

# Australia Awards Scholarships in Cambodia

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Review September 2015

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## 1. Executive Summary

The Australia Award Scholarships in Cambodia mid-term review was undertaken from the end of July until mid-September 2015 by a small team, comprising a team leader (Emily Serong), monitoring and evaluation specialist support (Jessica Kenway) and the DFAT regional evaluation manager based in Hanoi, Vietnam (Le Thi Quynh Nga).

The objectives of the review were to assess the implementation arrangements by the current contractor, based on: relevance; effectiveness; efficiency; equity and monitoring and evaluation. The review provides the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) with advice on an extension of the existing contract and recommendations on improvements to implementation arrangements within the extension period.

The review involved an extensive analysis of program documentation, DFAT publications and other relevant material, as well as a two-week field mission to Phnom Penh and consultations in Australia with contractor staff and on-award students.

Overall the review finds the program is performing very well. Implementation arrangements are sound and contributing to the long-term delivery of program objectives. There are opportunities to strengthen approaches and improve implementation however these are minor in the delivery of the program as a whole.

### Summary of Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** Revise and extend the contract with Coffey for the remaining two years.

#### *Relevance*

The Australia Awards Scholarship program is highly relevant with the Australian Government's priorities in Cambodia and in line with DFAT's global approaches to Australia Awards. On-going dialogue with the Government of Cambodia, as well as refinement of priorities area will ensure that program delivery continues to be relevant with emerging development objectives and the bilateral relationship.

**Recommendation 2:** DFAT should negotiate with CDC to standardise bonding arrangements across the Royal Government of Cambodia.

**Recommendation 3:** The program should consider in future promotion material either removing or simplifying priority areas into general categories based on the past three to four years, i.e. sustainable development; trade and investment; empowering women and girls<sup>1</sup>.

#### *Effectiveness*

Overall the implementation arrangements are contributing to the program's long term objectives. There is comprehensive evidence that management of the scholarship cycle is well designed, implemented, reviewed and strengthened based on evidence gathered throughout implementation. There are some identified areas for improvement, however on the whole the program is performing well.

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<sup>1</sup> These are suggested areas only and not based on in-depth analysis of priorities areas of the program over the past three to four years.

**Recommendation 4:** Reduce the Direct Entry PDT from 10 weeks to 6 weeks, with commencement at the end of October for all PDT participants.

**Recommendation 5:** HRD strategy should focus on program objectives at the individual level and implement strategies that can assist individuals to reintegrate into their specific organisations or sectors. (Also see M&E Recommendation 15.)

**Recommendation 6:** At the end of each semester a letter should be sent from the Australian Ambassador to all Ministers with returning alumni informing them of their return and the course they studied in Australia.

**Recommendation 7:** The program explores and pilots alternative, more flexible approaches to support reintegration, such as continuing the pre-departure preparation workshop, including tools for targeted workplace conversations, complemented by additional, innovative professional development support for alumni<sup>2</sup>.

**Recommendation 8:** The revised Scope of Services should include a new separate implementation component (not associated with Australia Awards) dedicated to Alumni Engagement. This component should include a dedicated position assigned to the administration of the AAA-C and the implementation for Year 1 and 2 of the 5-year strategy.

### **Efficiency**

The current program is delivered under a unique Australia Awards arrangement with Coffey managing the head contract and subcontracting IDP to deliver the majority of the staffing and administrative functions. There are clear efficiency and value for money advantages to this model but with some easily identifiable areas for improvement.

**Recommendation 9:** Simplified Scope of Services and Basis of Payments to reflect more adequately the allocation of personnel to the program, in particular the dedicated IDP staff and the input periods of externally sourced personnel such as the assessment panel.

**Recommendation 10:** Merge two specialist positions into one full time position dedicated to targeting, selection and reintegration for both the public and open categories, as well as equity pathway approaches.

### **Equity**

Equity groups are defined within this program as women (specifically in the public sector), people with a disability (PWD) and people from provincial areas. There are numerous barriers these groups face in accessing an international scholarship program. The AAS program is implementing appropriate strategies, in particular the Equity Pathway Program to address these barriers with some opportunities for strengthening approaches.

**Recommendation 11:** Revision of the Equity Pathway strategy, with consideration of targeting activities in ministries, the structure of language training and reintegration activities that specifically supports women and the barriers they face in their workplaces.

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<sup>2</sup> This support should be segmented by different cohorts' needs, i.e. open and public categories, female and provincial alumni etc.

**Recommendation 12:** Revised contract to include a pilot academic pathway activity for high quality applicants from provincial section 3 and 4 universities.

**Recommendation 13:** Extensive further analysis and scoping is required on academic pathway opportunities. This should be undertaken independently by DFAT over the six months to feed into the redesign process for the program post-2017.

### *Monitoring and Evaluation*

Overall, the program's M&E is aligned with DFAT's Global Australia Awards M&E Framework, as reflected through program's theory of change (TOC), well-defined indicators and clear approaches to measuring program's outcomes and outputs. Some refinement of the M&E Plan in line with other recommendations and enhanced reporting mechanisms made would improve the program's approach.

**Recommendation 14:** Reporting against the M&E Plan should include an additional column to 'Track' progress against each indicator, including equity targets where appropriate.

**Recommendation 15:** The M&E plan should be revisited and refined as necessary to be more realistic and feasible, given the identified challenges for capturing outcomes at organisational and systematic level.

**Recommendation 16:** Further organisational case studies should be designed to provide more information and comparative analysis on organisational enabling factors and challenges.

**Recommendation 17:** Annual Reports should focus on performance of the program as a whole, by briefly illustrating major achievements and challenges in implementation, and reporting progress against the M&E plan's questions and indicators (i.e. tracking column recommended above).

**Recommendation 18:** The contractor should develop a promotional brochure that reports on the high-level, positive tracer study findings, including profiles of alumni and other relevant data.

**Recommendation 19:** Increase in local staff dedicated to M&E.

## 2. Background

The Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS) in Cambodia has been in operation since 1994. Up to 50 scholarships are now awarded annually. At its peak the program delivered 55 awards in 2014 but has since scaled back slightly to 50.

The current goal for AAS in Cambodia is to support Cambodia in achieving its development goals and have positive relationships with Australia enhanced by the contribution of women and men with Australian qualifications, experience and networks, thereby contributing to Cambodia's economic growth<sup>3</sup>.

The objectives of the Australia Awards Scholarships in Cambodia are:

- a. to increase the skills and capacity of the men and women of Cambodia (including people with a disability and those from outside Phnom Penh)
- b. to support the men and women of Cambodia (including people with a disability and those from outside Phnom Penh) to make a contribution to Cambodia's development
- c. to support the men and women of Cambodia (including people with a disability and those from outside Phnom Penh) to develop on-going links with Australian people, organisations and institutions
- d. recognition by the Cambodia Government and other development partners that Australia is an active responsive contributor to the economic and social development of Cambodia.

The Australia Awards in Cambodia are managed by an Australian Managing Contractor, Coffey International Development PTY LTD (Coffey). Under the head contract, Coffey subcontracts IDP Education to deliver operational and administrative components of the scholarship processes, including promotion, targeting and selection, equity pathway program, mobilisation, pre-departure briefing, reintegration and alumni support. The subcontract with IDP also delivers Pre-departure English Language training through their Australian Centre of Education (ACE). Coffey retains management and oversight of program deliverables including reports to DFAT, monitoring and evaluation and financial management of the program.

DFAT Phnom Penh manages the contract with Coffey and provides strategic direction on program implementation. Coffey and IDP work collaboratively with DFAT Phnom Penh Post to deliver the program. The current contract with Coffey started in March 2013 and is scheduled to end in December 2015, with an optional extension to December 2017.

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<sup>3</sup> The current goal was been modified in the 2014-15 Annual plan from the original program designed to reflect the global Australia Awards program logic and changes in the aid program's focus in Cambodia

### 3. Review purpose, approach/methodology

This Mid-Term Review assesses how **effectively** and **efficiently** the program is being implemented, with a view to strengthen implementation for the remainder of the contract period; and inform DFAT's decision regarding the contract extension period. The review provides an assessment of how **relevant** the program is to the current Australian aid program in Cambodia.

The review makes recommendations to DFAT regarding:

1. Extension of the contract with Coffey from the current three years for a further two years (five years in total), including recommended changes.
2. Options to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of program implementation.

The primary audience for this review is DFAT Phnom Penh Post, who will share the document and/or findings (at their discretion) with the Scholarships and Alumni Branch, the Government of Cambodia and Coffey.

The review is formative in nature and primarily focuses on the program's implementation processes. Data has been collected using mixed methods. The review collected quantitative and qualitative data from primary and secondary sources. Consultations were held with stakeholders in Cambodia during a two week mission, and an additional focus group with current students in Australia. The review has validated the information by comparing stakeholder opinions and responses.

The team leader (Emily Serong) and DFAT regional evaluation manager (Le Thi Quynh Nga) participated in the in-country mission, with the M&E Specialist (Jessica Kenway) providing remote support. The team leader conducted other in-Australia consultations, including the additional focus group.

As outlined in the Review Plan (Annex 1) there are six agreed key evaluation questions.

1. How relevant is the current program's focus to the Australian aid program and Cambodian priorities? (Relevance)
2. How effectively is the program being implemented to meet the long-term program objectives? (Effectiveness)
3. How efficiently are key program activities and processes being implemented? (Efficiency)
4. How effectively have equity strategies relating to gender and social inclusiveness (participation of applicants with disability and provincial applicants) been implemented? (Equity)
5. How well is the monitoring and evaluation framework designed and is it effectively operationalised to assess the outputs and outcomes of the program? (M&E)
6. Based on the above findings, where (in the scholarship cycle) could implementation activities and program focus be strengthened to better support program objectives? (Recommendations)

A full expansion of sub-questions is available in the Review Plan at Annex 1.

There were some limitations in the data available for the review. The time available limited the number of interviews and focus groups that could be conducted, with only one focus group in Cambodia and one in Australia. In addition, while all efforts were made to assess efficiency and effectiveness from data available for comparable Award programs, the structure of different programs and the presentation of information made this difficult to make like-for-like comparisons.

## 4. Findings

Overall the review finds the program is performing very well. Implementation arrangements are sound and contributing to the long-term delivery of program objectives. There are opportunities to strengthen approaches and improve implementation however these are minor in the delivery of the program as a whole.

***Recommendation 1: Revise and extend the contract with Coffey for the remaining two years.***

### Relevance

The Australia Awards Scholarship (AAS) program is highly relevant with the Australian Government's priorities in Cambodia and in line with DFAT's global approaches to Australia Awards.

Australia Awards alumni are represented at senior levels across Cambodian government, civil society and the private sector, contributing to improved access and relationship building opportunities for Australian diplomats and Australian interests in Cambodia. In all consultations with Australian Embassy officials it was reported that the Australian scholarships are highly regarded by partners in Cambodia and there is widespread recognition of this contribution made by Australia. To celebrate this contribution a high-level event was held in November 2014 to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Australia Awards Scholarships (and its former iterations). The event was attended by close to 400 guests with the Minister for Education as the guest of honour. It was also covered well by the media.<sup>4</sup>

Consultations with the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), including the key bilateral partner the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), confirmed that the AAS is highly regarded and relevant to Cambodia's needs. In particular the CDC, which attends the program Annual Strategy Review meeting, is supportive of program implementation approaches which target women in the public sector, and is enthusiastic about their role as a member of the interview selection panel.

In particular the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Australia and Cambodia on the delivery of the scholarships outlines the Cambodian Government's commitment to pay the public sector awardees' salary during their studies in Australia. Individual ministries have varying bonding arrangements with awardees which require them to return to their workplace from between two to seven years. During consultations it was highlighted by DFAT that this variance in length of bonding commitment may have a negative impact on the number of applications received from different ministries. There were also concerns that long bonding periods may negatively affect the reintegration experience and motivations of alumni when they return, also effecting their ability to seek more relevant employment if their skills are being under-utilised.

Further analysis is required about the different conditions within ministries, including comparisons of application rates against the range of bonding arrangements, and consideration of findings from reintegration surveys or case studies across different ministries. In the meantime DFAT should consider raising the varying bonding lengths at the next Annual Strategy Review and seek commitment from CDC to standardise bonding arrangements across the Royal Government of Cambodia.

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<sup>4</sup> Coffey International Development PTY LTD, 2015, Australia Awards Cambodia: 2015 Progress Report, April 2015, p. 1



***Recommendation 2: DFAT should negotiate with CDC to standardise bonding arrangements across the Royal Government of Cambodia***

While Australian trade and investment linkages in Cambodia are small, international education represents the largest export to Cambodia worth over A\$40million in 2013-14.<sup>5</sup> The profile of Australian's education institutions and the growth of the private student market are commonly attributed to the foundation built by the AAS program, making it intrinsically linked with the Government's economic diplomacy efforts. The Embassy actively supports the scholarships program as a tool to promote Australian Education more broadly and would like to see more evidence and reporting that could assist providers to expand their student recruitment and other commercial efforts. For example information in AAS surveys and focus groups about the positive experience of awardees in Australia and employability upon return has potential as a valuable marketing tool for future AAS promotion and as well as for private full-fee paying students.

