



Management Response to the Evaluation of the Kiribati Australia Skills for Employment Partnership (KASfEP)

This document provides a management response to the 2025 Evaluation of the Kiribati Australia Skills for Employment Partnership (KASfEP).

Recommendations for Design mission and procurement	Timeframe	Status	Explanation	Action Plan
1. Design of the new program must be timely, with contracting of the management contractor for the successor program completed by the end of 2025 to enable early activities in Q1 2026	2025	Agree	DFAT agrees that it is important for the design of the new skills program to be timely to ensure that there is minimal impact during the transition period.	DFAT has commenced the design of the new skills program and will complete procurement in the second half of 2025.
2. The design shall include a co-design workshop with SPAG to co-design key program elements that strengthen program ownership and ensure local alignment	Q1 2025	Partially Agree	DFAT recognises that ownership and local alignment are essential for the next bilateral skills investment and will encourage engagement with MEHR to plan for future governance of KIT. The design of the next bilateral skills program will not include a co-design workshop. However, SPAG stakeholders will be involved in the design of the new bilateral skills via consultations and meetings.	DFAT will ensure close engagement with SPAG stakeholders during the design process.

Recommendations for KASfEP's remaining duration	Timeframe	Status	Explanation	Action Plan
P1. Initiate planning between KASfEP and KIT for leadership transition within KIT	2025–2026	Agree	DFAT agrees that it will be important for the success of the new program to commence early planning on leadership arrangements.	DFAT will work closely with Palladium and the KIT leadership team to initiate planning discussions around leadership arrangements.
P2. Prioritise identifying and providing mentoring support to emerging KIT leaders – particularly at Head of School level	2025–2026	Agree	DFAT agrees that succession planning, including mentoring, is important for the remaining duration of KasfEP.	DFAT accepts this recommendation and will continue to work closely with Palladium to ensure that KIT leadership has strong succession planning.
P3. Support KIT to develop maintenance plan and work with MEHR to influence budget decision to include sufficient operations and maintenance (O&M) budget	2025–2026	Agree	DFAT agrees on the importance of engaging with MEHR, as the responsible ministry to develop a maintenance plan.	DFAT will consider this recommendation in the development of its transition plan and advise Palladium to add this recommendation in KASfEP's transition plan.
P4. Develop a joint transition plan (DFAT–GoK) for KIT staff financing and leadership (e.g., i-Kiribati Director by a set date), including succession planning for senior positions in KIT	2025–2026	Agree	DFAT agrees that it is important to develop a leadership transition plan (see recommendations P1 and P2).	DFAT will engage all partners – MEHR, KASfEP and KIT to discuss the proposal for a joint transition plan and succession planning for senior positions in KIT.
P5. Consider opportunities to strengthen KIT's student management information system, or put in place transition plan for next investment	2025–2026	Agree	DFAT agrees that a strengthened student management information system at KIT will greatly improve the efficiency of data management at KIT. Palladium is currently working on this recommendation.	Palladium is currently working with the KIT leadership team to explore opportunities to implement an improved student management information system.
P6. Increase efforts to support MEHR's coordination of the skills sector through SPAG, particularly given SPAG's expanded mandate to include labour mobility	2025–2026	Agree	DFAT agrees that increased government coordination and collaboration, currently managed through SPAG, is important.	Palladium and DFAT will continue to advocate to MEHR to continue SPAG discussions for the remainder of 2025.

P7. Re-engage MEHR to identify high-level policy dialogue incentives and preferences on skills and labour mobility governance	2025–2026	Agree	DFAT agrees that continuing to engage with MEHR will be important in the remaining months of KASfEP, in order to seek their input on the direction and scope of future skills and labour mobility governance arrangements.	DFAT will re-engage with MEHR, at the senior leadership level, to better understand their ambitions for skills and labour mobility, including on governance arrangements.
P8. Continue to classify the risk that KIT may not be fully led or administered by MEHR at the conclusion of KASfEP as "high risk" in the Risk Register and manage accordingly	2025–2026	Agree	DFAT agrees that there is a significant risk that KIT will not be fully led/administered by MEHR at the conclusion of KASfEP.	DFAT recognises the impact of the risk on sustainability of KIT. DFAT will continue to engage closely with MEHR to discuss options for future administration arrangements for KIT.
P9. Explore options to strengthen KIT's English language training for labour mobility	2025–2026	Partially Agree	KASfEP already provides English language training to labour mobility cohorts. Strengthening KIT's English language training to labour mobility workers should be discussed via the MEHR as they are the responsible ministry for labour mobility.	DFAT will consider this recommendation for future collaborations with MEHR to ensure that PALM cohorts receive adequate English skills prior to mobilization subject to program capacity and MEHR recommendation.
P10. Consider opportunities to enhance and strategically align Australia–New Zealand coordination in the skills sector.	2025–2026	Agree	DFAT agrees that there is opportunity to better align Australia's support in the skills sector, with NZ-funded programming. New Zealand and Australia are both members of the SPAG.	DFAT will consider this recommendation in the design of the next bilateral skills program. We will discuss future coordination opportunities with New Zealand during the design consultations.

Note: Design considerations D1-D22 in the evaluation will be considered as part of the design for the next bilateral skills program.