Journals within the graduate's discipline area	
Alumni networking events	
Tracer Study liaison	
Alumni employer liaison	
Liaison with Australian Global Alumni Network	

3.2.3 HRD Activity Implementation

Based on the current (2015) indicative budget, aside from AAS and alumni activities, it is expected there will be limited scope for new activities in the first two years of Program implementation. However, this provides opportunity for detailed investigation and preparation of sub programs and consideration of STT options.

Implementation of smaller responsive ad hoc activities, involving non-formal training, seminars/workshops and short term technical assistance would proceed depending on sector program demands and available budget.

As part of the Inception Report due within 6 months of mobilisation, the Contractor will prepare an initial assessment of STT options (including priority sectors, key institutions, subject focus and potential demand) as well as a plan for investigating sub program options (including key issues, methodology, resourcing, costs and timing).

Following DFAT Hanoi acceptance of the proposed approach it is envisaged that the Contractor⁵⁴ analysis of STT options and sub program options would be completed and a Report submitted to DFAT Hanoi by the end of 2016. This represents a “stop-go” point and the Report should include a recommendation to DFAT Hanoi to proceed (or not) with the design of one or more STT courses and sub programs. Subject to DFAT Hanoi approval of budget and timing, the Contractor would proceed to design the agreed programs.

3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

3.3.1 M&E Overview

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) provides information required for DFAT, contractors and stakeholders to make day-to-day and strategic management decisions; supports accountability; and enables program stakeholders to learn from the program and apply that learning to other relevant investments⁵⁵.

M&E for the 2016-20 HRD program will build on the disaggregated baseline data available from the current Contractor’s records, and subsequently, from the regularly updated MIS. In summary, the delivery of the M&E within the program will require the following platforms:

- the theory of change which links and justifies program assumptions, inputs and outputs against the program outcomes and goal;
- the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF), Annex 10, which specifies output and outcome performance indicators, baselines, and sources of verification in draft form, for further development by the contractor;
- approaches to measuring program implementation effectiveness at a range of levels, presented in the design as a series of process-ordered questions, with indicators and data sources proposed;
- a Management Information System (MIS) which supports delivery of the Australia Awards modalities, sub programs, responsive HRD support, and the women’s leadership program, providing standard management records and indicators;
- a reporting framework which ensures that all reports necessary for management and accountability purposes are prepared and available to DFAT, clients and stakeholders.

Combined, these platforms provide the contractor and DFAT with:

- evidence in relation to outputs and outcomes, and encourage the consideration of whether the logical framework is robust and fit for purpose;
- insights into any divergent outcomes between male and female alumni, and Equity of Access alumni;

⁵⁴ It is expected that the Contractor would seek to utilise local staff expertise where available within DFAT, Hanoi.

⁵⁵ Draft Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, DFAT Canberra, November 2014

- a comprehensive approach and technical basis for consistent monitoring and reporting;
- the mechanisms to use IT effectively to promote efficiencies in data entry, management and analysis; and
- timely and quality reports for DFAT to monitor progress, and for partners and stakeholders to ensure their contributions are acknowledged and valued.

The M&E requirements of the Program are broader than in the past and will likely require additional/ dedicated local staff inputs.

Reporting by the contractor will focus on data analysis and program impacts in accord with DFAT requirements although numerical reports will continue to be available in a summary and user-friendly format.

3.3.2 Australia Awards – Scholarships/Alumni M&E

While promoting individual alumni reporting through submission of Reintegration Action Plans (REAPs) to the Contractor, the design acknowledges the demands on new graduates and establishes realistic expectations on alumni concerning preparing, updating and reporting on REAPs.

Where commitment of an employer / supervisor to an individual's proposed Award is demonstrated in the application, and this commitment is supported by perceptions of the interview panel, the Contractor should exercise judgement whether to recommend that a REAP, *supported by continuous communication while on Award*, be developed by the Awardee and her/his supervisor - with the support of Contractor personnel. However, REAPS should not be compulsory for all Awardees.

The results of the comprehensive 2014 Tracer Study will be available for wider distribution in 2015. The Study results will provide useful information for long-term strategic planning for HRD in Vietnam. From 2015, annual outcomes studies (as negotiated with DFAT) will assume greater importance, while Tracer Studies are expected to continue to be conducted (periodically, globally) by DFAT Canberra; data resulting from these will be used to inform program planning.

To record Australia Awards information, the Contractor will develop a Management Information System (MIS), which will align/communicate with both OASIS and other program databases as necessary. All alumni data (for both Scholarship and Fellowship graduates) contained in the MIS (and eventually in the DFAT Canberra global alumni network database) will also include information about graduates of formal Australia Awards Short-term Training (STT) courses.

