

**Management Response to the Independent Strategic Review of the Australia Indonesia Knowledge Partnership Platform (KONEKSI)
November 2025 – March 2026**

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) commissioned an Independent Strategic Review (ISR) of the KONEKSI, conducted between November 2025 and March 2026. The ISR assessed KONEKSI's performance against its objectives, with a dual focus on: (i) evaluating the program's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and identifying lessons learned; and (ii) informing options for possible future Australian investments in Indonesia's higher education, research, science and innovation ecosystem. The ISR confirmed that KONEKSI remains strongly aligned with Australia and Indonesia's shared strategic interests, performing effectively, and on track to achieve all End-of-Program Outcomes.

DFAT broadly agrees with the ISR's recommendations and the proposed forward pathway, which together provide a credible and strategic basis for strengthening program performance over the remaining investment period and maximising KONEKSI's impact. The recommendations cluster around two priority areas that will shape the program's evolution: **(1) responding more directly to the Government of Indonesia's (GOI) research, innovation and higher education agenda, and (2) enhancing bilateral government-to-government engagement, including by evolving KONEKSI as a potential platform** (from principally a research collaboration mechanism). Several recommendations are endorsed in **full**, while others are **partially agreed** pending further testing, feasibility assessment and consultation with Government of Australia and Government of Indonesia partners.

DFAT also notes the ISR's forward-looking analysis and options for future higher education, research, science, and innovation programming in Indonesia. These findings will inform the development of the Investment Concept Note (ICN) for the next phase of Australia's engagement in this sector.

Part A. Responding to GOI Agenda

Recommendation	Response	Rationale	Proposed Actions	Timeframe
<p>Part A. Responding to GOI agenda To maintain program relevance, strengthen government-to-government (G2G) engagement and position Australia as a trusted partner in Indonesia’s research and innovation transformation.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The ISR recommends that KONEKSI sharpen its alignment with GOI priorities and (1) exercise the extension option for up to 12 months; (2) strengthen connections between researchers, policy makers and industry users, (3) deepen engagement with Indonesia’s evolving research and innovation ecosystem, and (4) explore opportunities to selectively contribute to GOI’s reform efforts in higher education.</p>	<p>DFAT will ensure that the ISR’s detailed recommendations below are translated into sequenced actions to strengthen program performance and position KONEKSI for a successful transition to its next phase.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Recommendation 1. Continue the program and exercise the extension option for 12 months to evolve the program to respond more specifically to GOI’s Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) agenda and increase government-to-government (G2G) engagement.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The ISR recommends that KONEKSI be continued and DFAT exercise the contract extension option for 12 months to provide time to evolve the program to respond more specifically to the Indonesian Government’s agenda and maintain influence and relevance of the program.</p>	<p>DFAT will extend KONEKSI for up to 12 months (to December 2028) and adjust KONEKSI work plans to respond to GOI’s STI agenda and to support enhanced G2G engagement where feasible.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 The Program should modify its approach to strengthen the connections between researchers and users in the context of stated GOI priorities.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The ISR recommends a pivot in program delivery (within scope) to strengthen research utilisation and align KONEKSI more with GOI’s innovation agenda. This may include a challenge-based approach to identifying priorities</p>	<p>DFAT will work with KONEKSI to ensure it strengthens research utilisation and alignment to GOI (and GOA) research and innovation agendas, including exploring and pursuing, where feasible, the suggested activities.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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		for joint research funding; a KONEKSI portfolio-wide assessment of research ‘readiness for use’; and piloting challenge-focused <i>Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIE)</i> panels in selected provinces.		
Recommendation 3 The program should develop a clear strategy to engage with Indonesia’s research and innovation ecosystem, including local innovation hubs.	Agree	The ISR recommends that DFAT establish a clear strategic framework to guide and align its current and future investments in Indonesia’s research, development and innovation ecosystem.	DFAT will task KONEKSI to develop a comprehensive ecosystem engagement strategy and action plan outlining clear objectives, priority areas, and engagement pathways across technical assistance (TA) and grants.	Ongoing
Recommendation 4 The program should explore the scope to mobilise philanthropic and private sector co-investment for capability-building in research and innovation.	Partially Agree	The ISR recommends that DFAT explore diversified funding models to strengthen long-term sustainability.	DFAT will task KONEKSI to identify opportunities to diversify funding models through engagement with philanthropy, private sector and industry.	Ongoing
Recommendation 5 In the extension period, opportunities to contribute in a limited way, to GOI’s reforms in the Higher Education Sector should be explored, in so far as these connect to KONEKSI’s research and innovation remit.	Agree	The ISR notes several areas of interest identified by the Indonesian Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MoHEST).	DFAT, in conjunction with MoHEST and the Australian Department of Education, will explore feasible entry points and shared priorities.	Ongoing

Part B. Leverage KONEKSI to strengthen G2G engagement and work with GOI to determine the optimal means to structure enhanced G2G engagement.

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<p>Part B. Leverage KONEKSI to strengthen G2G engagement and work with GOI to determine the optimal means to structure enhanced G2G engagement.</p>	Agree	<p>The contractor-managed model is operationally efficient but can dilute opportunities for sustained G2G engagement in the processes of thematic prioritisation, activity selection and implementation oversight. More embedded G2G linkages in research and innovation could facilitate joint priority-setting, policy experimentation and structured knowledge exchange between ministries and agencies.</p>	<p>Post-ISR, DFAT will work to strengthen GOA–GOI engagement, including by building on existing program collaboration built through CSIRO and DISR led activities.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Recommendation 1 In the short term (within current phase) DFAT should engage GOA stakeholders regarding the preferred implementation model for phase 2 (potentially establishing an advisory group to take this forward).</p>	Agree	As above	<p>DFAT will increase and broaden engagement with GOA STI agencies in strategic program discussions in addition to activity implementation. This will assist in identifying areas of GOI/GOA mutual interest for collaboration in current and next phase.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Recommendation 2 The program should undertake a strategic STI foresight exercise to systematically identify potential areas of collaboration between Australia and Indonesia.</p>	Agree	<p>Stronger G2G engagement is essential to align with the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), deepen institutional relationships, and ensure the program reflects shared policy priorities rather than solely researcher-driven collaboration.</p>	<p>DFAT will seek to broaden out a MOHEST-(domestically) focused strategic foresighting exercise to include other GOI and GOA stakeholders to ensure potential areas of bilateral research cooperation.</p>	Ongoing

C. Future Programming

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DFAT should launch a design mission for a successor phase/ program, starting in early 2029 at the latest, and which should entail significantly greater G2G involvement.	Partially Agree	Ground future G2G arrangements in the CSP Action Plan (2025) and informed by outcomes of Australia's Strategic Examination of Research and Development (SERD). Consider, as part of the design process, whether there is a continued role for a managing contractor in the management and administration of the program or whether it can be run through relevant Australian Government entities.	DFAT has commenced discussions with GOI to explore its interest in a future investment in higher education, research, science and innovation beyond the current KONEKSI program, and, subject to the outcome of those discussions and relevant approvals, will enter into a design process. CSP and SERD implications will be considered.	For consideration when developing future investments in this space