

**Mid-Term Review (MTR) of
Evaluation Capacity Building Program (Indonesia)
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

Initiative Summary

Initiative Name	Evaluation Capacity Building Program (Indonesia)		
Commencement date	November 2009	Completion date	November 2015
Delivery organisation(s)	AusAID		
Country/Region	Indonesia		
Initiative objective/s	<p>This 5-year Program aims to sustain institutional performance in the use of credible information to improve aid effectiveness and efficiency of monitoring and evaluation. The end-of-program outcomes of the ECB are:</p> <p><i>Information that is generated by M&E systems and activities have a credible basis;</i></p> <p><i>Credible information informs and influences decision making at the initiative, sectoral, thematic and country program levels;</i></p> <p><i>Effective mechanisms for integrating lessons from the ECB program and integrating corporate developments into the ECB program are operational;</i></p> <p><i>The Performance and Quality Unit in Jakarta is fully institutionalized;</i></p> <p><i>The Performance and Quality Unit is harmonized with Program Effectiveness and Performance Division in Canberra.</i></p>		

Summary of the Mid-term Review (MTR)

Objective of the MTR: to assess the potential value of the program against the resources provided; to improve the on-going design and implementation of the Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) program; and to develop knowledge which may be of use to other AusAID ECB programs, or the ECB literature more broadly.

MTR Completion Date: 20 February 2013

MTR Team: Professor Saville Kushner, University of Auckland- (Team Leader), Ritesh Shah, University of Auckland - (Team Member), Simon Ernst, AusAID (Team Member)

AusAID MTR Managers: Lukas Adhyakso, Sofia Ericsson and Dwiagus Stepanoro

AusAID's response to the MTR Report

The ten specific recommendations in the MTR have provided a clear set of areas in which AusAID needs to focus to improve the ECB program and through this improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the development program in Indonesia. There are 19 distinct recommendations flowing from the MTR and our response addresses each one independently.

Of the 19 recommendations, we agree with 13. For these, we will either amend existing strategies or develop new ones to address the issues in line with the context of the ECB program and the resources of the AusAID Indonesia program. We disagree with six of the recommendations on the basis that four of them are outside the scope of what the ECB program is trying to achieve, and two are not considered appropriate for the context in which the ECB program is operating.

The MTR has allowed us the space to have more detailed discussions about the program and to reflect on a range of issues that we face. Following from this and the MTR recommendations we have identified 4 specific areas that the Indonesia Management Team has agreed will be a priority focus and which will operationalize our responses to the MTR recommendations.

AusAID's response to the specific recommendations made in the report

Recommendation 1:

“ECBP should be mandatory for all activity and unit managers engaged in external partnerships and incorporated into the IPP process. These participants should be invited to identify learning goals of a personal and professional nature (i.e. confidence as well as competence).”

Sub recommendations:

1a *ECBP should be mandatory for all activity and unit managers engaged in external partnerships and incorporated into the IPP process.*

Agree.

The ECB program has been designed to be responsive to individuals' immediate learning needs which may not include all aspects of M&E across the entire program cycle. A key principle of the program is just-in-time learning that can be directly applied to activities that relate to an individual's role - an individual is expected to engage in activities that are relevant to their immediate work tasks. In this sense, while it should not be mandatory for an individual to participate in all ECB program sessions, it should be mandatory for them to participate in the ECB program sessions that enable them to perform their particular role effectively.

The performance and quality team within the Program Effectiveness and Performance Section will further improve ECB program's approach to meet individuals' training needs by: recruiting focal-point staff from each scale-up sector by the 3rd quarter of 2013 (see also recommendation 4c below) to act as liaison points within the major sectors; improving communication by the Performance and Quality team to Indonesia program staff advising of upcoming ECB program sessions that are relevant to their learning needs; preparing a menu of ECB program activities that relate more closely to the needs of the current country program cycle at the sector and initiative level; and, targeting sessions with counsellors to determine how the ECB program can better meet the needs of their sections.

1b *These participants should be invited to identify learning goals of a personal and professional nature (i.e. confidence as well as competence)*

Agree.