Positive efforts have been made to link New Colombo Plan (NCP), the Australian Government's new scholarship and mobility program for undergraduate Australians to study in the Indo-Pacific region, and Australia Award programs, through alumni offering internships to NCP recipients at their workplaces and networking opportunities between the cohorts. As NCP grows<sup>6</sup> these linkages could be enhanced further, for example by connecting Cambodian students in Australia with the NCP alumni network.<sup>7</sup>

The AAS program aligns with the aid program priority areas by targeting applications from people within defined priority areas<sup>8</sup>. This involves a mixed targeting approach which includes listing the priority areas on promotional material and in the application form, as well as outreach activities to identified government ministries, civil society and private sector organisations operating within these defined sectors. While this approach allows the flexibility to respond annually to changes in the focus of the aid program and the Australia government more broadly, it can create confusion amongst potential applicants if the priority areas change each year in promotional material. While the program is performing well in sourcing high quality applicants through its targeted promotional activities (see Targeting section below), it may be deterring other strong candidates from applying by listing very specific priorities areas in promotional material that can change each year. The annual changes in priority areas can also lead to inconsistencies and difficulties in reporting, especially contributions to development at the sector level. To resolve this DFAT should review the priorities areas over the past three to four years and consider grouping into more general categories. In addition DFAT should continue to clearly state which courses or field of study areas that it does not seek applications for, such as Business and Finance.

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<sup>5</sup> Australian Trade Commission, 2015, Market Information Pack (MIP) Education Snapshot, Cambodia, May 2015, p. 3

<sup>6</sup> Cambodia is one of highest recipients of NCP mobility awards, with approximately 200 students in the next year.

<sup>7</sup> This option was recommended for consideration in the Alumni 5 year Strategy currently being drafted

<sup>8</sup> In the 2015 Country Profile these priority areas were defined as: health, infrastructure, agriculture, education management, trade, and ending violence against women ([www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/cambodia.pdf](http://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/cambodia.pdf))

***Recommendation 3: The program should consider in future promotion material either removing or simplifying priority areas into general categories based on the past three to four years, i.e. sustainable development; trade and investment; empowering women and girls<sup>9</sup>.***

Currently the Australia Awards program in Cambodia only offers long-term Scholarships for postgraduate study in Australia. While the 2012 Program Design Document (PDD) and Scope of Services (SOS) provide an opportunity for short course awards to be introduced under the current contract, this has not been a priority for DFAT Phnom Penh, given the saturation of short courses delivered by other donors and minimal engagement from targeted organisations<sup>10</sup>. This is a valid rationale and in line with the draft global Australia Awards strategy, which guides individual country or regional programs on how they may incorporate short courses within their suite of Australia Award options, but leaves the decision-making regarding the kind of awards up to the individual country or regional program. The future redesign of Cambodia Australia Awards program should consider this further, as there may be opportunities to incorporate short course awards to address some of the issues outlined in the Equity section below.

### **Effectiveness<sup>11</sup>**

Overall the implementation arrangements are effective and contributing to the program's long term objectives. There is comprehensive evidence across Annual Plans, Progress Reports and Annual Reports that each stage of the scholarship cycle is well designed, implemented, reviewed and strengthened based on evidence gathered throughout implementation.

### **Targeting**

The program is implementing a number of diverse targeting and promotional activities, such as information sessions, visits to organisations, newspapers and radio advertisements, and online and print materials. These approaches are well attended and accessed, reaching a broad range of audiences across Cambodia<sup>12</sup>. In line with Recommendation 2, despite refining or rationalising the priority areas in publically available information, the program should continue its current approach to actively target specific organisations that align with the broader aid program in collaboration with DFAT sector program. The program also makes extensive use of the Australia Awards website, which was redesigned in 2014 with the support of the Coffey-managed Laos Australia Institute, representing an efficient use of internal resources and expertise. On-award and client satisfaction surveys indicate that the Australia Awards website is a key information source about the program. For example the 2014 Client Satisfaction survey reported that 26 percent of applicants used the website as their first source of information about AAS (the highest reported source), with 72 percent

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<sup>9</sup> These are suggested areas only and not based on in-depth analysis of priorities areas of the program over the past three to four years.

<sup>10</sup> Short course awards are often delivered in other Australia Awards program through targeted organisations or well-defined sectors with broader Australian Government investment. Given the lack of HRD engagement outlined in the Reintegration and HRD Section below this has not been a priority for Cambodia.

<sup>11</sup> Given the primary focus of the review is on the program's implementation process, the review does not assess program's performance in term of progress or likelihood in achieving actual outcomes according to the standardized concept on effectiveness in DFAT's quality criteria. Rather, the review looks effectiveness of activities in each stage of the scholarship circle and sees how they align with the stated program's objectives.

<sup>12</sup> As documented in the 2014 Annual report and 2015 Progress Report.

reporting it was their follow-up source for information (also the highest reported source). The program also reported that the introduction of online videos regarding the application processes and other topics greatly reduced the number of telephone and emails inquiries to the office. The success of these videos has been adapted to other Coffey Australia Award programs in Laos and Mongolia.

Application statistics indicate that the program is receiving sufficient numbers of open and public category and priority areas applicants (except for infrastructure). In the most recent intake year the applications from the open category represented about two thirds of applicants and public category applications at one third. This remains steady from the 2014 intake and represents a reasonable proportion of applicants within the allocations set by the program of 40 percent to public and 60 percent to open.

The program is also demonstrating success in targeting the priority sectors. As mentioned above, in 2015 these were identified in the promotional material as health, infrastructure, agriculture, education management, trade, and ending violence against women. This year 61 percent of applicants aligned with these areas, compared with 45 percent in 2014. While this is a positive result for the program which the contractor is required to report on, it may be the result of changing priority areas rather than specific activities. However, as outlined in Recommendation 3, this reporting area could be refined through simplifying priority areas or removed all together. This would not diminish the targeted promotional activities of the program, which could still link with priority sectors and organisations identified by the Embassy. Instead it would allow increase flexibility in the type of applicants sourced.

To date achieving equity targets is more challenging, especially for public sector women and provincial applicants. This is discussed in more detail in the Section on Equity below.

### **Pre-departure training (PDT)**

Currently pre-departure training (PDT), including English language, academic and cultural preparation, is provided to all provisional awardees for up to 12 months depending on IELTS level:

<b>English language level</b>	<b>PDT program</b>	<b>Length</b>
IELTS 6.5 (no band less than 6.0)	Direct Entry	10 weeks
IELTS 6.0	Fast Track	6 months
IELTS 5.5 (no band less than 5.0)	Intensive	12 months

There is some flexibility between the Fast Track and Intensive programs, with some awardees able to move between these programs depending on their language acquisition.

Many Cambodians have never studied abroad before, nor been to a Western country. Preparing awardees for the language, academic, cultural and social challenges they may face in Australia is responsibility of the program, which it is performing well. In the 2013 on-award survey 91 percent of Cambodian students were satisfied with their preparation for coming to Australia, with 91 percent reporting the information reflected the living condition, while 94 percent agreed the information reflected the study experience. In the 2014 on-award survey 94 percent of students were satisfied with their preparation. Focus group discussions with current PDT participants and awardees in Australia (Annex 5) also indicated that students were pleased with the amount of content the PDT

dedicated to study style and skills required at an Australian university. Current students were especially pleased with the content dedicated to the social and cultural environment in Australia. One student commented that they had been very anxious that they would not be able to cope in such a different country, but since the PDT they felt more relaxed and prepared for what life will be like in Australia.

Adequacy of the PDT to prepare students for living and studying in Australia could be measured by the success rate of Cambodian awardees while on-award in Australia. Cambodia has one of the highest success rates of any Australia Awards program at 94 percent<sup>13</sup>. The only consistent comment from current PDT and on-award students in the focus groups was that more alumni should be involved in the PDT, especially presenting focused topics rather than a general Q&A session. One suggestion was that male and female alumni are grouped with students going to the same city and they provide ten practical tips for living in that city which are also distributed in written form to students. Current On-award scholars indicated their enthusiasm to provide this service when they return to Cambodia. The commitment many scholarships recipients feel towards the program should be harnessed as a source alumni participants for this activity.

In the 2015 Scholarship Policy Handbook, the Scholarships and Alumni Branch recommends the length of in-country English language training as six month per half IELTS band requirement. Cambodia is following this requirement for the Fast Track and Intensive awardees however the length of pre-departure training for Direct Entry awardees is up to individual Posts to decide. The 10 weeks course for Direct Entry participants covers important content relating to studying and living in Australia and also assists awardees to improve their academic English ability. This is however one of the most generous offerings of any Australia Award program in the region. For example in Indonesia awardees with the required English are provided with six weeks of pre-departure training, while in other countries such as Vietnam and Burma Direct Entry awardees only participate in a short 2-3 days pre-departure workshop. Focus group participants currently in Australia who attended the Direct Entry course indicated that while the training was valuable, some of the content was redundant, especially when combined with the preparation provided by their university during the Introductory Academic Program (IAP) in Australia.

Clearly the success of Cambodian students when they are on-award in Australia can in part be attributed to the preparation they are provided with in Cambodia however, even a reduced course would still provide more than sufficient time to prepare awardees, as well as undertake the other mobilisation activities. While there is a clear cost saving to DFAT in reducing the length of the Direct Entry PDT, it should also be acknowledged that participants themselves would benefit from the reduced length. Currently successful awardees are notified of the selection outcome in mid-August and are required to commence PDT (regardless of PDT course length) by the end September. This provides awardees with approximately 6 weeks to finish or resign from their employment and if residing in the provinces they must move to Phnom Penh and locate accommodation. While focus group discussion with PDT and on-award students did not indicate this was a significant issue, on-award surveys indicate that some Cambodian awardees report severe or major problems negotiating with their employers before departure, which may be attributed by this short time frame.

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<sup>13</sup> This is measured by number of awardees who have not had variations in their award on OASIS (online Australian scholarship information system), such as extensions, terminations, course transfers etc.

During the review, interviewees and focus group participants indicated that open category awardees who resign from their jobs often face significant financial challenges, especially if they must also move to the capital and/or support their families on the modest stipend provided. Unlike their public category colleagues they do not continue to receive their local salary. It would be a financial and professional advantage to these awardees if they were able to stay in paid employment for an additional month before commencing PDT and their time in PDT was reduced overall.

***Recommendation 4: Reduce the Direct Entry PDT from 10 weeks to 6 weeks, with commencement at the end of October for all PDT participants.***

#### **HRD and reintegration**

Increasingly Australia Award programs are designed and implemented using varying approaches to human resource development (HRD). While the Program Design Document for the Cambodia program does not outline a HRD approach in the program objectives and the challenges are well identified<sup>14</sup>, there are directives in the contracted scope of services to implement a HRD approach with the public sector. The role of the HRD and Reintegration Specialist has been focused on this (on a part time basis in conjunction with Equity Pathway implementation). This has included developing strategies to work directly with ministry officials, including human resource departments and supervisors of alumni, as well as through the Alumni Development Action Plans (ADAPs) as outlined in the 2013 Annual Plan.

The results of these strategies are mixed, however on the whole there is a lack of meaningful HRD engagement with officials in the public sector. Two factors are potentially contributing to this. Firstly there is a lack of HRD systems within many ministries, besides basic reporting of numbers of staff and attendance. In addition the HRD approach within the AAS program is not built into a broader HRD objective within other Australian aid program priority areas, therefore minimising the resource investment and strategic priority of this focus on the partnership between Australian and the RGC.

While this lack of meaningful engagement has not translated into diminishing quality of candidates from these Ministries<sup>15</sup>, it does outline the challenges faced by the program to target the awards specifically to meet the human resource demands in government agencies. This is not a failure of the program to meet the organisational level outcomes of the program because there are still mechanisms to measure the contribution alumni are making within an organisation. It is however difficult for the program to support the system level outcome outlined in the TOC (Annex 3) of “improved HRD planning in RGC agencies through better use of scholarships”. Making this component of the TOC unrealistic and requiring revision (See Recommendation 16)

***Recommendation 5: HRD strategy should focus on program objectives at the individual level and implement strategies that can assist individuals to reintegrate into their specific organisations or sectors. (Also see M&E Recommendation 16)***

Clearly the challenge is about ensuring alumni are effectively reintegrated when they return to their ministry. Consultations with the Cambodian Government indicated that implementing Cambodia’s

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<sup>14</sup> AusAID 2012, Australia Awards Cambodia 2013-2017 Program Design Document, p. 20

<sup>15</sup> Gender equity issues however may be a key issue for future HRD and reintegration activities with the public sector, see Recommendation 11.

new Industrial Development Policy 2014-2024 and preparing for the establishment of ASEAN Economic Community by the end of 2015 are contributing to the public sector becoming more favourable in using returnees effectively. However instead of implementing an ambitious approach to HRD, another option may be to increase the profile of Australia Awards and returning alumni within Ministries through high-level communication. While this may not directly support HRD, it could indirectly encourage ministries to use the knowledge and skills of alumni in priority activities of the ministry.

