

## **Management Response to the Final Evaluation Report of the Australian National University Indonesia Project Phase V**

### **30 June 2026**

#### **Background**

The Australian National University Indonesia Project (ANU IP/the Project), established in 1965, is a leading centre for economic research, policy development and graduate training. Supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) since 1980 and currently in its fifth phase (IP Phase V) - it promotes sustainable, inclusive development and strong collaboration among Indonesian, Australian and international stakeholders. The Project advances these objectives through partnerships with DFAT initiatives, promoting Indonesian literacy in Australia, strengthening bilateral economic links, and supporting gender equality and social inclusion. Its research spans trade and economic development, agriculture, resources and the environment, governance, social policy and human capital, and gender, in collaboration with programs including SKALA, PROSPERA, KONEKSI and Australia Awards Indonesia.

#### **The Evaluation**

DFAT commissioned an independent evaluation of IP Phase V from October to December 2025 to assess performance against its objectives and inform decisions on a potential six-month extension of a Phase VI (a design update). Conducted by an independent team and finalised in February 2026, the evaluation provides a comprehensive assessment of performance, lessons learned, and recommendations for future funding phases. It found strong evidence that IP Phase V has delivered robust results, meeting and exceeding end-of-program expectations, and remains highly relevant to Australian Government priorities, including alignment with the Australia-Indonesia Development Partnership Plan (2024-28), Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040, and Australia-Indonesia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Plan of Action (2025-29). The findings also support decision-making on a program extension and future funding. DFAT, the ANU Indonesia Project, and relevant Jakarta Post teams were consulted in finalising the responses to these recommendations.

#### **DFAT Response to the Evaluation**

DFAT, in consultation with ANU, has developed a management response to the evaluation's recommendations. In summary, we consider the evaluation to be a robust and fair assessment of both the strengths of, and challenges faced by IP Phase V. We consider the evaluation to have provided valuable insights to sharpen program performance. These insights will be applied both to the current phase of funding and to inform future phases.

DFAT and ANU agree with 6 of the recommendations and partially agrees with 3 of the recommendations. The recommendations can be found in full on page 28-29 of the evaluation report.

Recommendation	Response	Comment	Timeframe
<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> <i>Maintain the strategic focus of the Project in Phase VI.</i></p> <p>Maintain the Project’s research focus on contemporary social economic issues and policy making so as not to dilute the niche benefit it provides to both the Australian Government and to policy dialogue in Indonesia. Reconsider the focus on private sector outreach, which would be better served by AusTrade or another DFAT initiative.</p>	Partially Agree	<p>The ANU and DFAT strongly support the core recommendation to maintain the Project’s strategic focus in Phase VI, particularly its emphasis on contemporary social and economic policy issues and its distinctive contribution to policy dialogue.</p> <p>However, ANU and DFAT assess that private sector engagement can complement Indonesia Project’s core work. While private sector engagement with the private sector can enhance its policy relevance.</p>	November 2026
<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> <i>Develop structured engagement between DFAT initiatives and the Project.</i></p> <p>DFAT to facilitate engagement between the Project and other DFAT initiatives (such as PROSPERA, SKALA, KONEKSI, and Australia Awards), through a planned program of briefings, horizon scanning sessions, and joint events, to enable deeper understanding and structured collaboration.</p>	Partially Agree	<p>Collaboration between the ANU Indonesia Project and DFAT initiatives, including PROSPERA (Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Economic Development), SKALA (Synergy and Collaboration for Basic Service Delivery), KONEKSI (Australia Indonesia Knowledge Partnership Platform) and Australia Awards Indonesia (AAI), has already resulted in increased understanding of each other’s work. To continue to build on this momentum, DFAT will look for opportunities to deepen collaboration and harmonise ways of working. Noting resource constraints faced by both ANU and DFAT, this will occur when it makes sense, and where there are sufficient supporting resources available.</p> <p>AAI has already expressed an interest in engaging in this work and looking for opportunities for Indonesian researchers to showcase their work through AAI products. DFAT will look for ways to involve AAI in joint discussions with the Indonesia Project</p>	January 2027-31, during implementation of the next phase of funding (IP Phase VI)
<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> <i>Resource collaboration commensurate with expectations.</i></p> <p>When designing collaborations with DFAT initiatives (e.g. PROSPERA, SKALA, KONEKSI), ensure that additional activities are accompanied by appropriate resources and clear incentives for all parties, so that the Project’s core research and capacity-building functions are not undermined.</p>	Agree	DFAT and ANU agree that any collaboration with DFAT initiatives needs to take differing resource constraints and program strengths into account. This includes considering the high workload and staffing constrains faced by both ANU and DFAT initiatives. This will form part of discussions when preparing for collaboration with DFAT initiatives	January 2027-31, during implementation of IP Phase VI funding.