The Performance and Quality team will discuss with Corporate Learning and Development staff the prospect of integrating ECB program-related learning goals into Individual Performance Programs. The Director of the Program Effectiveness and Performance Section in Jakarta will also brief Counsellors on this approach as part of the presentation to management of the ECB program MTR.

Recommendation 2:

“Consideration should be given to developing ECBP into a role more closely reflecting the broad professional development needs of program staff. This would involve a more explicitly work-based learning model targeted at the development of independent judgement rather than compliance with the M&E standards. This implies more on-the-job/peer-based critical reflection, less didactic input and a curriculum that is less content-driven. Doing so might require contracting specialists in professional development and work-based learning as well as M&E specialists to be involved in designing and facilitating ECB sessions. There would be merit in retraining P&Q Unit staff in the theory and practice of professional development and adult learning, and occasional placement of P&Q Unit staff in program/M&E interactions to develop first-hand experience of the challenges faced by activity managers. “

Sub recommendations:

2a *Consideration should be given to developing ECBP into a role more closely reflecting the broad professional development needs of program staff. This would involve a more explicitly work-based learning model targeted at the development of independent judgement rather than compliance with the M&E standards. This implies more on-the-job/peer-based critical reflection, less didactic input and a curriculum that is less content-driven.*

Disagree.

It is important to note that the ECB program is already addressing professional development needs of staff in their capacity as international development professionals. This is described in the syllabus on pages 20 to 22 (Performing as an Informed Development Professional), which was provided to the review team but is not reflected in the mid-term review findings or recommendations.

The ECB program is based on the premise that it is not possible to develop independent judgement when the parameters of quality have not firstly been defined. In this respect, the ECB program standards serve as a guide to quality, and were developed at the inception of the ECB program in response to the high demand from Indonesia program staff for clear, specific guidance on how to assess the quality of evaluation products. We will continue to maintain an emphasis on compliance to the standards as a foundation to assist staff to *make judgments and learn to be more flexible over time as their confidence grows.*

The experiential learning cycle used by ECB program and as described in the syllabus is already designed to allow participants to reflect on their actual practice in a real work setting, identify the difficulties they face in performing their tasks and to develop practical solutions. Through this approach, knowledge is generated by conducting a task (often over a number of contacts). Knowledge is intrinsically linked with practice in a cycle of learning by doing. The Key Concepts and the syllabus also address how to integrate context into program design, management and M&E, which aims to improve staff capacity to make suitable and well-informed judgements.

Support to staff by the ECB program already contains significant work-based learning, and encouraging the use of independent judgement as experience grows will continue to be based on the foundation of a content-driven curriculum.

2b *Doing so might require contracting specialists in professional development and work-based learning as well as M&E specialists to be involved in designing and facilitating ECB sessions.*

Disagree.

As per the response to 2a, we believe the ECB program is already geared to the professional development needs of staff (as per the syllabus) and a work-based learning approach. While we will diversify the skills of our ECB program providers with a change to our M&E specialist over the next 12 months, this is driven by availability, not a requirement to supplement the skills of our providers.

2c *There would be merit in retraining P&Q Unit staff in the theory and practice of professional development and adult learning, ...*

Agree.

In their role of supporting the ECB program, it is useful for Performance and Quality staff to have a broad understanding of professional development and adult learning concepts. However, this is with the caveat that the role of the Performance and Quality Unit extends far beyond the ECB program, and it is not practical or

desirable for Performance and Quality staff to become specialist trainers. The ECB program addresses the capacity of Performance and Quality Unit team members to understand *basic principles* of facilitation and adult learning. This has been delivered as on-the-job training where the ECB Facilitator provides detailed feedback on these skills after a session is delivered by the Performance and Quality Unit member. This training will continue, and external professional development opportunities also be identified to supplement this training where necessary.

2d ... and occasional placement of P&Q Unit staff in program/M&E interactions to develop first-hand experience of the challenges faced by activity managers.

Agree.

This is already a feature of the ECB program, has been carried out before, and will continue as planned within the available resources. Three Performance and Quality Unit members have already participated fully as team members on evaluations over the past two years.