***Recommendation 6: At the end of each semester a letter should be sent from the Australian Ambassador to all Ministers with returning alumni informing them of their return and the course they studied in Australia.***

Alumni Development Action Plans (ADAPs) were introduced as a reintegration tool into the program when the current contractor commenced in 2013. Although the PDD advises against the use of formal reintegration plans, it is assumed that ADAPs were implemented due to advice from the Scholarships and Alumni Branch at the time that recommended the use of formal reintegration plans.<sup>16</sup> Due to the high rate of Cambodians who return to their previous employer<sup>17</sup> ADAPs (template at Annex 7) may be a useful discussion tool between awardees and employers to consider how their knowledge and skills acquired in Australia may be used upon return. However in the absence of structured HR systems, especially in the public sector as mentioned above, the opportunity for these plans to be utilised in a meaningful way is difficult to conceive. Throughout consultations with DFAT, Coffey staff, students and alumni the value of ADAPs was regularly questioned. In particular, the HRD Specialist reported severe challenges in obtaining these plans from public sector awardees. These awardees are required to have the plan signed off by someone in their ministry which is very difficult to obtain due to the reluctance of their supervisor or department to tie themselves to a formal agreement.

The first intake to complete the ADAPs during their Pre-Departure briefing was the 2014 Semester 1 intake. This cohort of students is currently completing their studies and will return to Cambodia at the end of this year. Since there has not yet been one full cycle of ADAPs completed there is inadequate information available regarding their effectiveness as a reintegration tool. Evidence of their current use by awardees and employers in the program appears to be limited. Current students in Australia reported through focus groups and surveys that they have not reviewed their ADAP since being in Australia. However, while it is difficult to obtain formal agreement from supervisors on ADAPs, current students also suggested that the conversation with supervisors before departing was important in clarifying their own objectives of the scholarships against broader organisational priorities. Therefore a more flexible approach may be to provide scholars with the tools to have targeted conversations before and after their studies with their organisation about utilising their knowledge and skills, especially at senior levels of their workplaces.

In addition, a significant proportion of alumni are returning to the non-government or the private sector without a guaranteed job and either must find a new job or wait for a position within their

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<sup>16</sup> This could not be substantiated by SCB due to change in staff, however Post and Coffey provided this observation.

<sup>17</sup> 76 percent indicated in 2014 Tracer Study, p18

former organisation to become vacant. In the 2014 tracer study only 37 percent of open category alumni returned to their previous employer. These alumni need much more innovative, flexible reintegration support than is currently provided by the ADAP tool. The program has implemented new activities to assist this cohort, such as a workshop on job searching and interview skills. However the program should also consider adapting some of its other innovations, such as online videos, to support this cohort, who may be moving between short-term contacted positions or other commitments and not always available to attend face-to-face events. Some of these alternative approaches could be piloted over the remaining two years.

***Recommendation 7: The program explores and pilots alternative, more flexible approaches to support reintegration, such as continuing the pre-departure preparation workshop, including tools for targeted workplace conversations, complemented by additional, innovative professional development support for alumni<sup>18</sup>.***

### **Alumni support**

An effective, high profile Australian Alumni Association of Cambodia (AAA-C) is a priority for the Australian Embassy, in line with the global alumni engagement strategy. The AAA-C was established in 1998 with now more than 500 members however it does not appear to be very organised or well-defined. Consultations identified that two primary issues contribute to the current challenges faced by the AAA-C, these are:

1. Branding/image: the association is too closely aligned and identified with Australia Award alumni, making up approximately 80 percent of its memberships and is therefore not appealing to the broader Australian Alumni community in Cambodia
2. Activities: Committee members are not proactive and rely on the administrative and funding support provided by the Australia Awards program

The Embassy (through Coffey) has engaged a consultant to write a five-year alumni strategy. This strategy is concentrating on improving the management and activities of the AAA-C therefore this review is primarily focused on the support provided by the contractor to the AAA-C.

The activities of the Association are largely dependent on the prevailing committee members and their level of engagement. Currently this is not high. As a result the AAS program support is primarily focused on providing the AAA-C with administrative and secretariat assistance, significantly impacting on the contractor's time and resources to engage strategically with the Association to pursue activities that develop on-going links with Australia. By having the Australia Awards Alumni Manager undertaking almost all the administrative tasks of the AAA-C, the organisation continues (unintentionally) to be seen internally and externally as captured by Australia Awards. Without a fundamental change in this structure the current arrangements will continue to impact on the membership base and the attitude of the association's committee members. To build a more sustainable and inclusive organisation, administrative support provided by DFAT needs to be more visibly separated from the Australia Awards operations.

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<sup>18</sup> This support should be segmented by different cohorts' needs, i.e. open and public categories, female and provincial alumni etc.

While the review considered the option of DFAT establishing a separate contract to manage the AAA-C, there is acknowledged efficiency in using the existing Australia Awards contract to implement this arrangement. Therefore through the revised contract and scope of services a separate component of Australia Awards can be established to include secretariat or administrative support to the AAA-C. This new set of services and reporting requirements will need to be clearly branded and positioned as a separate activity to the Australia Awards Scholarship implementation arrangements, with separate oversight and management from DFAT.

***Recommendation 8: The revised scope of services should include a new separate implementation component (not associated with Australia Awards) dedicated to Alumni Engagement. This component should include a dedicated position assigned to the administration of the AAA-C and the implementation for Year 1 and 2 of the 5-year strategy.***

If this recommendation is adopted by DFAT, the existing Alumni Manager who is also responsible for M&E and Information would be freed up to implement more strategic activities to support Australia Awards alumni and their reintegration in line with Recommendation 6. This position would also have significantly more time to dedicate to critical M&E activities (see Recommendation 19).

## Efficiency

The current program is delivered under a unique Australia Awards arrangement with Coffey managing the head contract and subcontracting IDP to deliver the majority of the staffing and administrative functions. There are clear efficiency and value for money advantages to this model but with some easily identifiable areas for improvement.

## Resource investment

Resources dedicated to cycle activities, as outlined in the Basis of Payments and Annual Plans are appropriate, and are continually reviewed and refined to improve the efficiency. For example promotional activities were adjusted between 2014 and 2015, removing television advertising and refocusing resources towards efficient online and text message outreach. The review has found that activities and process, especially selection, are very thorough. However, for example a shorter PDT (recommendation 3) would provide some resource savings without compromising the effectiveness of this activity. A few issues were identified with the physical location of the Australia Awards office. The current office space, while sufficient in size, does not provide good visibility for the program and can easily be confused with IDP's broader commercial activities. While the joint location has logistical and operational merit, from a branding and program integrity perspective it would be better if a clearer separation of functions were publically visible.

Coffey has confirmed that if a contract extension occurs they have already sourced suitable new premises. Through the review it was suggested that with this office relocation future monthly meetings will be alternated between the Embassy and Australia Awards Office. This will contribute significantly to an enhanced working relationship between DFAT and Coffey. The new office location is still however within an IDP premise, therefore DFAT will need to include clear directives in the revised contract to ensure Coffey establishes an appropriate Australia Awards Office location,



including clear branding in public access areas, to significantly improved visibility of the Australia Awards, especially as a stand-alone office space.

### **Staffing**

The unique arrangement under Australia Awards with the head contract with Coffey and subcontract with IDP provides an efficient use of flexible human resources during the peak periods of the program. IDP's broader commercial operations around student recruitment and event management means they have existing staff within the office to assist with these components of the scholarships cycle when required, such as promotion, application and data management, university placement, mobilisation, and alumni activities.

It is difficult however to assess whether the contract adequately reflects the actual time and staff dedicated to specific tasks. For example the Basis of Payments provides for two senior assessment officers with inputs spread out over each month of the year however this function is actually performed by an external assessment panel of three to four members who are engaged by the program for a short period of time. Further consultations with the Coffey and IDP staff found that there is possibly more staff in discrete Australia Awards roles than is reflected in the flexible resourcing structure or the organisational chart provided to DFAT. Therefore DFAT needs greater visibility of the allocation of positions from IDP and a clearer understanding of their tasks and deliverables. While the total staff composition is comparable with other Australia Award programs<sup>19</sup>, other programs have more dedicated full-time local positions within their organisational structures. In particular the program should consider making the Alumni, Information and M&E manager position full time, rather than at the current 80 percent.

***Recommendation 9: Simplified scope of services and basis of payments to reflect more adequately the allocation of personnel to the program, in particular the dedicated IDP staff and the input periods of externally sourced personnel such as the assessment panel.***

One clear efficiency opportunity around staffing exists with the two Specialist positions. Currently the Targeting and Selection Specialist and the HRD and Reintegration Specialist are two separate part-time positions (60 and 40 percent respectively). This creates great inefficiencies in the delivery of the program due to both positions working on similar days, therefore leaving gaps in program resources and tasks falling on the Operations Manager. The roles are also very artificially separated along public and open category interactions around targeting and reintegration, as well as the equity pathway implementation. Combining these positions into one role that works across the lifecycle of the program would add greatly to the effectiveness of these activities, by engaging with applicants, awardees, alumni and key stakeholders in a coherent way.

***Recommendation 10: Merge two specialist positions into one full time position dedicated to targeting, selection and reintegration for both the public and open categories, as well as equity pathway approaches (more below).***

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<sup>19</sup> Based on rough assessment of the staff allocation in the Basis of Payment and compared with organisational structures of the Mongolia, Laos and Timor Leste programs

## Equity

Equity groups are defined within this program as women (specifically in the public sector), people with a disability (PWD) and people from provincial areas. There are numerous barriers these groups face in accessing an international scholarship program. The three most common are: access to information, English language ability and academic level. The AAS program is implementing appropriate strategies, in particular the Equity Pathway Program/Fund, to address these barriers with some opportunities for improvements, including adapting support for returnees.

## Women

All Australia Award programs aim to achieve gender balance in award recipients. This has been an on-going challenge for Cambodia, where it has only been achieved for the first time in the current 2015 selection round. The program has implemented a number of strategies to encourage more applicants from women and data over the past three years of the program demonstrates positive trends in the quality of these applications. While the percentage of female applications has remained steady at about 30-35 percent each year, the percentage of female awardees has increased from 37 percent in 2013, to 44 percent in 2014, and 50 percent in 2015. The significant increase in successful women has mostly been within the open category, which has grown from 17 percent in 2013, 27 percent in 2014 to 36 percent in 2015. There are significant challenges in targeting women from the public category which has seen a decline in the percentage of successful applicants over the same period, from 19 percent in 2013, to 16 percent in 2014 and now at only 14 percent in 2015. A number of reasons have been suggested during the review as to why this may be the case, including a lack of professional development opportunities promoted to women; the conservative nature of the public sector may attract more conservative women who do not identify with an overseas scholarship opportunity; and a low number of women in appropriate positions in targeted ministries.

The most significant support strategy has been through the Equity Pathway Program (and its precursor the English Language for Ministry Officials (ELMO)) which targets female public servants to improve their English language capability to meet the scholarship eligibility requirements. The Equity Pathway Program (EPP), especially through the efforts of the HRD and Reintegration Specialist, is helping to support some women towards an AAS however the effort is clearly not translating into overall results for this cohort. Nevertheless, the percentage of eligible AAS applicants selected for progressing further in the AA process who had ever received support from EPP has increased steadily over three years (32 percent in 2013, 50 percent in 2014 and 63 percent in 2015). These statistics reflect an effective approach of the EPP in the enrolment of the participants, however it is not translating into successful awardees, highlighting more work may be needed to improve participants' application writing skills, developing a career plan and conducting interview. Other factors reported by Post and the contractor, outside of the EPP contributing to increases in successful women (particularly from the open category) include changes in promotional activities by the program to feature more female alumni in prominent positions and working directly with organisations to encourage female applicants. One option the program may consider is to request government ministries to submit an equal number of applications from men and women as a way of further encouraging the promotion of the program to women in government.

During consultations it was suggested that some barriers may also exist for women participating in the EPP. For example classes are held in the evening which may impact on women with families. It was also reported that some women are concerned with their career progression and reintegration issues if they leave their positions for a scholarship. These concerns were further substantiated in the on-award surveys, in which women reported a higher percent against all returning home barriers compared to men. In the 2014 survey for example 92 percent of women expected to experience a lack of opportunities or career development when they returned, compared with 73 percent of men. While it is difficult to fully understand all the barriers contributing to a lack of female recipients from the public category, further supports during and post-award could be incorporated into the EPP to deliver a more comprehensive approach.

***Recommendation 11: Revision of the Equity Pathway strategy, with consideration of targeting activities in ministries, the structure of language training and reintegration activities that specifically support women and the barriers they face in their workplaces.***

### **People with a Disability (PWD)**

The barriers faced by PWD are similar to the other equity groups targeted in the program, with access to education, especially higher education is limited. In addition many PWD face on-going discrimination after they have completed higher education, with opportunities for full-time, permanent employment also very challenging.

As with female public servants, the EPP has provided English language training to PWD to improve their access to the AAS. In addition the EPP is also piloting an internship program for two PWD to support the two-year work experience eligibility criteria. These applicants should be ready to apply of the AAS in the next round.

To date the number of successful PWD award recipients has been low. This is not surprising considering the challenges faced and the small pool of potential eligible applicants in Cambodia. The program has implemented positive outreach strategies with PWD organisations, especially the umbrella Disability Action Council, which is providing good awareness of the support to PWD. The program is also trying to move away from just targeting individual PWD and extending targeting strategies to organisations that support PDW. These efforts, along with current participants in the EPP should provide some positive results in the future.

