

Pacific Australia Skills Investment Design Summary

Overview

Australia has long supported skills and training in the Pacific and Timor-Leste through the regional Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC, 2007-2025) and other bilateral programs. Australia's new regional program, Pacific Australia Skills, builds on APTC's legacy and will support skills for employment. It will:

- deliver training and qualifications.
- address local and regional labour market needs.
- help strengthen local training systems, institutions, and staff.
- build new partnerships between Australia, the Pacific and Timor-Leste.

Pacific Australia Skills started in early 2025 and is managed by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Australia's investment in this program is up to AUD229.5 million over five years, with the possibility of a 4-year extension.

Program objective and expected outcomes

Objective:

Australia, in partnership with Pacific island countries and Timor-Leste, supports the delivery of responsive and inclusive skills development which increases access to onshore and offshore labour market opportunities.

Expected outcomes:

1. Increased numbers of Pacific and Timor-Leste youth and workers, in all their diversity, participate in quality, equitable, industry-relevant, and demand-driven skills development.
2. Participants, in all their diversity, have enhanced pathways to employment, across Pacific and Timor-Leste domestic and regional labour markets.
3. More integrated Pacific, Timor-Leste and Australian skills and training systems.

Delivery approach

Pacific Australia Skills is responsive and adaptive. A Managing Contractor implements the program, handling operations, partnerships, training delivery, and monitoring. The program focuses on:

1. Delivery of quality, industry-relevant and demand-driven skills development.
2. Enhancing pathways to employment in domestic and regional labour markets.

3. Enhancing linkages between Pacific, Timor-Leste and Australian skills and training systems.

A key feature of the program is the Technical Skills Panel (TSP). The TSP will be operated by the Managing Contractor and will be made up of training providers from Australia, the Pacific, and Timor-Leste. It will deliver training based on demand and provide expert advice. It can be scaled up or down as needed to address new priorities.

Delivery principles

Pacific Australia Skills will prioritise:

regional integration

- demand-responsive delivery
- prioritisation of gender equality
- disability equity and rights and social inclusion in delivery approaches
- authentic partnerships that deliver outcomes
- national skills sector leadership development
- preservation and transfer of traditional and indigenous knowledge
- climate change resilience and
- social safeguards.
- Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Pacific Australia Skills will use a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system to support accountability and track progress and results. The MEL approach is informed by key principles, including openness and collaboration, responsiveness to gender equality, disability and social inclusion considerations, and commitment to locally led development. An independent technical advisory group of experts, including from the Pacific and Timor Leste, will support DFAT with management, internal MEL processes, and quality assurance.

Risks and safeguards

Risks associated with Pacific Australia Skills will be reduced through strong governance, experienced contractors, and clear safeguards, including:

- child safety and protection
- prevention of sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse
- environmental and social risks
- fraud prevention and anti-corruption
- effective incident reporting, investigation systems and procedures.

Further information

Further information about Pacific Australia Skills and the full Investment Design Document can be found on the DFAT website at www.dfat.gov.au.