Recommendation 3

“There also appears scope and need to align the ECBP with existing AusAID training in managing partnership interactions currently offered through Corporate, and complementing and expanding on this training within specific work related tasks. To that end, there should be a review of job descriptions for activity managers with a training needs analysis in respect of partnership working, relationship management and M&E co-ordination. ECBP pedagogical strategies should be designed to address these.”

Sub recommendations:

3a *There also appears scope and need to align the ECBP with existing AusAID training in managing partnership interactions currently offered through Corporate, and complementing and expanding on this training within specific work related tasks.*

Agree.

We agree that partnership interaction is a critical element of the Indonesia program, and that training such as the “Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme” would be a valuable supplement to ECB program training. The recently established ECB program Community of Practice in AusAID Canberra, which serves as a hub for ECB program practitioners to communicate experience and connect with colleagues in Canberra, is a useful mechanism for the ECB program in Indonesia and more broadly to connect with learning and development personnel in Canberra. See response to recommendation 10 for more details on the Community of Practice.

3b *To that end, there should be a review of job descriptions for activity managers with a training needs analysis in respect of partnership working, relationship management and M&E co-ordination. ECBP pedagogical strategies should be designed to address these.*

Disagree.

While this is an interesting recommendation, review of activity manager job descriptions lie beyond the scope of the ECB program and Performance and Quality Unit mandate. We will raise this recommendation with Human Resources as a suggestion that could be of interest and within their scope of work.

Recommendation 4

“P&Q Unit should play more of a proactive and outreach role in the office, conducting training needs analyses and promoting ECBP to all grades. This might involve relaunching the M&E Focal Point network with the unit taking a co-ordinating role. This should also involve a more concerted role in promoting good practice in the integration of QAIs, APPRs and the AusAID results agenda into the ECBP.”

Sub recommendations:

4a *P&Q Unit should play more of a proactive and outreach role in the office, conducting training needs analyses....*

Disagree.

We do not consider that a new, formal, systematic Training Needs Assessment is required at this time. The ECB program emerged organically over an 18-month period where significant assessments were carried out. During this time assessments of staff roles and capacity were explored, along with the identification of barriers to achieve the desired behaviour changes and performance outcomes. The reports from this period are available. In addition informal training needs assessments are carried out continuously across the Indonesia program. Every ECB session begins with a "listening session" where people's needs are heard; and, Performance and Quality staff are expected to conduct informal dialogue with all staff on how ECB can better meet their needs.

4b *... and promoting ECBP to all grades.*

Agree.

We will strengthen existing strategies as outlined under recommendation 1a.

4c *This might involve relaunching the M&E Focal Point network with the unit taking a co-ordinating role.*

Agree.

We recognise that the Focal Points need to be re-launched. The plan is to change the nature of the role of Focal Points from that previously tried, with a smaller and more targeted group that includes people who are qualified with a demonstrated interest in the subject matter. ECB program would provide specific training to Focal Point personnel to enable it to function more effectively as an outreach service for Performance and Quality Unit. This will also serve to widen the base for Performance and Quality Unit succession planning so as not to rely on any single individual. This plan will be operationalised once the new ECB Facilitator is recruited, by the 3rd quarter of 2013, in order to train the focal point personnel together with the facilitator, which represents better value for money.

4d *This should also involve a more concerted role in promoting good practice in the integration of QAIs, APPRs and the AusAID results agenda into the ECBP.*

Agree.

Quality At Implementation reports have long been a strong feature of the syllabus where staff are facilitated to prepare quality first-draft Quality At Implementation reports (see the syllabus for a complete elaboration of the approach). The approach is one of support to participants as they develop a first draft, and then participate effectively in the corporate process for moderation where text and ratings are contested.

The Indonesia program has postponed the development of a new country strategy to align with the development of Indonesia's five year development plan (2014-2019). As a result, the focus has now shifted to the development of delivery strategies and the accompanying Performance Assessment Frameworks that will provide clearer bases for implementation and performance management of each sector program under the current Country Strategy. These elements will link the monitoring and evaluation systems for strategies to the Annual Program Performance Reports, and the ECB program concepts that relate to initiative-level M&E are equally relevant to sector-level M&E.