### **Provincial**

Targeting applicants from locations outside the capital city of Phnom Penh has been a challenge for the program. Results are very low and have been declining over the past three years, from 17 percent<sup>20</sup> in 2013, 11 percent in 2014 and only 10 percent in 2015. Data from this year is particularly concerning since the percentage of provincial applications was the highest for the three year at 19 percent, compared with 17 percent in 2014. However eligibility dropped to 12 percent and awardees to 10 percent. What is positive in the 2015 results however is the number of female awardees from the provinces was the highest ever with three successful applicants representing six percent of total awardees compared with only two percent in 2014.

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<sup>20</sup> All provincial percentages reported in this paragraph are out of the total number of applications, eligible applicants and awardees.

Activities to address the barriers faced by provincial applicants have included extensive promotion of the program in provincial locations through information sessions, social media and text message. The Equity Pathway Program is also available to improve English language levels, however this is still very difficult to access due to the location of the classes in Phnom Penh. Every weekend some participants are traveling six or seven hours to attend the classes, as well as staying overnight in Phnom Penh before returning home.

One of the most significant barriers for provincial applicants, as well as for many applicants from Phnom Penh, is the assessment of undergraduate academic qualification of Cambodian universities by the Australian Government's, particularly many universities located in provincial areas. The Australia Government, through the Department of Education and Training, provide Country Education Profiles (CEP) to help Australian organisations understand overseas higher education and postsecondary technical and vocational educational qualifications. Individual CEPs are used by universities to help understand the level of an overseas qualification which is then used to assess entry to an Australian university.<sup>21</sup> The Australia Awards Scholarships Handbooks also refers managing contractors to the CEP in assessing the eligibility of applicants. Currently the CEP for Cambodia only lists approximately thirteen universities as meeting Section 1 or 2 standards which are equivalent to an Australian undergraduate qualification. While the eligibility criteria clearly states that applicants must "possess a Bachelor degree considered equivalent to an Australian Bachelor degree (for Master level applicants)", the CEP assessment is not a public document, therefore potential applicants from Section 3 or 4 universities do not know they may not be eligible.

The program is employing a number of strategies to manage this by working one-on-one with university admission staff to assess applicants based on work experience and other technical training along-side their academic qualifications. The program will also trial this year to seek placement in Australia for three provincial awardees from Section 3 and 4 universities.

Consultations with the Australian Embassy and the contractor indicated that the comprehensive assessment of Cambodia's higher education system for its CEP was undertaken in 2005 with a slight revision in 2012. There is frustration amongst stakeholders that the information in the CEP may be inaccurate considering the pace of development and change in Cambodia. Efforts are being made internally with the Australian Government to encourage a more thorough review of Cambodia's CEP. However until this review is undertaken, Australia universities and Coffey will continue to be guided by the current CEP.

Due to these challenges, as well as a need to refocus the priority of the program on targeting high quality candidates who are able to gain entry to an Australian university, DFAT has indicated a desire to de-emphasise the priority of provincial targeting. Considering the current challenges faced, this would be a sensible approach, particularly while future directions of the program are being reviewed. One option DFAT is considering in the next phase of Australia Awards post-2017 is the development of a pathway program that targets high performing undergraduates from provincial areas and provides them with additional academic and English language support, either through a local partner or an Australian education provider. This option, or others possible pathways options, require further in-depth scoping. Effort over the next two years should continue to focus promotion

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<sup>21</sup> <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/Services-And-Resources/services-for-organisations/Pages/Services-for-organisations.aspx>

in a limited number provinces with Section 1 and 2 universities, as well as EPP access to eligible provincial applicants that require further English language assistance. However the next two years also presents DFAT with an opportunity to investigate and scope possible options to provide in-depth analysis for future approaches. Several Australia Award programs in the region already pilot and implement in-country and pathway approaches. Coffey manages some of these in Laos and Indonesia therefore contractor should also be given the opportunity to test some possible approaches within the remaining program to provide further analysis towards the future program.

***Recommendation 12: revised contract to include an opportunity for Coffey to propose a pilot academic pathway activity for approval by DFAT***

***Recommendation 13: extensive further analysis and scoping is required on academic pathway opportunities. This should be undertaken independently by DFAT over the six months to feed into the redesign process for the program post-2017.***

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

Overall, the program's M&E is aligned with DFAT's Global Australia Awards M&E Framework, as reflected through the program's theory of change (TOC), well-defined indicators and clear approaches to measuring program outcomes and outputs.

#### **Design of M&E Plan:**

The M&E Plan is well-designed, including having a relatively clear logic in the TOC <sup>22</sup>(Annex 3) as well as technically and theoretically sound indicators. The plan was updated in October 2014 to respond to the Australia Awards global Program Logic and M&E framework. It also includes clearly identified data sources, approaches to data analysis, and responsibilities, and incorporates frameworks for both performance and outcome monitoring and evaluation using DAC quality criteria.

Process and output data have been clearly reported in Progress and Annual Reports, and are well utilised to inform recommended improvements in the Annual Plans. Progress of each activity in the Annual Plans is reported either in the form of a table or narrative. Implementation of recommendations and lessons learned are tracked and reported through Progress reports and the Annual report. However, a full picture of the program's performance reflected through tracking and presenting the results against headline indicators in the M&E framework is missed. For tracking performance, there have been no annual targets established for relevant indicators in the M&E framework; nor baselines. To make it a comprehensive M&E mechanism on the program's performance, equity indicators and their targets could be incorporated. The M&E Plan would be strengthened therefore by presenting targets and clear annual milestones, then reporting results against each indicator.

***Recommendation 14: Reporting against the M&E Plan should include an additional column to 'Track' progress against each indicator, including equity targets where appropriate.***

A key challenge exists in capturing and communicating outcomes at organisational and systematic level post-award as outlined in the TOC, particularly due to the HRD difficulties mentioned above. For example ADAPs as a data source in the M&E Plan appears to be unrealistic (as discussed above)

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<sup>22</sup> With some revisions required to the organisational and system level outcomes as outlined in Recommendation 15

due to limited engagement of employers, or unavailability of employer HRD plans. Those indicators concerned with the use of ADAP or employer's engagement should be revisited and refined. To capture how alumni contribute to the development of an organisation or a sector the program could use other research methods such as case studies.

***Recommendation 15: The M&E plan should be revisited and refined as necessary to be more realistic and feasible, given the identified challenges for capturing outcomes at organisational and systematic level.***

Case studies have been carried out as a series of longitudinal stories from aspirations to completion and re-integration, focusing on successful stories. Technically however, individual and/or organisational case studies should be designed following a systematic approach for qualitative studies which includes a defined conceptual framework to test; information/variables to be obtained; an analysis plan and process for selecting cases so that useful emerging themes across cases can be observed. Therefore the future design of case studies should link with and provide information to the indicators defined in the revised M&E plan.

Only one organisational case study has been completed with the National Bank of Cambodia. Therefore more organisational cases studies are needed to provide further analysis on the organisational enabling factors and challenges faced. For the sake of learning, a comparison design of case studies between a successful ministry and another with more challenges may be a sensible approach.

***Recommendation 16: Further organisational case studies should be designed to provide more information and comparative analysis on organisational enabling factors and challenges***

### **Operationalisation**

Progress and Annual reports prepared by the contractor are extremely detailed and quite lengthy with a lot of cross sectional data for each separate activity in the scholarship cycle. For example a number of annexes present series of data tables however no analysis is provided. Showing and interpreting trends over a number of years for a few key correlated indicators, combined with summary analysis on trends, and an assessment of the quality and effectiveness of interventions would be more useful than pages of data tables.

DFAT is also already informed about most the operational issues presented in Progress and Annual reports through the regular monthly meetings, therefore these reports have low relevancy for a busy audience and can be quite difficult to follow. Shorter reports, with more concise analysis of activities would be of greater value to decision makers.

***Recommendation 17: Annual Reports should focus on performance of the program as a whole, by briefly illustrating major achievements and challenges in implementation, and reporting progress against the M&E plan's questions and indicators (i.e. tracking column recommended above).***

In addition M&E data could better communicate results of the program for public and economic diplomacy purposes. Coffey currently gathers a lot of information that may be useful for wider audiences, such as Austrade in the development of the Market Information Package on Australian education exports in Cambodia. However it is unclear what information is available and how best to utilise it. There is a clear opportunity for Coffey and DFAT to explore and improve the use of M&E data and communication information better.

For example, the 2014 tracer study report includes a number of extremely positive findings, such as:

- 96 percent of alumni are employed
- 91 percent of alumni have greater technical/operation responsibilities since returning
- 94 percent of alumni had a positive or very positive impression of Australia

This information could be included in a newsletter or other promotional material produced by the contractor to demonstrate the success of the program to a wider audience. Collected data and information could also be useful for assisting Australian education providers in expanding their student recruitment and other commercial efforts as mentioned above in the Relevance section.

***Recommendation 18: The contractor should develop a promotional brochure that reports on the high-level, positive tracer study findings, including profiles of alumni and other relevant data.***

Finally it was reported that access and utilisation of the Alumni Online Network (AON) database has been limited. In addition ownership of the alumni database between the AAS program, IDP and AAA-C needs to be clarified. Resolving this issue will be a particularly critical step in the development and implementation of the five-year alumni strategy mentioned previously.

### **M&E Resources**

It is difficult to estimate the full extent of resources dedicated to M&E as activities are implemented across the program cycle with responsibilities across multiple individuals and functional areas. However if the discrete M&E resources were assessed against the full program costs, it would account to approximately 1-3percent of program budget<sup>23</sup>. Currently the local staff member responsible for M&E and Information is also responsible for Alumni which is consuming most of his time. If DFAT were to adopt Recommendation 7<sup>24</sup>, as well as increase the allocation of time of this position from 80 percent to full time, this would significantly increase the M&E human resources of the program. In particular the local manager would be able to more adequately support the M&E advisor with initial data analysis and other preparation activities.

***Recommendation 19: Increase in local staff dedicated to M&E.***

## **5. Conclusion**

Overall the review finds that the current implementation arrangements managed by Coffey are performing very well. Throughout the scholarship lifecycle there are sound management approaches, including clearly documented rationales for adjustments and improvements.

This review has identified some areas for improvement, including: alternative reintegration approaches particularly to support women and open category alumni; reduced pre-departure training; revision of the M&E plan to be more focused on individual outcomes; and adjustments to staffing arrangements. Overall however the program is high performing and implementation arrangement are contributing to the long-term delivery of program objectives.

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<sup>23</sup> This assessment range is based on either a calculation of the whole program costs, including in-Australia costs, estimated at only 1 percent, or only in-country costs estimated at 3 percent.

<sup>24</sup> Recommendation 7: The revised scope of services should include a new separate implementation component (not associated with Australia Awards) dedicated to Alumni Engagement. This component should include a dedicated position assigned to the administration of the AAA-C and the implementation for Year 1 and 2 of the 5-year strategy.

# ANNEX 1: Australia Awards Scholarships in Cambodia Review Plan

Submitted 4 August 2015

## 1. Background

The Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS) in Cambodia has been in operation since 1994. Up to 55 scholarships are now awarded annually. Since 1994, over 500 Cambodians have been awarded scholarships and over 400 have since completed their scholarship and returned to Cambodia. Australia Awards Scholarships are a priority for the aid program in Cambodia. The Scholarship priority areas are set to align with the broader sectoral priorities of the aid program (ie. health, infrastructure, agriculture, education management, trade, and ending violence against women).

The aims of Australia Awards Scholarships globally are to: (a) develop capacity and leadership skills so that individuals can contribute to development in their own country; and (b) build people-to-people links at the individual, institutional and country levels.

The current goal for AAS in Cambodia is to support Cambodia in achieving its development goals and have positive relationships with Australia enhanced by the contribution of women and men with Australian qualifications, experience and networks, thereby contributing to Cambodia's economic growth.

The objectives of the Australia Awards Scholarships in Cambodia are:

- (a) to increase the skills and capacity of the men and women of Cambodia (including people with a disability and those from outside Phnom Penh);
- (b) to support the men and women of Cambodia (including people with a disability and those from outside Phnom Penh) to make a contribution to Cambodia's development;
- (c) to support the men and women of Cambodia (including people with a disability and those from outside Phnom Penh) to develop on-going links with Australian people, organisations and institutions; and
- (d) recognition by the Cambodia Government and other development partners that Australia is an active responsive contributor to the economic and social development of Cambodia<sup>25</sup>.

The Australia Awards in Cambodia are managed by an Australian Managing Contractor, Coffey International Development PTY LTD (Coffey). Coffey delivers all operational and administrative components of the annual cycle of scholarships processes, from annual planning, promotion, targeting and selection, through to mobilisation, reintegration and alumni support. Coffey also manage a subcontract with IDP to deliver Pre-departure English Language training through their Australian Education Centre (AEC).

DFAT Phnom Penh manages the contract with Coffey and provides strategic directions on the program implementation. Coffey works collaboratively with DFAT Phnom Penh post to deliver the program.

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<sup>25</sup> A full Theory of Change diagram is available at Annex 3



The current contract with Coffey started in March 2013 and is scheduled to end in December 2015, with an optional extension to December 2017.

## 2. Review purpose

The purpose of the Mid-Term Review is to assess how **effectively** and **efficiently** the program is being implemented with a view to strengthening implementation for the remainder of the contract period; and to inform DFAT's decision regarding the contract extension period. The review should also consider how **relevant** the program is to the current Australian aid program in Cambodia.