The (Alumni) Cluster Studies conducted to date should be replaced by Thematic Studies, e.g. by discipline, such as Agriculture or Water; while Organisational Case Studies⁵⁶ will continue to attempt to determine the extent of influence that

⁵⁶ Depending on the distribution and location of graduates, *Organisational Case Studies* may be more appropriately undertaken as *Sector Case Studies*.

a critical mass in any single organisation or country has had. The Impact Studies conducted to date may be subsumed within the above Organisational Case Studies, or be implemented separately, and will assist in informing deeper analysis of organisational or sector impact by male and female alumni.

The following online surveys will be distributed to candidates /awardees / alumni to gain the opinions of a wider group of program participants:

- a) Pre-departure Survey (in the month prior to mobilisation);
- b) Completion Survey (within one month of graduating);
- c) One-year Survey (within 12-18 months of return);
- d) Two-year Survey (with 2-4 years of return).

Analysis of the results of these surveys will inform program operational and strategic decision-making; assist in reporting to DFAT and key partners, and (for Surveys (b), (c), and (d)), identify potential individuals or cohorts for further investigation through case studies or longitudinal case histories. This survey data, supported by targeted interviews, will also provide the background information needed for the development of alumni promotional profiles, for use by DFAT.

The Reintegration Workshops (Seminars) currently conducted in Australia during the final six months of Australian studies, followed up with a second Reintegration Workshop within the first six months of a graduate's return will continue. However, in addition to the support such workshops are intended to perform to assist awardees and alumni to return to the Vietnam environment, the Reintegration Workshops will assume a stronger monitoring and evaluation role.

This will be achieved by the inclusion in the Reintegration (#2) Workshop of qualitative questions that seek feedback on program effectiveness, including factors assisting/constraining return to a productive role in the workforce; and the relevance and extent to which knowledge and skills gained in Australia contribute to your working life in Vietnam.

While the Reintegration Workshops will perform a dual role – alumni support and data gathering and analysis, Review Workshops, (in a structured focus group format) involving graduates who have been back in Vietnam for a minimum of two years, will provide data about the perceptions of the program by “experienced” alumni – those who have had the opportunity to return to their social, employment and community networks – and to reflect on their Australia Award and its implications for them as individuals – both professionally and socially. The annual on-arrival and on-award surveys, managed by DFAT Canberra, will support local data gathering and analysis.

The Global Australia Awards Program Logic and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework provide the framework for all program M&E, planning, review and implementation by the Contractor.

3.3.3 Australia Awards – Short-term Training M&E

Short-term training course design and delivery will be sub-contracted to Australian institutions identified by the Contractor and agreed by DFAT. Preference will be given to Australian providers with knowledge and experience of the sectoral context in Vietnam, and established linkages with Vietnamese organisations. Contracts will clearly delineate the responsibilities and resourcing of both the provider (including local partners in delivering the program), and the (Program) Contractor. STT providers will be responsible for the design and conduct of M&E for courses delivered.

The Contractor will continuously monitor the quality of short-term training to ensure courses are effective in contributing to program outputs and outcomes; and consult with DFAT and partners (including MoET and beneficiary agencies) to ensure that training is continuing to meet demand. Assessments will be reported in each Annual Report for the Program.

3.3.4 HRD support M&E

Appropriate M&E frameworks should reflect the scale and type of interventions and be cost effective. The design of sub programs (and the Women in Leadership program), should build in M&E arrangements; these will likely differ depending on the form of the sub program implemented and the delivery modalities involved. If the sub program is contracted to a single provider it would normally be the responsibility of that provider to implement M&E; if the sub program involves a rolling program of integrated but separately contracted and delivered activities it may be more appropriate for the head Contractor to assume responsibility for M&E.

Either way, M&E should include assessment of the extent to which the target institutions were able to participate effectively in the identification of training needs; the extent to which individual beneficiaries of HRD interventions have been able to contribute subsequently to the workplace; and the extent and ways in which the institution has benefited.

For ad hoc interventions addressing current or emerging issues identified by sector programs, judgment should be exercised in determining the type of M&E required.

3.4 Reporting and Data Dissemination

3.4.1 Reporting schedule

When reported in language appropriate to contractor personnel and clients, M&E processes and outcomes help identify learning about a range of program areas, including good practice, effective strategies and tools, and information about specific implementation issues. As noted earlier, team members share M&E responsibilities; reporting, dissemination and learning are inter-related functions. Program reports must capture progress, results and lessons, to be disseminated using a variety of media and strategies; further, feedback from clients and stakeholders about results serve to reinforce program learning; and

will assist DFAT in making necessary adjustments to the program (e.g. targets) and, where necessary, arranging contract variations.