The results agenda is interpreted here to mean the Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework. This is fully integrated into all relevant sessions, and special sessions addressing the Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework have been delivered both internally, and to supply-side M&E practitioners. See the syllabus for details on where results-based management is integrated into the program.

Recommendation 5

"Relevant staff from PEPD and the Indonesia program should work collaboratively on the development of an engagement strategy which formalises PEPD's involvement in the ECBP and establishes clear communication protocols between areas based on a mutual understanding of the salient roles and responsibilities of branches, sections and individual positions. This should involve

a requirement that ECBP guidance and curriculum be exposed to peer review from PEPD and potentially other parts of the agency to ensure alignment with Corporate M&E guidance.”

Sub recommendations:

5a *Relevant staff from PEPD and the Indonesia program should work collaboratively on the development of an engagement strategy which formalises PEPD’s involvement in the ECBP and establishes clear communication protocols between areas based on a mutual understanding of the salient roles and responsibilities of branches, sections and individual positions.*

Agree.

We will escalate the issue to Program Effectiveness and Performance Division and Timor Leste Section Performance and Quality representative who is managing the ECB program as a whole. It has already been agreed to integrate this issue into the current work program, facilitating a collaborative working relationship.

5b *This should involve a requirement that ECBP guidance and curriculum be exposed to peer review from PEPD and potentially other parts of the agency to ensure alignment with Corporate M&E guidance.*

Agree.

Alignment is an articulated end-of-program outcome and critical to the success of the program. Where there are any aspects that are not aligned with corporate guidance we would need to be aware of those immediately to make the necessary adjustments. ECB program is designed to support the *operationalisation* of corporate guidance rather than replace it. Beyond alignment, and in terms of the contestability of the content, the ECB program Community of Practice has been prepared to be an efficient decision making body on the suitability of the content guidance and curriculum (*See detailed description on the role of the Community of Practice under recommendation 10 below*).

Recommendation 6

“There should be more positive engagement with multilaterals and the Government of Indonesia on AusAID’s M&E approach and expectations, including discussion on how/whether existing systems within these partners complements or contradicts aspects of AusAID’s requirements and how this can be addressed.”

Disagree.

The ECB program is a program of change for AusAID, it is not designed to meet the learning needs of all players in development within a particular country. *All* implementation partners are important to ECB program, not only multilaterals. We will continue to work with staff to improve their *communication* with partners about our expectations and approaches.

ECB program does not have any role in changing Government of Indonesia M&E systems except when supporting a program/initiative that aims to work on Government of Indonesia systems.

Recommendation 7

“Opportunities should be given for more collaborative engagement with M&E specialists in both the development of the ECBP’s future strategy and as contributors to existing and new training modules. This would require greater recognition of M&E providers as proactive partners rather than as compliant ‘contractors’ and could open up space for methodological diversity on the purpose, role, design, function and utilisation of M&E within AusAID as an organisation.”

Agree.

We are currently improving the content of M&E Practitioner workshops to not only update them on AusAID requirements, but introduce stimulating topics and help build capacity and interest to deliver on expectations. These practitioners are already presenting sessions themselves on topics of their choice. Also, we will continue to improve capacity of Program staff to provide feedback and effectively communicate with M&E Practitioners through the experiential learning cycle as discussed under 3a.

Recommendation 8

“Consideration should be given as a matter of urgency to the development of M&E/program design guidance for ‘non-linear’ (i.e. non theory of change based) programs and Facilities. This should be adopted by the Corporate Division and fed back into the ECBP. The P&QU should develop a relevant knowledge base of specialists and approaches in the interim.”

Agree.

The syllabus already addresses this under ‘the Program Theory II’ (Complicated, Complex and Emergent Designs page 23), and ‘Design and M&E Considerations for Facilities’. This could also be supplemented by other trainings e.g. Aid Management Pathway or Clear Horizon training.

Recommendation 9

To diversify and strengthen the existing pool of M&E expertise on the supply side, AusAID should develop a coherent strategy for improving the capacity of Indonesian M&E specialists. This could be based on institutional development (the in-country tertiary sector, evaluation association and policy research institutes, where available) and might involve consideration of supporting the development of in-country professional associations of evaluators.