The review will therefore make recommendations to DFAT regarding:

3. Extending the contract with Coffey from the current three years for a further two years (five years in total), including any recommended changes to program focus.
4. Options for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of program implementation.

The primary audience for this review is DFAT Phnom Penh Post, who will share the document and/or findings (at their discretion) with the Scholarships and Alumni Branch, the Government of Cambodia and Coffey.

It is proposed that the review plan is shared with Coffey to ensure staff are able to sufficiently prepare for the in-country field mission.

## 3. Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions were developed initially from the TOR, and refined through consultation with DFAT and informed by the document review.

There are six key evaluation questions.

7. How effectively is the program being implemented to meet the long-term program objectives?
8. How efficiently are key program activities and processes being implemented?
9. How effectively have equity strategies relating to gender and social inclusiveness (participation of applicants with disability and provincial applicants) been implemented?
10. How relevant is the current program's focus to the Australian aid program and Cambodian priorities?
11. How well is the monitoring and evaluation framework designed and is it effectively operationalised to assess the outputs and outcomes of the program?
12. Based on the above findings, where (in the scholarship cycle) could implementation activities and program focus be strengthened to better support program objectives?

These questions have been further defined through a series of sub-questions.

1. How effectively is the program being implemented to meet the long-term program objectives?  
In particular:
  - 1.1 How effective are targeting approaches in ensuring a sufficient number of eligible applicants and successful candidates are sourced from priority cohorts to meet program allocations/targets?
  - 1.2 Are pre-departure activities providing adequate preparation for studying and living in Australia, as well as English language training?
  - 1.3 How satisfied are alumni and other program stakeholders with the support provided to Australia Awards recipients on return (reintegration)? In particular how effective is the ADAP as a reintegration planning and monitoring tool?
  - 1.4 How effective is the current support provided by the contractor to the AAA-C in developing on-going links with Australia?
  - 1.5 Are there reasons identified for any program delays or problems, such as mobilising awardees or access to target groups? If yes, have they been addressed and resolved?
2. How efficiently are key program activities and processes being implemented?
  - 2.1. How efficient are the implementation arrangements such as resource investment in targeting strategies, content and length of pre-departure training, and reintegration activities compared with other Australia Awards programs in the Asia Pacific of similar size?
  - 2.2. How do the staffing composition and other administrative resources compare with other Australia Awards programs in the Asia Pacific of similar size?
3. How effectively have equity strategies relating to gender and social inclusiveness (participation of applicants with disability and provincial applicants) been implemented?
  - 3.1. What is the definition of equity that is applied in the program?
  - 3.2. Have targets been established (such as number of eligible applicants and conversion to awardees) and what progress has been made towards these targets?
  - 3.3. How systematically have efforts been made throughout the scholarship cycle to increase the equity of the program?
4. How relevant is the current program's focus to the Australian aid program and Cambodian priorities?
  - 4.1. How well is the program aligned with Australia's overarching aid policy (i.e. new Aid Investment Plan), Australia Awards Global Strategy (draft) and specific program directions in Cambodia, including Government of Cambodia priorities?
  - 4.2. How is the current program addressing DFAT's public and economic diplomacy strategies?
5. How well is the monitoring and evaluation framework designed and is it effectively operationalised to assess the outputs and outcomes of the program?
  - 5.1. How well is the M&E Plan aligned with the global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Australia Awards (including the global Program Logic) – recognising that the MEF and global program logic have only recently been released?

- 5.2. Is the program collecting and using sufficient data to support well-informed management, accountability, and learning?
  - 5.3. Is the M&E Plan well designed to gather and communicate information on the long-term impact of the program?
  - 5.4. Are resources for M&E activities sufficient?
4. Based on the above findings, where (in the scholarship cycle) could implementation activities and program focus be strengthened to better support program objectives?

## 5. Methods

The review is formative in nature and will primarily focus on the program's implementation processes. Data will be collected using mixed methods. The review will utilise quantitative and qualitative data from primary and secondary sources. Primary data will be obtained through interviewing program stakeholders. Secondary data will be sourced from the available documentation. The review team will validate and triangulate the information by comparing information from different sources.

The methods to be used in the review include:

1. Document analysis
2. Interviews
3. Focus groups and round table discussions.

**Document and data analysis.** Program documents (such as the Program Design Document, contract with Coffey, Annual Plans and Reports, M&E Plan, Contractor Performance Assessments, Tracer Studies and On-Award Surveys) will provide information on the effectiveness and efficiency of implementation activities, management processes and operational resources. DFAT documents (such as the Aid Investment Plan, Public Diplomacy Strategy, Economic Diplomacy Strategy, Australia Awards Program Logic and draft Australia Awards Global Strategy) will provide points of reference by which to assess the program's relevance.

**Interviews.** Interviews will be conducted during the in-country field mission with stakeholders including DFAT officers, Coffey staff and subcontractors, and Government of Cambodia officials. Interviews will also be held with other donors in Cambodia to discuss their scholarship programs (e.g. to help assess value for money and program relevance).

**Focus groups discussions.** Up to two focus group discussions will be held with Australia Award Scholarship recipients undertaking pre-departure English Language Training, recipients currently in Australia on award, and possibly alumni (to investigate their experiences of implementation activities). Depending on awardees and alumni profile and accessibility, as well as availability of study participants, several sampling strategies may be applied, for example:

- Grouped by gender (female and males) and social inclusion classifications such as people with disability, people from remote area etc
- Grouped by types of agencies such as a group of governmental officers at ministerial level, provincial level, or NGOs

The review team will consult with the DFAT's scholarship team in Phnom Penh on the best sampling strategy, and will develop a focus group design as more detailed planning for the in-country field work progresses.

During the in-country field mission the review team will meet at the end of each day to review the data collected, and prepare for the interview approach for the following days. The review team may also request additional data and information available from the Coffey or other stakeholders as the review progresses.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The purpose of the review and intended use of information obtained from interviews will be explained to each stakeholder at the onset of interviewing. Interviewing will be voluntary and no informant will be forced to participate. Also, care will be taken that all interview questions and requests for further clarification are not perceived as "steering" the interview or discussion in any particular direction. Information obtained during data collection will be aggregated and no reference will be made to any individual respondent as a source of specific information. Where there is value in identifying individual respondents in the report in order to strengthen the findings of the review, specific permission will be sought.

### **Communication of findings**

An aide memoire will be presented to DFAT at the conclusion of the in-country field mission, outlining initial findings and possible recommendations. Close consultations with DFAT will continue throughout the drafting and finalising of the review report to ensure the review meets expectations and provides the required content to inform future decisions.

## **6. Limitations**

Coffey has been implementing the program for less than three years, with only one full cycle of the AAS completed under their management. Consequently this review, under DFAT's guidance, is focusing primarily on assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of implementation arrangements, rather than progress towards the program objectives. This assessment will be more appropriately done through a Tracer Study, or more summative evaluation, towards the end of the program.

There are also limitations in the data available for the review. The time available limits the number of interviews that can be conducted in Cambodia (e.g. with past scholars), and in Australia with scholars on Award. In addition, while all efforts will be made to access data for comparison of efficiency and effectiveness from comparable Award programs, experience suggests this information will be difficult to source and compare.

An assessment of substantial changes required to the program focus would require in-depth investigation and analysis which the timeframe for this review does not allow. It is therefore proposed that any recommendations for substantial changes be flagged for consideration in the future redesign of the program in 2016.

## **7. Team Member Responsibilities**

Roles and responsibilities for the review team are outlined in the Terms of Reference.

**Team Leader** (Emily Serong) is responsible for the overall delivery of the review, including developing the approach and methodology, leading consultations, and the drafting of key documents (Review Plan, Aide Memoire and Review Report). The team leader will provide direction to the other team members and will work collaboratively to deliver a high quality review within the agreed timeframe.

**M&E Specialists** (Jessica Kenway and Sara Webb) will support the Team Leader throughout the review process, including providing advice and guidance on the review methodology and evaluations questions. The specialists will also provide overall review and quality assurance of key documents.

**DFAT M&E Specialist** (Nga Le Thi Quynh) will attend in-country consultations in Cambodia, draft and contribute to sections of the Aide Memoire and Review as agreed with the Team Leader. These may particularly include the effectiveness section of the review focused on the M&E Framework and targeting (women, disability and provincial) approaches.

**DFAT Phnom Penh Post** will support the review by providing all relevant documents, making arrangements for in-country consultations and providing timely feedback on draft documents, including attending an Aide Memoire presentation at the conclusion of the in-country field mission.

## 6. Review process and timeline

<b>7. Dates</b>	<b>Activity</b>
13 July – 4 August	Desk review (analysing existing background documents and including a briefing session with DFAT Canberra). Prepare a Review plan and any relevant documents as required
<b>4 August</b>	<b>Submit review plan</b>
5 August	Receive DFAT comments and revisions
7 August	In-Australia consultations (by telephone with DFAT Canberra)
11-19 August	Field Work – see Annex 1 for proposed consultations
20-21 August	Preparation of aide memoire
<b>21 August</b>	<b>Presentation of aide memoire</b> Including initial findings and proposed recommendations for discussion with DFAT
24 August – 2 September	Draft Mid-Term Review Report
<b>2 September</b>	<b>Submit draft review</b> Including detailed recommendations
9 September	Receive DFAT comments and revisions
10 – 16 September	Finalise report
<b>16 September</b>	<b>Submit final Mid-Term Review Report</b>

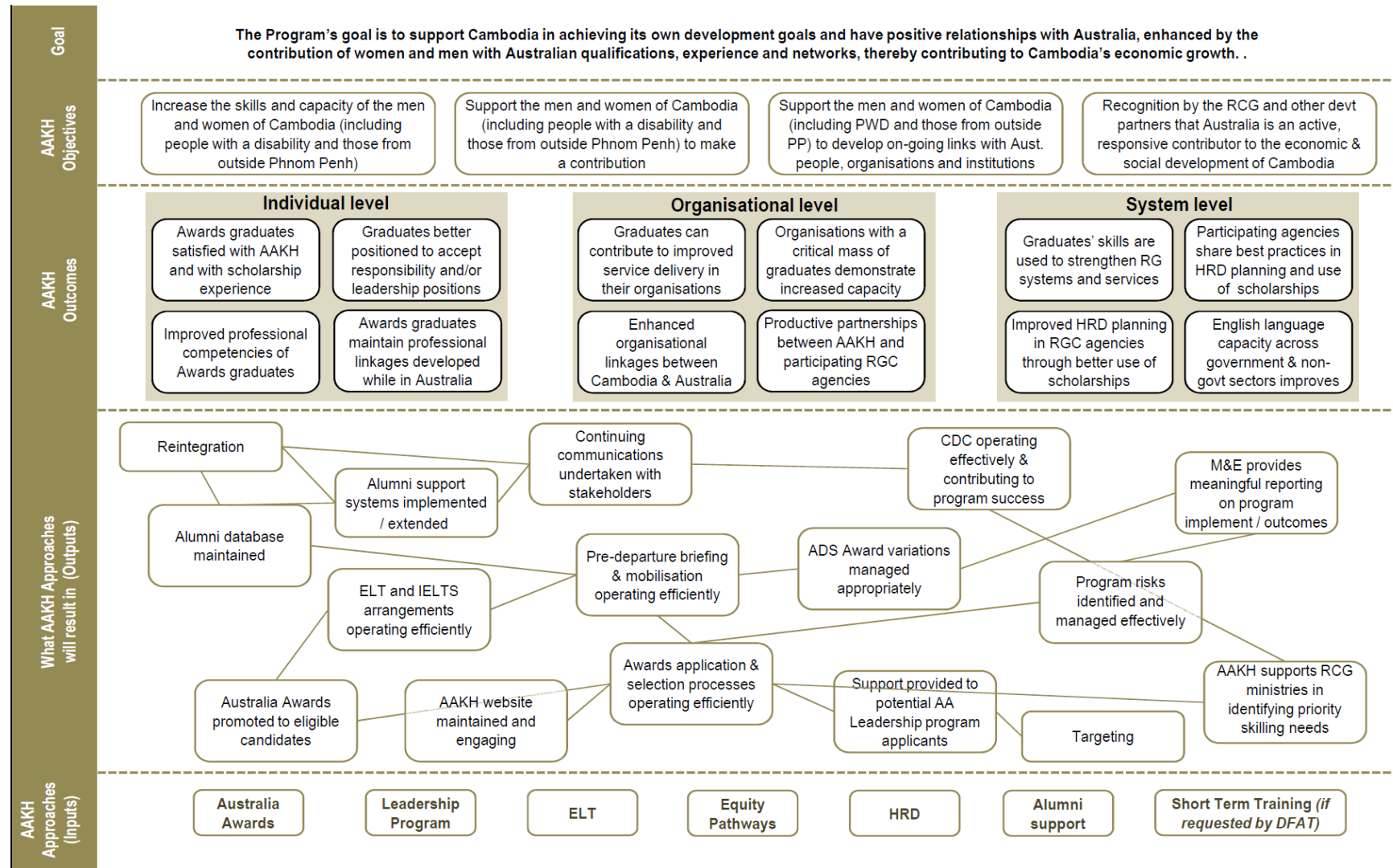
*Annex 1: Proposed in-country consultations*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting/Activity</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Aug 9/10	Travel to Phnom Penh	
Tues Aug 11	Team workshop with DFAT M&E officer / Embassy briefings	Team discussion of desk review, approach to meetings/consultations, key questions etc.  Meetings with Embassy sections – Pol, Eco , Edu
Wed Aug 12	Coffey meetings with Team leader, Ops Manager and HRD and Targeting Specialists	All day with Coffey key staff  Interviews based on information provided in desk review (contract, SoS, Annual plans, progress reports, QAI, PDT review etc.)
Thu Aug 13	Camb Govt /  HRD pilot agencies / other donor	Morning workshop with Council for Development  Afternoon with other stakeholders
Fri Aug 14	IDP and AEC	interviews with PDT subcontractor IDP/AEC, including interviews with current awardees
Sat Aug 15	Writing, maybe lunch with AAA-C	Discuss existing and future program support for AAA-C (or maybe a weekday lunch or dinner?)
Sun Aug 16	Writing	
Mon Aug 17	HRD pilots agencies / other donors	Other meetings with HRD pilot agencies or donors?
Tues Aug 18	Follow up meetings with Coffey	<i>N.B Including telcon with Jess/Sara to discuss findings and recommendations</i>
Weds Aug19	Follow up meetings with Embassy	Including workshop with team on structure and content of Aide Memoire
Thurs Aug 20	Aide Memoire writing	<i>N.B. Send draft Aide Memoire to Jess for feedback</i>
Fri Aug 21	Finalise Aide Memoire and presentation	
Sat Aug 22	Travel to Melb	