Recommendation	Response	Comment	Timeframe
<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> <i>Further strengthen the Project’s approach to inclusivity.</i></p> <p>Build on current progress and success by developing a streamlined, practical GEDSI strategy commensurate to the scale of the project and resources available. With this in mind, the GEDSI strategy could: (i) adopt a stronger approach to disability inclusion consistent with internationally recognised standards relevant to the tertiary sector and project context; (ii) proactively supporting researchers with disability and diverse backgrounds to engage with the Project where feasible; and (iii) ensuring disability inclusion analysis (and broader GEDSI analysis) is substantively connected to core economic and policy debates (e.g. ensuring that people with disability are engaged as respondents in research, sharing their lived experience, perspective and voices where appropriate and relevant to specific research topics). Given resource limitations, DFAT is encouraged to consider internal resources and technical advice which can be shared with and utilised by the Project to support its GEDSI approach.</p>	Agree	<p>DFAT and ANU acknowledge the potential to strengthen the Indonesia Project’s approach to inclusivity. These recommendations will be considered by DFAT and ANU in the design and inception phase of the new program (expected August – December 2026).</p> <p>In the interim, DFAT will coordinate engagement between ANU and DFAT GEDSI design specialists. DFAT will also incorporate lessons learned from other DFAT investments (such as AAI) to encourage participation and engage with scholars with a disability.</p>	August-December 2026
<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> <i>Invest in communications and knowledge translation.</i></p> <p>Allocate dedicated resources (e.g. a fulltime communications/events role) to: (i) translate research into accessible formats and communicate results in a way that enables policymakers to translate evidence-based research into decision making; (ii) enhance the Project’s digital presence; and (iii) better engage Australian students, researchers and government officials in events, seminars and policy dialogue.</p>	Agree	<p>DFAT and ANU agree that allocating dedicated resources and investing in communications and knowledge translation will enhance accessibility and policy relevance of research outputs. The Phase VI design will include provision for a full-time communications role. This expanded capacity will enable more systematic translation of research into accessible formats, strengthen the Project’s digital presence, and support deeper engagement with policymakers, students, and the broader research community.</p>	January 2027-31, during implementation of IP Phase VI funding.

Recommendation	Response	Comment	Timeframe
<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> <i>Address succession planning and long-term sustainability.</i></p> <p>Consider options for generational renewal and succession planning. This could include going out to market to recruit scholars into key academic roles when positions become available; while at the same time continuing to foster the development of early-career academics through targeted scholarships and research opportunities to ensure a pipeline of Indonesia-focused scholars and researchers into the future.</p>	Agree	DFAT and ANU acknowledge the importance of succession planning and long-term sustainability. Networking events will remain a key output for the Phase VI design. This will support creation of a ‘pool’ of Indonesia researchers which the ANU can leverage when positions become available.	January 2027-31, during implementation of IP Phase VI funding.
<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> <i>Increase investment allocation and period of funding commitment.</i></p> <p>DFAT to consider longer term funding phases or a commitment to multiple phases to enable strategic staffing and planning. At the same time, DFAT and ANU are encouraged to consider increasing the overall investment commitment to: (i) enable the engagement of a fulltime communications/events role; (ii) ensure sufficient funding for project activities (training, events and seminars); and (iii) to increase the number of travel grants and PhD scholarship opportunities for Australian students.</p>	Agree	DFAT acknowledges the tight resourcing constraints the Project operates within, and the challenges posed by a relatively short funding cycle. For Phase VI, DFAT proposes a modest increase to the investment allocation and the period of funding commitment.	January 2027-31, during implementation of IP Phase VI funding.
<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b> <i>Broaden and deepen inclusion of Indonesian alumni.</i> Strengthen outreach beyond Jakarta by expanding collaborative research, fellowships and training with institutions in Eastern Indonesia and other under-represented regions. Consider a scholarship or other mechanism to support Indonesian PhD students to publish their research before returning to Indonesia and/or work.</p>	Agree	DFAT and ANU agrees with the importance of strengthening outreach and engagement beyond Jakarta as well as supporting research publications. The ANU will look to continue to run Eastern Indonesia bootcamps to deepen engagement and alumni network beyond Jakarta; support early career academics to publish, including in the Indonesia Bulletin of Economic Studies; and creating a pipeline of Indonesia focused students and keeping them engaged from the undergraduate to PhD level.	January 2027-31, during implementation of IP Phase VI funding.

Recommendation	Response	Comment	Timeframe
<p><b>Recommendation 9:</b> <i>Broaden and deepen engagement with Australian students.</i></p> <p>Consider expanding the number of travel grants for Australian students undertaking research in Indonesia, and adopting other mechanisms for Australian student and research engagement such as the provision of a DFAT-funded PhD scholarship within the Project</p>	<p>Partially Agree</p>	<p>ANU and DFAT acknowledge the importance of broadening and deepening engagement with Australian students in relation to both the investment’s agreed outcomes and Australian government strategic goals.</p> <p>The ANU will explore options for increasing grant funding for Australian students. This is expected to assist with existing work to attract students and keep them engaged with Indonesia-focused research.</p> <p>At this stage, establishing a dedicated DFAT-funded PhD scholarship, separate from existing DFAT initiatives (e.g. New Columbo Plan), is likely outside the funding remit of this investment.</p>	<p>January 2027-31, during implementation of IP Phase VI funding.</p>