Program reporting schedules, when confirmed, will provide timely, formative, summary data (disaggregated by activity, gender, disability, rural disadvantage, sector, etc.) to support the efficient implementation and review of the program. As noted above, reporting will focus on data analysis and program impacts rather than on presenting detailed quantitative data – although numerical reports will continue to be directed to the relevant DFAT officers in a summary, user-friendly format.

The Program design also requires a Mid-Term Review (MTR) (or Independent Progress Report (IPR)) to be completed approximately 30 months after mobilisation. The independent MTR, commissioned and funded by DFAT, will consider program outcomes and managing contractor (and subcontractors') performance; its findings will help inform the remaining 2.5 years of the program. Specifically, the Review will provide advice on ways to improve the impact and/or sustainability of the program for the remainder of its implementation period, and possibly beyond. It will also provide an opportunity to update risk and sustainability assessments and management.

The Contractor will cooperate in the conduct of an independent End-of-Program Completion Report undertaken around 3-6 months prior to program completion. This will provide the opportunity for a comprehensive and independent assessment of the success or otherwise of the program in meeting its stated outcomes and outputs.

Annex 12 identifies all Contractor reports required and explains their purpose.

3.4.2 Management Information System

The Program MIS will support delivery of the complete range of program initiatives - Australia Awards Scholarships and Short-term Training, Alumni management, Engagement with Targeted agencies and organisations, the Women in Leadership Program, and TVET engagement.

It will also provide data to confirm or otherwise the achievement of indicators included in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF). Basic information will come from implementation records or reports, including data such as number of Award applications received (disaggregated by award type, organisation, level, sector, gender, and equity group); number of terminations/variations, course pass rates, returns to workplaces, and REAP reports received.

However, the (global) OASIS Australia Awards system will continue to provide the major source of all Australia Awards Scholarships initial management data for individual applicants and conditional awardees.

The DFAT Australian Global Alumni Network - an interactive global MIS supporting a network of up-to-date details on alumni - currently holds more than 40,000 alumni records, including around 4,000 from Vietnam. This data will support greater access to longitudinal data and analysis of the extended impact of program initiatives on human resource development in Vietnam.

As noted previously, within the constraints of the GoA 2014 Privacy Legislation, the key features of the Global Network will assist Hanoi Post and contractor personnel to access alumni personal profiles, capture alumni biographies, identify high-profile alumni, and provide access to operational and statistical reporting.

In addition to standard search requests by DFAT relating to Australia Awards applications received, awardee academic progress, costs of variations, etc., the MIS developed by the contractor should also have the potential for web-based, real-time access to its data/reports by approved Hanoi- and Canberra-based DFAT personnel.

3.4.3 Data records

While quantitative information will be captured mainly on activities implemented within activities relating to Australia Awards Scholarships and Alumni, and Short-term Training, all Program components require accurate and current recording of (qualitative and quantitative) process and outcome data – for reporting, and to inform program planning.

3.5 Sustainability

In a development context, sustainability can be defined as the continuation of benefits after major assistance from a donor has been completed, with a concurrent focus on maintaining the flow of benefits into the future. Given this, the results and impact of the Program should not necessarily be determined by the number of Australia Awards Scholarships, Short-term Training Courses, or TVET opportunities offered, or by the number of agencies supported with HRD technical advice, volunteers, or partnerships with Australian institutions, but rather by the extent of contributions by individuals to the increasing economic and social development of Vietnam.

Such contributions are expected to have an ongoing, multiplying and life-long effect on a far wider range of colleagues and contacts – than on individual participants alone. However, finding evidence for the broader organisational or sector impact arising from an individual's improved capacity and skills and knowledge, is particularly challenging.

Nevertheless, sustainability for the Australia Awards aspects of the Vietnam HRD program can be viewed in terms of the capacity of the awardees to use and transfer their new knowledge, and for the Awardees' skills to be used effectively by their employing organisations. More efficient organisations will lead to stronger economic growth, better delivery of services to the population and a more resilient society.

Accordingly, the Program design includes strengthened approaches for:

- a) better targeting of Australia Awards candidates, and improved prioritisation of target agencies and organisations and priority sectors;
- b) consultations with NGOs/ CSOs and the private sector to identify their priority areas of need, thus helping to increase the relevance of the training provided for the whole of society;

- c) structuring individual support for alumni prior to and once they return to the workforce;
- d) targeting organisations for direct HRD support which have a clear and proactive enabling environment for skill utilisation, particularly for (currently undervalued and underused human resources) – women and people with disability;
- e) offering support for other alumni activities that provide professional development opportunities and enable / encourage alumni to maintain professional and social networks and linkages across organisations; and
- f) within the agreed priority sectors, the program will also work towards achieving overall sustainability goals, through providing industry-based and-specific training on the sustainable management of Vietnam’s human and natural resources, as a key factor critical to successful, long-term development.