## Annex 2: Document review list

- Cambodia Scholarships Design Document 2013
- Cambodia Scholarships Scope of Services
- Contract with Coffey and relevant attachments SOS and BOP
- Deeds of Amendment no 1 and no 2
- Coffey program documentation including but not limited to:
  - Annual Plans for 2013/2014 and 2014/2015
  - Annual Reports for 2013 and 2014, including annexes (especially alumni survey analysis and case studies)
  - Six-monthly Progress Reports
  - M&E Plan
- Partner Performance Assessment April 2015
- Cambodia Tracer Study Report and Annexes (December 2014)
- Review of pre-departure training (December 2014)
- DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance
- DFAT's 2012, 2013 and 2014 Quality at Implementation (QAI) Reports
- Cambodia Country Strategic Plan 2012
- National Strategic Development Plan 2014-18 (Government of Cambodia)
- Australia Awards Global M&E Framework
- Australia Awards Global Program Logic
- Australia Awards Scholarships Handbook
- Australia Awards Global Strategy (draft)
- On-award surveys
- DFAT Public Diplomacy Strategy
- DFAT Economic Diplomacy Strategy

## Annex 3: Theory of Change diagram





## **ANNEX 4: List of consultations**

### **In-Australia**

#### **Coffey:**

Robyn Stokes, Contractor Representative

Geoff Lacey, Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor

#### **Australia Awards Scholarship Awardees:**

University of Melbourne

Monash University

Victoria University

### **In-Cambodia**

#### **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Embassy:**

Sothea Hel, Senior Program Manager, Development Cooperation

Sarah Toh, Second Secretary, Development Cooperation

Paul Keogh, Counsellor, Development Cooperation

Benita Somerville, First Secretary, Development Cooperation

Dr Premprey Suos, Senior Program Manager, Development Cooperation

Michelle Vizzard, First Secretary Development Cooperation

Simon Fellows, First Secretary and Deputy Head of Mission, Political Economic Section

Reasmey Hong, Program Manager (Law and Justice/ Volunteers), Development Cooperation

Chhay Ros Ph.D., Senior Program Manager, Development Cooperation

Arjun Bisen, Second Secretary, Political Economic Section

#### **Australia Awards Cambodia:**

John Walsh, Team Leader, Coffey

Sharon Wilkinson, HRD Specialist, IDP Education

Gill Sutherland, Targeting and Selection Specialist, IDP Education

Piseth Pum, Operations Manager, IDP Education

Sothea Korng, Alumni, Information and Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, IDP Education

#### **Other contractors:**

Sreng Mao, Country Manager (Cambodia), IDP Education

Ashely Irving, Principal Australia Centre for Education (ACE), IDP Education

Dr Jason Ketter, Alumni 5-Year Strategy Consultant, Coffey

#### **Royal Government of Cambodia:**

Mak Ngoy, Director General, Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education Youth and Sport

Im Sour, Deputy Director General, Council of the Development of Cambodia (CDC), Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board

Phana Veunida, Director Asia Pacific and Oceania Countries Department, CDC, Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board

Saram Martin, Executive Liaison Officer, CDC

Srey Chan, Director of Persons with Disability Rights Unit, Disability Action Council Secretariat

**Other donors:**

Brent Rapson, New Zealand Embassy Bangkok

Ms Sirikarn Thammawijit, Development Programme Administrator, New Zealand Embassy Bangkok

Jay R. Raman, Public Affairs Officer, Embassy of the United States of America, Phnom Penh

Socheat Ou, Public Affairs Specialist, Embassy of the United States of America, Phnom Penh

Po Eng, Information Resource Specialist, Public Affairs Section, Embassy of the United States of America, Phnom Penh

**Australia Awards Scholarship Awardees:**

Intensive Pre-Departure Training participants

Australia Awards Scholarships Alumnus

## ANNEX 5: Focus Group Discussion Plans

### Focus Group Discussion 1 Questions

Audience: Pre-departure students in Intensive program (12 months). Students have almost completed the course and will undertake their IELTS test at the end of August. They are scheduled to depart for Australia in Jan 2016.

#### Introduction

Purpose of the study and focus group. Their confidentiality will be respected, with no names recorded of focus group participants.

#### Question area one (Eval Qu 1.2)

Based on your understanding of what study and life will be like in Australia how well do you think the pre-departure training program has prepared you for this:

- To adjust to a new academic environment
- Social and cultural adjustment
- English language ability

*Probe with questions about what they think will be the hardest part of adjusting to study and life in Australia? Are they ready?*

#### Question area two (Eval Qu 2.1)

Do you think the length and content of the training was appropriate?

Which components of the PDT do you think could be increased/ decreased?

What would you change about the training so that future students are better prepared?

#### Question area three (Eval Qu 1.3 reintegration)

When you applied for the scholarship you had to discuss how your scholarship would contribute to development in Cambodia.

- Is your ambition is still the same (realistic) or has it changed over the past year?
- Have you heard about Alumni Development Action Plans (ADAPs)?
- How do think you (and your employer if applicable) would use this plan to monitor your progress towards this ambition?

*Probe with questions about reintegration systems or plans with their employer when they return.*

## **Focus Group Discussion 2 Questions**

Audience: Current students On-Award at universities in Melbourne. Students were specifically identified as completing the Direct Entry PDT

### **Introduction**

Purpose of the study and focus group. Their confidentiality will be respected, with no names recorded of focus group participants.

### **Question area one (Eval Qu 1.2)**

1. Based on your experience of studying and living in Australia how well do you think the pre-departure training program prepared you for this:
  - To adjust to a new academic environment
  - Social and cultural adjustment
  - English language ability

*Probe with questions about what the hardest part of adjusting to study and life in Australia? Were they ready? Differences for men and women? What information would have been useful in the PDT?*

2. What challenges or problems did you experience during the period between finding out about the scholarships and departing for Australia?

*Probe with questions about negotiating and finishing work; budgeting during PDT; preparing family for Australia; visas and medicals; any other arrangements?*

### **Question area two (Eval Qu 2.1)**

3. Do you think the length and content of the training was appropriate?
4. What would you change about the training so that future students are better prepared?

### **Question area three (Eval Qu 1.3 reintegration)**

5. Have you completed an Alumni Development Action Plan (ADAP)? How have you used this Plan since you've been in Australia?
6. How do think you (and your employer if applicable) will use this plan when you return, if at all?

*Probe with questions about reintegration systems or plans with their employer when they return.*

7. Any other comments they would like to make.

*Summarise the main points of feedback that you have heard from them. Explain next steps, i.e. what you are doing with the information.*

## ANNEX 6: In-country field mission schedule

### Australia Awards Scholarships Cambodia– 2015 Review

(Phnom Penh, 10-21 August 2015)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Meeting/Activity</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Aug 9/10			Travel to Phnom Penh	
Mon Aug 10	3.30-4.30pm	Australian Embassy	Briefing with Paul Keogh, Counsellor - DFAT Aid)	
Tues Aug 11	9.00-10.00am	Australian Embassy	Introductory briefing with Sarah and Sothea Roth	Team discussion of desk review, approach to meetings/consultations, key questions etc.
	10.00-11.00am	Australian Embassy	- 10.00- 10.15am: Michelle Vizzard- 1 <sup>st</sup> Secretary: Infrastructure - 10.15- 10.30am: Benita Sommerville- 1 <sup>st</sup> Secretary: Health and Law & Justice - 11.00-11.20am: Simon Fellows- 1 <sup>st</sup> Secretary & DHoM: New Colombo Plan	Meeting with other Embassy sectoral teams
	Afternoon		Review Team catch up and preparation	
Wed Aug 12		Australia Awards Office c/o. IDP Education (ACE) No. 657, Kampuchea Krom	Coffey meetings with Team leader, Ops Manager and HRD and Targeting Specialists	All day with Coffey key staff Interviews based on information provided in desk review (contract, SoS, Annual plans, progress reports, QAI, PDT review etc.)
Thu Aug 13	8.30-9.30am		Teleconference with the New Zealand Scholarships Awards Management Team in Bangkok (TBC)	
	2.30- 3.30pm	Higher Education Department #169, Preah Norodom Blvd., Phnom Penh	H.E. MAK Ngoy Director General, Directorate General of Higher Education, Project Manager,	workshop with Higher Education Department and Council for Development of Cambodia

			Higher Education Quality and Capacity Improvement Project	
	4.00-5.00pm	Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC)	Ms Phana Veunida Director, Asia Pacific and Oceania Department, Council for the Development of Cambodia	
Fri Aug 14	10.00- 11.00am	IDP Education (ACE) No. 657, Kampuchea Krom	-Ashley Irving – ACE Principal	interviews with PDT subcontractor IDP/AEC, including interviews with current awardees
	11.00-12.00pm	IDP Education (ACE) No. 657, Kampuchea Krom	-Sreng Mao – Country Director IDP	
	2.00-3.30pm	Australia Awards Office	- PDT Students	
	4pm	c/o. IDP Education (ACE) No. 657, Kampuchea Krom	- Alumni meeting	
Sat Aug 15/ Sun Aug 16			Writing	
Mon Aug 17	9.00-9.30am	Australian Embassy	Arjun Bisen- 2 <sup>nd</sup> Secretary	Political and Economic
	1.30pm	The US Embassy	- Jay R. Raman- Public Affairs Officer -Ou Socheat- Public Affairs Specialist (Fulbright Scholarships management team)	
	3.00pm		Disability Action Council	Meetings with HRD pilot agencies
Tues Aug 18	8.30	While Mansion Hotel	Dr Jason Ketter- Consultant for the AAA-C Five-year strategic plan	
			Follow up meetings with Coffey	
Weds Aug19			Follow up meetings with Embassy	Including workshop with team on structure and content of Aide Memoire
Thurs Aug 20			Aide Memoire writing	<i>N.B. Send draft Aide Memoire to Jess for feedback</i>
Fri Aug 21	9.30-11.00am	Australian Embassy	Aide Memoire presentation to DFAT	
Sat Aug 22			Travel to Melb	

## ANNEX 7: Alumni Development Action Plan

INTRODUCTION TO REINTEGRATION PLANNING DECEMBER 2014  
REINTEGRATION PLAN

Name of Scholar: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a Ministry Employee please note name and contact details of your Employer:

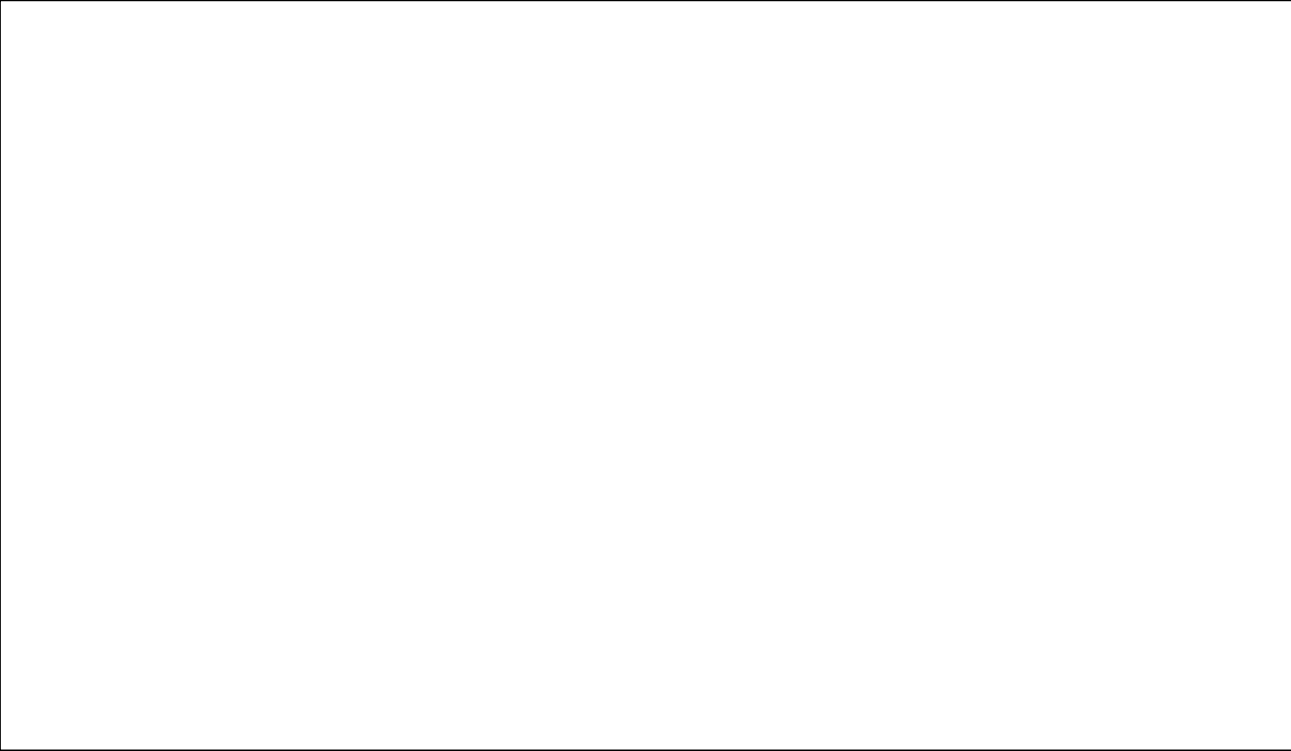
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current position of Scholar: \_\_\_\_\_