Disagree.

Building the capacity of the development partners (beyond the practitioners who already participate in the Indonesia Program Community of Practice for M&E Practitioners) is outside the scope of the ECB program, and not a part of the current Country Program Strategy to deliver through the aid program. The ECB program is designed to engage with active M&E Practitioners servicing the program only.

Recommendation 10

A more concerted approach to the development of an ECBP ‘Community of Practice’ across Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu, which is more closely aligned with the Corporate Group in Canberra, and that adopts the ECBP edited guidance and Standards should be done with urgency.

Agree.

The ECB program Community of Practice led from Canberra has been established as an efficient decision making body for determining the suitability of the content of ECB program documents and guidance for all participating country programs. Suitability of content goes far beyond alignment with policy. The assessment criteria involves: the needs of staff “on the ground”; the appropriateness of guidance for English as a second language; the presentation of complex concepts for staff with different educational backgrounds; and technical quality of the guidance from an M&E perspective.

The ECB program Community of Practice also plays a key role in bringing together Performance and Quality representatives and ECB Facilitators in participating programs to discuss successes and challenges, to share solutions, to share new topics of relevance to the syllabus, and to support each other in the implementation of an ECB program. The focus of the Community of Practice is ECB, not M&E or performance issues more broadly. The Community of Practice will also serve as a formal link to the Program Effectiveness and Performance Division – as the custodian of performance and quality processes and policy in AusAID, and a staff member of the Program Effectiveness and Performance Division is an active member of the group.

AusAID’s planned actions

AusAID Indonesia, led by the Program Effectiveness and Performance Section in Jakarta, will initiate the following actions on the basis of the review:

1. *We will strengthen our outreach to AusAID Indonesia staff by:*
 - a. *Consulting with Counsellors and Directors to identify appropriately qualified and experienced in-house staff to be Focal Points within the sectoral teams by the 3rd quarter of 2013. The Focal*

- Point members will be a small number of appropriately qualified individuals with a demonstrated interest in evaluation. They will require the approval of their manager to dedicate a small percentage of time to ECB program advanced training and team outreach;*
- b. *Using the ECB program syllabus to promote the relevance of course content to operational needs of respective levels at post. This approach will be discussed with the Corporate and Program Enabling Section with a view to incorporating into the learning and development plan of the program starting from 2013/14 financial year. The aim is to provide learning opportunities that support AusAID's staff (in ECB program language, the demand side), including providing constructive feedback to M&E specialists/advisors (the supply side);*
 - c. *In line with point b above, discuss with the Learning and Development team and managers the integration of ECB program learning goals into Individual Performance Programs as a link to career development and table this for the senior management team to endorse.*
2. *We will continue to seek opportunities for synergy with AusAID Canberra and alignment with corporate policy by:

 - a. *Participating in the new ECB program Community of Practice as a formal link to the Program Effectiveness and Performance Division Canberra and other country programs using the ECB program;*
 - b. *Contributing to development of the engagement strategy led by the facilitator of the Community of Practice that will help country programs using the ECB program to effectively engage the Program Effectiveness and Performance Division on relevant aspects of the ECB program;*
 - c. *Identifying opportunities with Program Effectiveness and Performance Division and Corporate and Program Enabling Division where staff can complement ECB program training and the application of the syllabus with Aid Management Pathway training, and reflect it as part of the learning and development plan of the country program starting from financial year 2013/14.**
 3. *Discuss with the ECB program M&E advisor the adaptation of ECB program content to the recent shift in focus to development of Delivery Strategies at the sector levels, and associated Performance Assessment Framework. This process has already begun, for example with sessions on indicators modified to accommodate the work being conducted on Performance Assessment Frameworks.*
 4. *Engage with the 'supply side' by developing a strategy for engagement with M&E practitioners. This is likely to include continuing to improve the content and format of M&E Practitioner workshops as a key mechanism of engagement to communicate expectations and an opportunity for practitioners to share knowledge and information.*