Across all priority sectors, the program aims to develop skills and systems that support greater and more equitable benefits of an increasingly robust Vietnamese economy, in ways that provide greater social and community benefits.

3.6 Inclusiveness

The current phase of the Vietnam HRD Program has been justly praised for its achievements in promoting equity, and for ensuring that its rhetoric is matched by adequate resourcing and well considered procedures. The new phase will institutionalise a number of measures to ensure the ongoing commitment to the participation and positive outcomes for women on equal terms to men, people with disability and people from ethnic minority groups:

- The introduction of a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Adviser as a formal member of the Contractor’s team.
- The maintenance of the Equity of Access Fund, and corresponding support to help achieve 20% representation of people with disability and rural disadvantaged of total awardees.
- Disaggregation of core program objectives and indicators so that results can be tracked by sex, disability, rural location, and ethnic group.
- Consideration of support to the Center for Women in Politics and Public Administration (WiPPA) to promote gender equitable leadership in public sector organisational culture within the premier political academy in Vietnam.
- The involvement of spouses and families in pre-departure and reintegration activities to support family adjustment and shared responsibilities, and positive perceptions of women’s career and leadership pursuits.

- The delivery of short courses on leadership for men and women, to promote experiential learning of unconscious bias and gender equitable leadership.

Given the new phase will be more closely aligned with the AIP sectors, a review of the sex ratio of awards will be undertaken at the end of the 2016 round and consideration be given to setting a minimum threshold (e.g. 30%) for both male or female applicants.

3.7 Environmental Management

It is unlikely the Contractor will have direct involvement with activities that have significant environmental impact. Nevertheless, the Contractor is expected to be cognisant of DFAT's *Environmental Management Guide for Australia's Aid Program, 2012*, which provides for the assessment, management and mitigation of potential environmental impacts to be incorporated into Australia's aid activities.

The most likely instance might occur in the design and content of STT courses, particularly training that has relevance, for example, to disaster risk management, climate change and agriculture.

3.8 Risk Management

There are a number of risks associated with the Program listed in the Risk Register, Annex 14. Risks need to be monitored regularly, balanced against the likely benefits, and risk levels and/or strategies adjusted accordingly.

During the Inception phase the Contractor will develop a more comprehensive risk management plan. That risk management plan will be reviewed and updated annually as part of the annual planning process. Potential risks include developmental risks where the program's development goals are not achieved, risks to DFAT and Australia's reputation locally and internationally and fiduciary risks.

The design focuses on in-Vietnam activities, cost and risk⁵⁷. Overall, the risk assessment of Program is low. Australia Awards, accounting for around 80 per cent of the program, are delivered through well-established procedures, and a transparent tender process will source an experienced contractor, with quality assurance processes in place. Provided senior Contractor management ensure adherence to practices formalised in the Finance and Operations Manual, financial risk to the management and operation of the program is likely to be minimal.

The Contractor will develop and update as necessary, the Promotions and Communications Plan, as well as purpose-specific communications / media management plans for any substantial initiatives. Such plans will provide the framework and guidance for managing any potential GoA profiling risks to the

⁵⁷ In-Australia, costs are managed in Canberra under contracts with Australian Education institutions.

intended public diplomacy outcomes of the program, and will align with the overall DFAT Post and Global communications/public diplomacy strategies.

As a relatively secure country, Vietnam offers a safe working environment, and therefore, it is unlikely that safety and security risks will be a major determinant in achieving successful program operations.

Any change in perceptions of the Vietnamese Government in relation to the reduction in Award numbers over the period 2014-2016, or strategic direction of the program, should be undertaken as part of regular discussions and through the PCC to avoid potential relationships risks between both partners. Potential risk, particularly in relation to TVET, could be exacerbated by any continuing conflict between MoET and MoLISA in relation to roles and responsibilities.

The fundamental program risk for scholarships is that alumni are unable to utilise their skills and knowledge due to personal, institutional and cultural barriers; and the risk associated with sustaining and building links with Australia after return.

The design places increasing emphasis on selecting the 'right' awardees from the 'right' organisations and providing additional support to improve workplace productivity. The enhancements in the design offer a range of modalities and sub programs to address 'utilisation' risks through a more strategic and focused approach, working with target organisations to offer a suite of short- and long-term training options, so that organisations are better positioned to reintegrate and utilise alumni.

However, with innovation comes increased uncertainty. As lessons are learnt iteratively with new modalities, the future program must ensure a timely and appropriate response to any emerging risks.

A reduction in funding and resources represents a potential *operational risk* to successful implementation of the Program. The design has emphasised the outsourcing of administrative tasks to the Contractor to allow DFAT resources to focus on policy, analysis and monitoring. In support of this, clear responsibilities for program personnel will be defined in the current restructuring of Post personnel.