Award and field of study: \_\_\_\_\_

**GENERAL EXPECTATIONS 1 a:** Please explain why you expect the completion of this award to give you greater opportunities to contribute to relevant activities in your workplace (***Response must be no less than 200 words, but no more than 400 words***):

**1 b:** What opportunities do you see to transfer your new skills and knowledge to colleagues or external stakeholders?



**1 c:** How do you see your job contributing to the development of Cambodia?





**TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMENCES:**

**2. TASKS and RESPONSIBILITIES [Scholar]**

List potential or proposed ongoing or new tasks<sup>1</sup>, areas of responsibility<sup>2</sup> or ways in which you may apply the knowledge that you will gain through your studies.

SCHOLAR List a key Responsibility that you may be accountable for on your return from Australia  Note new knowledge or skills that you intend to gain through your studies	Will this be a new responsibility (Y/N)	Timeframe (Mth/Yr)

**SIGN-OFF**

I, the undersigned, declare the information provided above to be a true and accurate understanding of some of the ways in which the skills gained through this Award may be used on my return:

**Scholar: Name** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Ministry Officials:** Please share this with your Ministry representative and ask him/her to sign below to confirm that he/she has seen this

**Ministry Representative:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

<sup>1</sup> Includes any function or operational activity, including research

<sup>2</sup> May include a new position or new responsibilities under a current position

**TO BE COMPLETED BY MINISTRY OFFICIAL SUPERVISORS:**

**3. POTENTIAL TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES [CANDIDATE & MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVE]**

Scholars please consult with your employers and discuss the previously agreed potential ongoing or new tasks<sup>3</sup> or areas of responsibility<sup>4</sup>.

**GENERAL EXPECTATIONS 3 a: Supervisor:** Please explain why you expect the completion of this award by the employee to give your organization greater opportunities to contribute to relevant development activities **(Response between 200 words and 400 words):**

Scholar please record how you may be able to apply your new knowledge and skills.

Employers please add support that may be provided.

SCHOLAR Responsibilities, knowledge or skills	New (Y/N)	Timeframe (Mth/Yr)	EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVE Support to be provided or other comments

**TO BE COMPLETED ON SCHOLAR'S RETURN:**

**4. POTENTIAL TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES [CANDIDATE & EMPLOYER]**

Scholars please consult with your employers and discuss the previously agreed potential ongoing or new tasks<sup>3</sup> or areas of responsibility<sup>4</sup>. Update this below based on the current context of your organisation, and current plans for how you may be able to apply your new knowledge and skills.

Employers please add support that may be provided.

SCHOLAR Responsibilities, knowledge or skills	New (Y/N)	Timeframe (Mth/Yr)	EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVE Support to be provided or other comments

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<sup>3</sup> Includes any function or operational activity, including research

<sup>4</sup> May include a new position or new responsibilities under a current position

## ANNEX 8: Application data 2013-2015

### AAS - By Category

		Australia Awards 2013										Australia Awards 2014										Australia Awards 2015									
Open	Category	Application	Eligible	Progressing	Interview	Awardee	Application	Eligible	Progressing	Interview	Awardee	Application	Eligible	Progressing	Interview	Awardee	Application	Eligible	Progressing	Interview	Awardee										
		Male	20	14	3	2	2	22	14	2	2	2	23	14	2	2	2	23	14	2	2	1									
	Female	0	9	2	2	42%	5	6	9	33%	0	4	3	40%	58	35%	4	3	40%	58	35%										
Public	Female	47	41	1	1	19%	57	41	2	13%	9	16%	61	47	26	16%	4	4	16%	7	14%										
	Male	12	10	1	1	21%	2	81	2	25%	1	20%	2	92	26	41	25%	2	2	26%	9	18%									
<b>Total</b>		<b>49</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>										

### AAS - By Location

		Australia Awards 2013						Australia Awards 2014						Australia Awards 2015					
Location	Sex	Application	Eligible	Awardee	Application	Eligible	Awardee	Application	Eligible	Awardee	Application	Eligible	Awardee						
Province	Female	23	18	2	23	19	1	28	18	3	28	18	3						
Province	Male	64	50	7	67	44	5	79	46	2	79	46	2						
Phnom Penh	Female	146	114	17	157	105	23	167	105	22	167	105	22						
Phnom Penh	Male	262	206	26	280	183	26	277	189	23	277	189	23						
<b>Total</b>		<b>495</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>50</b>						

### AAS - By Disability

		Australia Awards 2013										Australia Awards 2014										Australia Awards 2015									
Sex	Application	Eligible		Progressing		Interview		Awardee		Application	Eligible		Progressing		Interview		Awardee		Application	Eligible		Progressing		Interview		Awardee					
		PWD	Female	1	1	1	0	0	0		0	2	2	1	1	1	0	0		0	0	5	4	4	2	2	2	2	1	2	
	Male	17	15	6	2	2	4	4	4	4	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0					
Non-PWD	Female	16	13	3	0	1	17	12	3	2	72	35	40	8	43	2	44%	19	11	9	33%	64	38%	37	44	24					
	Male	30	24	4	3	34	22	10	5	3	65%	3	64%	7	59%	0	56%	1	35	23	3	65%	98	59%	45	53					
<b>Total</b>		<b>49</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>					

## ANNEX 9: Aide Memoire

### Australia Awards Scholarships in Cambodia Review

Submitted 21 August 2015

#### 8. Introduction

This Aide Memoire outlines the initial findings and proposed recommendations of the Australia Awards Scholarships in Cambodia Review in-country field mission, which was undertaken from August 10 to 19, 2015. The findings and recommendations outlined have been informed by an analysis of program documentation and consultations with program stakeholders in Cambodia.

#### 9. Background

The Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS) in Cambodia has been in operation since 1994. Up to 50 scholarships are now awarded annually. At its peak the program delivered 55 awards in 2014 but has since scaled back slightly to 50.

The current goal for AAS in Cambodia is to support Cambodia in achieving its development goals and have positive relationships with Australia enhanced by the contribution of women and men with Australian qualifications, experience and networks, thereby contributing to Cambodia's economic growth<sup>26</sup>.

The objectives of the Australia Awards Scholarships in Cambodia are:

- e. to increase the skills and capacity of the men and women of Cambodia (including people with a disability and those from outside Phnom Penh)
- f. to support the men and women of Cambodia (including people with a disability and those from outside Phnom Penh) to make a contribution to Cambodia's development
- g. to support the men and women of Cambodia (including people with a disability and those from outside Phnom Penh) to develop on-going links with Australian people, organisations and institutions
- h. recognition by the Cambodia Government and other development partners that Australia is an active responsive contributor to the economic and social development of Cambodia.

The Australia Awards in Cambodia are managed by an Australian Managing Contractor, Coffey International Development PTY LTD (Coffey). Under the head contract, Coffey subcontracts IDP to deliver operational and administrative components of the annual cycle of scholarships processes, including promotion, targeting and selection, equity pathway program, mobilisation, pre-departure briefing, reintegration and alumni support. The subcontract with IDP also delivers Pre-departure English Language training through their Australian Centre of Education (ACE). Coffey retains management and oversight of program deliverables including reports to DFAT, monitoring and evaluation and financial management of the program.

DFAT Phnom Penh manages the contract with Coffey and provides strategic direction on program implementation. Coffey and IDP work collaboratively with DFAT Phnom Penh Post to deliver the program. The current contract with Coffey started in March 2013 and is scheduled to end in December 2015, with an optional extension to December 2017.

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<sup>26</sup> The current goal was been modified in the 2014-15 Annual plan from the original program designed to reflect the global Australia Awards program logic and changes in the aid program's focus in Cambodia

## 10. Review purpose

The purpose of the review is to assess how **effectively**<sup>27</sup> and **efficiently** the program is being implemented with a view to strengthening implementation for the remainder of the contract period; and to inform DFAT's decision regarding the contract extension period. The review should also consider how **relevant** the program is to the current Australian aid program in Cambodia.

The review will therefore make recommendations to DFAT regarding:

5. Extending the contract with Coffey from the current three years for a further two years (five years in total), including any recommended changes to program focus.
6. Options for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of program implementation.

## 11. Evaluation questions and approaches

There are six agreed key evaluation questions.

13. How relevant is the current program's focus to the Australian aid program and Cambodian priorities? (Relevance)
14. How effectively is the program being implemented to meet the long-term program objectives? (Effectiveness)
15. How efficiently are key program activities and processes being implemented? (Efficiency)
16. How effectively have equity strategies relating to gender and social inclusiveness (participation of applicants with disability and provincial applicants) been implemented? (Equity)
17. How well is the monitoring and evaluation framework designed and is it effectively operationalised to assess the outputs and outcomes of the program? (M&E)
18. Based on the above findings, where (in the scholarship cycle) could implementation activities and program focus be strengthened to better support program objectives? (Recommendations)

The review is formative in nature and will primarily focus on the program's implementation processes. Data has been collected using mixed methods. The review collected quantitative and qualitative data from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through interviewing program stakeholders. Secondary data was obtained through reviewing documentation. The review has validated the information by comparing stakeholder opinions and responses.

## 12. Initial findings

Overall the program is performing well. Implementation arrangements are sound and contributing to the long-term delivery of program objectives. There are opportunities to strengthen approaches and improve implementation however these are minor in the delivery of the program as a whole.

### ***Recommendation 1: Revise and extend the contract with Coffey for the remaining two years***

#### **Relevance**

The Australia Awards Scholarship program is highly relevant with the Australian Government's priorities in Cambodia and in line with DFAT's global approaches to Australia Awards.

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<sup>27</sup> Given the primary focus of the review is on the program's implementation arrangements, the review does not assess program's performance in term of progress or likelihood in achieving actual outcomes according to the standardised concept on effectiveness in DFAT's quality criteria. Rather, the review is looking at the effectiveness of activities at each stage of the scholarship circle and sees how they align with the stated program's objectives.

#### Key Issues:

- AAS aligns with the aid program priority areas by targeting applications from people within defined fields<sup>28</sup>.
- This approach responds annually to changes in priorities, however can create confusion amongst potential applicants and inconsistencies in reporting contribution to development at individual, sector or organisational level.
- Australia Awards alumni are represented at senior levels across Cambodian government, civil society and the private sector, contributing to improved access and relationship building opportunities for Australian diplomats.
- International education is Australia's largest export to Cambodia making the scholarship program intrinsically linked with the Government's economic diplomacy efforts.
- Efforts have been made to link New Colombo Plan (NCP) and Australia Award programs through alumni offering internships and networking opportunities between the cohorts. As NCP grows these linkages could be enhanced further, for example by connecting Cambodian students in Australia with the NCP alumni network (N.B. for consideration in the 5 year Alumni Strategy).
- Cambodian government, including the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) confirm that the AAS is highly regarded and relevant to Cambodia's needs.
- RGC supportive of program approaches, especially targeting women in the public sector.

**Recommendation 2: simplify priority areas outlined in the promotional material** to enable greater flexibility in the range of areas and fields from which application can be sourced.

#### Effectiveness

Overall the implementation arrangements are contributing to the program's long term objectives. There is comprehensive evidence across Annual Plans, Progress Reports and Annual Reports that management of each stage of the scholarship cycle is well designed, implemented, reviewed and strengthened based on evidence gathered throughout implementation.

#### Key Issues:

##### Targeting:

- Diverse promotional activities are well attended and accessed, reaching a broad range of audiences across Cambodia, as documented in the Annual Progress reports.
- The program makes extensive use of the Australia Awards website, including videos, which have been adapted to other Coffey Australia Award programs in Laos and Mongolia.
- Application statistics indicate that the program is receiving sufficient numbers of open and public category and priorities areas applicants (except for infrastructure). This could be further refined and easier to report through simplifying priority areas (recommendation 2)
- Achieving equity targets is more challenging, especially for provincial applicants (discussed in more detail below).
- The program has achieved a 50:50 gender split for the first time this year.

##### Pre-departure training (PDT):

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<sup>28</sup> In the 2015 Country profile these priority areas were defined as: health, infrastructure, agriculture, education management, trade, and ending violence against women

- Feedback on PDT is positive based on-award surveys and focus group discussion.
- Positive performance results of students during studies with a 94% success rate reported through OSAIS. This is one of the highest rates across all Australia Awards programs
- Review of PDT in 2014 (undertaken independently by Coffey and IDP) proposed a number of recommendations which are currently being adequately implemented.
- Many challenges exist, especially financial, for open category awardees attending PDT. In particular they must resign from their jobs and support themselves (and often their families) on a modest stipend in Phnom Penh for 10 weeks, up to 12 months depending of course.
- The length for English language training is determined by the Scholarships Handbook based on IELTS requirement, however length of pre-departure training for Direct Entry awardees is up to the post to decide.

***Recommendation 3: Reduce the Direct Entry PDT from 10 weeks to 6 weeks.***

#### **HRD and reintegration:**

- Although it is not outlined in the program objectives, there are directives in the program design and scope of services to implement a Human Resource Development (HRD) approach with the public sector.
- The HRD Specialist has implemented a number of approaches to support HRD mechanisms, including working directly with ministry officials and through the Alumni Development Action Plans (ADAPs), however this has been very challenging.
- Two contributing factors include the significant lack of HRD systems within many ministries and the approach is not built into a HRD objective within other Australian aid program priority areas.
- ADAPs are a relatively new tool (since 2013). They do not appear to be a practical or meaningful tool to manage reintegration, due to many of the issues mentioned above in the public sector.
- In addition, a significant proportion of alumni return to the non-government sector without a guaranteed job and either must find a new job or wait for a position within their former organisation to become vacant. These alumni need much more innovative, flexible reintegration support than is currently provided by the ADAP tool.
- However the first cohort of awardees who completed ADAPs will return to Cambodia at the end of this year, therefore insufficient information is available regarding their full effectiveness. Further analysis is required of this cohort.
- Reintegration support could strengthen it's approach to women and the particular barriers they face in returning to Cambodia

***Recommendation 4: HRD strategy should focus on program objectives at the individual level and implement strategies that can assist individuals to reintegrate into their specific workplaces or sectors.***

***Recommendation 5: At the end of each semester a letter should be sent from the Australian Ambassador to all Ministers with returning alumni informing them of their return and the course they studied in Australia.***

***Recommendation 6: The program explores an alternative, more flexible approach to reintegration, such as continuing the pre-departure preparation workshop complemented by additional professional development support for alumni<sup>29</sup>.***

#### **Alumni support:**

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<sup>29</sup> This support should be segmented by different cohorts' needs, i.e. Open and public categories, female and provincial alumni etc.



- Support for the AAA-C is a priority for the Australian Embassy, in line with the global alumni engagement strategy. The Embassy (through Coffey) has engaged a consultant to write a 5-year alumni strategy
- A number of issues contribute to the current challenges faced by the AAA-C, including:
  1. Branding: the association is too closely aligned and identified with Australia Awards and is not appealing to the broader Australian Alumni community in Cambodia
  2. Activity: Committee members are not proactive and rely on the administrative and funding support provided by the Australia Awards program

***Recommendation 7: The revised scope of services should include a new separate implementation component (not associated with Australia Awards) dedicated to Alumni Engagement. This component should include a dedicate position assigned to the administration of the AAA-C and the implementation for Year 1 and 2 of the 5 year strategy.***

### Efficiency

The current program is delivered under a unique Australia Awards arrangement with Coffey managing the head contract and subcontracting IDP to deliver the majority of the staffing and administrative functions. There are clear efficiency and value for money advantages to this model but with some easily identifiable areas for improvement.

#### Resource investment:

- Resources dedicated to cycle activities are appropriate, and are continually reviewed and refine to improve the use of resources available. Activities and process, especially selection, are very thorough.
- A shorter PDT (recommendation 3) would provide some resource savings
- There is a tension between the investment in provincial targeting considering the academic barrier faced. A lot of time and energy is spent soliciting and assessing provincial applications and this may not represent real value for money, but is balanced with other program priorities. This is discussed further below.

#### Staffing:

- The subcontract with IDP allows the flexible use of staff during the peak periods of the program, however is difficult to assess whether the contract adequately reflect the actual time and personnel dedicated to specific tasks.
- DFAT needs more visibility of the allocation of positions from IDP and a clearer understanding of their tasks and deliverables.
- The total staff composition is comparable with other Australia Award programs, however other programs have more dedicated full-time local positions.
- Currently the Targeting/Selection Specialist and the HRD/Reintegration Specialist are two separate positions (60 and 40 percent respectively). This creates great inefficiencies in the delivery of the program due to both positions working on similar days, therefore leaving gaps in program resources and tasks falling on the Operations Manager. The roles are also very artificially separated along public and open category interactions around targeting and reintegration, as well as the equity pathway implementation.

***Recommendation 8: simplified scope of services and basis of payments to reflect more adequately the allocation of personnel to the program, in particular the dedicated IDP staff and the input periods of externally sourced personnel such as the assessment panel.***

***Recommendation 9: merge two Specialist positions into one full time position dedicated to targeting, selection and reintegration for both the public and open categories, as well as equity pathway approaches (more below). This position should be contracted directly to Coffey and not included under the subcontracting arrangements with IDP.***

## **Equity**

Equity groups are defined within this program as women (specifically in the public sector), people with a disability (PWD) and people from provincial areas. There are numerous barriers these groups face in accessing an international scholarship program. The AAS program is implementing appropriate strategies, in particular the Equity Pathway Program/Fund, to address these barriers with some opportunities for improvements.

### **Women**

- The target is to achieve gender balance in award recipients. Achieved for the first time in 2015.
- Application data over the past three years of the program demonstrates positive trends in the quality of female applications. The percentage of female applications has remained steady at about 30-35% each year, while the percentage of awardees has increased from 37% in 2013, 44% in 2014, to 50% in 2015
- The significant increase in successful women has mostly been within the open category. There are still significant challenges in targeting women from the public category which the Equity Pathway Program is addressing. Open category women do not get access to this.
- Other factors that may be contributing to the increase in successful women include changes in promotional activities to feature more female alumni in prominent positions and working directly with ministries to encourage female applicants.

***Recommendation 10: Reintegration activities should include specific supports for women and the barriers they face upon return to their workplaces.***

### **PWD**

- Barriers are similar to other equity groups, with access to education, especially higher education is limited. Discrimination and access to employment also very challenging
- Targeting of PWD organisations, especially the umbrella Disability Action council is providing good awareness of the program support to PWD
- Program is trying to move away from just targeting PWD and targeting organisations that support PDW, and piloting internship program for two PWD to support work experience criteria.

### **Provincial**

- Barriers include access to information, English language ability and academic levels.
- Activities to address these barriers include extensive promotion, Equity Pathway Program to improve English language levels (but still very difficult to access due to location).
- Academic barriers are a major issue, in particular the Australian Government's assessment of Cambodian universities
- Results are very low with provincial award rates declining over the past three years, from 17% in 2013, 11% in 2014 and only 10% in 2015. Data from this year is particularly concerning since the percentage of provincial applications was the highest for the three year at 19%, but eligibility dropped to 12% and awardees to 10%. What is positive in the 2015 results however is the number of female awardees from the provinces was the highest ever with 3 successful applicants.

***Recommendation 11: revised contract to include a pilot academic pathway activity for provincial applicants from tier 3 and 4 universities***

***Recommendation 12: extensive further analysis and scoping is required on academic pathway opportunities. This should be undertaken independently by DFAT over the six months to feed into the redesign process for the program post-2017.***

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

Overall, the program's M&E is aligned with DFAT's Global Australia Awards M&E Framework, as reflected through program's theory of change (TOC), well-defined indicators and clear approaches to measuring program's outcomes and outputs.

#### **Design of M&E Plan:**

- Well-designed, including clear logic along with the TOC and technically (theoretically) sound indicators. Also clearly identified data sources, approaches to data analysis, and responsibilities. It incorporates frameworks for both performance and outcome monitoring and evaluation using DAC quality criteria.
- The M&E Plan would be strengthened by presenting targets and clear annual milestones, then reported results for each indicator.

***Recommendation 13: Reporting against the M&E Plan should include an additional column to 'Track' progress against each indicator.***

#### **Operationalisation**

- Process and output data have been clearly reported in Progress and Annual Reports, and are well utilised to inform recommended improvements in the Annual Plans.
- Implementation of recommendations and lessons learned are tracked and reported through progress reports and Annual report.
- Key challenges exist in capturing and communicating outcomes at organisational and systematic level post-award as outlined in the TOC, for example ADAP as a data source in the M&E Plan appear to be unrealistic (as discussed above) due to limited engagement of employers, or unavailability of employer HRD plans. Therefore alternatives need to be considered.
- Only one organisational case study has been completed with the National Bank of Cambodia. Therefore further analysis is required on the organisational enabling factors and challenges faced.
- Geographical mapping on people-to-people links between Australia and Cambodia would be useful to visualise the program's impacts. This would keep track on the expansion of the geographical links in a visual aid and can provide a useful tool for public diplomacy.
- Progress and Annual reports are extremely detailed and quite lengthy with a lot cross sectional data for each separate activity in the scholarship circle. DFAT is already across all the operational issues presented through the regular monthly meetings, therefore these reports have low relevancy for a busy audience and can be quite difficult to follow.
- M&E data could better communicate results of the program and for public diplomacy purposes. For example, findings of tracer study could be included in a newsletter or other promotional material.

***Recommendation 14: Further organisational case study should be designed to provide more information and comparative analysis on organisational enabling factors and challenges***

***Recommendation 15: The M&E plan should be revisited and refined as necessary to be more realistic and feasible, given the identified challenges for capturing outcomes at organisational and systematic level.***

**Recommendation 16:** Annual Report should focus on performance of the program as a whole, by briefly illustrating major achievements and challenges in program implementation, and reporting progress against the M&E plan's questions and indicators (i.e. tracking column recommended above).

**Recommendation 17:** For the next application round the contractor should develop a promotional brochure that reports on the high-level, positive tracer study findings, including profiles of alumni and other relevant data.

#### **M&E Resources**

- Currently approximately 1-3% of program budget (depending on calculation)

**Recommendation 18:** Increase in local staff dedicated to M&E.

### **13. Summary of proposed recommendations**

1. Revise and extend the contract with Coffey for the remaining two years
2. Simplify priority areas outlined in the promotional material
3. Reduce the Direct Entry PDT from 10 weeks to 6 weeks.
4. The HRD strategy should focus on program objectives at the individual level and implement strategies that can assist individuals to reintegrate into their specific workplaces or sectors.
5. At the end of each semester a letter should be sent from the Australian Ambassador to all Ministers with returning alumni informing them of their return and the course they studied in Australia.
6. The program explores an alternative, more flexible approach to reintegration, such as continuing the pre-departure preparation workshop complemented by additional professional development support for alumni.
7. The revised scope of services should include a new separate implementation component (not associated with Australia Awards) dedicated to Alumni Engagement. This component should include a dedicated position assigned to the administration of the AAA-C and the implementation for Year 1 and 2 of the 5 year strategy.
8. Simplified scope of services and basis of payments to reflect more adequately the allocation of personnel to the program, in particular the dedicated IDP staff and the input periods of externally sourced personnel such as the assessment panel.
9. Merge two Specialist positions into one full time position dedicated to targeting, selection and reintegration for both the public and open categories, as well as equity pathway approaches (more below). This position should be contracted directly to Coffey and not included under the subcontracting arrangements with IDP.
10. Reintegration activities should include specific supports for women and the barriers they face upon return to their workplaces.
11. Revised contract to include a pilot academic pathway activity for provincial applicants from tier 3 and 4 universities
12. Extensive further analysis and scoping is required on academic pathway opportunities. This should be undertaken independently by DFAT over the six months to feed into the redesign process for the program post-2017.
13. Reporting against the M&E Plan should include an additional column to 'Track' progress against each indicator.
14. Further organisational case study should be designed to provide more information and comparative analysis on organisational enabling factors and challenges.
15. The M&E plan should be revisited and refined as necessary to be more realistic and feasible, given the identified challenges for capturing outcomes at organisational and systematic level.

16. Annual Report should focus on performance of the program as a whole, by briefly illustrating major achievements and challenges in program implementation, and reporting progress against the M&E plan's questions and indicators (i.e. tracking column recommended above).
17. For the next application round the contractor should develop a promotional brochure that reports on the high-level, positive tracer study findings, including profiles of alumni and other relevant data.
18. Increase in local staff dedicated to M&E.

## 14. Next steps

<b>21 August</b>	<b>Presentation of aide memoire</b> Including initial findings and proposed recommendations for discussion with DFAT
24 – 28 August	In-Australia consultations with on-award recipients (TBC Melbourne)
24 August – 2 September	Draft Mid-Term Review Report
<b>2 September</b>	<b>Submit draft review</b> Including detailed recommendations
9 September	Receive DFAT comments and revisions
10 – 16 September	Finalise report
<b>16 September</b>	<b>Submit final Mid-Term Review Report</b>