WOK WANTAIM LONG STRONGEM EDUKEISEN

**VOLUME 1 - NARRATIVE**

PNG

PARTNERSHIPS FOR IMPROVING EDUCATION (PIE)

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**ACRONYMS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AAP | Annual Action Plan |
| AHC | Australian High Commission |
| AQEFA | Achieving Quality Education for All |
| CIEI | Callan Inclusive Education Institute |
| CSPD | Callan Services for Persons with Disabilities |
| CEC | Church Education Council |
| CRP | COVID-19 Response Plan |
| CSEP | Papua New Guinea-Australia Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership |
| CWD | Children with Disabilities |
| DFAT | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade |
| DHERST | Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology |
| DHOM | Deputy Head of Mission |
| DPO | Disabled People’s Organisations |
| ECBP | Education Capacity Building Program |
| ECDF | Education Capacity Development Facility |
| ECE | Early Childhood Education |
| EMIS | Education Management Information System |
| EOIO | End of Investment Outcomes |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GER | Gross Enrolment Ratio |
| GEDSI | Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion |
| GoA | Government of Australia |
| GoPNG | Government of Papua New Guinea |
| GPE | Global Partnership for Education |
| GPI | Gender Parity Index |
| GTFS | Government Tuition Fee Subsidy |
| IDD | Investment Design Document |
| IERC | Inclusive Education Resource Centre |
| IO | Intermediate Outcomes |
| JICA | Japan International Cooperation Agency |
| LEG | Local Education Group |
| LLG | Local level government |
| LTA | Long-term adviser |
| MERL | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning |
| MEF | Monitoring and Evaluation Framework |
| MTR | Mid-Term Review |
| NDoE | National Department of Education |
| NEP | National Education Plan |
| NER | Net Enrolment Rate |
| NGO | Non-Government Organisation |
| OBE | Outcomes Based Education |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OECD-DAC | OECD – Development Assistance Committee |
| PARI | PNG Accessibility/Remoteness Index |
| PASS | PNGAusPartnership Secondary School |
| PDoE | Provincial Department of Education |
| PEA | Provincial Education Adviser |
| PEP | Provincial Education Plan |
| P4R | Australia’s Partnership for Recovery |
| PGK | Papua New Guinea Kina |
| PIE | Partnerships for Improving Education |
| PILNA | Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment |
| PNG | Papua New Guinea |
| PPF | PNG Partnership Fund |
| PSEAH | Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment |
| RISE | Rapidly Improving Standards in Elementary Education (Save the Children Fund) |
| SBC | Standards Based Curriculum |
| SBoM | School Boards of Management |
| SCF | Save the Children Fund |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SLIP | School Learning Improvement Plan |
| STA | Short-term adviser |
| TFFE | Tuition Fee Free Education |
| ToC | Theory of Change |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| TUF | Teacher Upgrading Fund |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children’s Fund |

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# **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

***What are the development challenges?***

1. Since 2014, Papua New Guinea (PNG) has had consecutive budget deficits and falling Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. In 2019 PNG recorded a Government budget deficit equal to 4.9 percent of GDP. The recent PNG Government budget forecasts a decline in real GDP of -3.5 percent in 2021 and -3.3 percent in 2022. This is straining the Government’s ability to meet salaries and operational costs and to fund essential services, including education.
2. Clear evidence of the budget constraints has been seen in the shift from the Tuition Fee Free Education (TFFE) policy introduced in 2012 to the Government Tuition Fee Subsidy (GTFS) from 2020 onwards. In 2021, this policy requires a parental contribution of 38 percent of approved tuition fees.[[1]](#footnote-1)
3. This shift in policy has coincided with declining income and increasing poverty levels in PNG. A 2020 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Socio-Economic Impact Assessment found that 80 percent of households were adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with 60 percent of respondents experiencing significant declines in their income. Those earning less were more affected than those earning more, increasing inequality in the country. School fee debts at the household level were common. A recent World Bank report[[2]](#footnote-2) noted that school fees were having adverse equity effects, particularly on girls, who are vulnerable to exclusion.

4. Analysis of key education performance indicators shows net enrolment rates (NER) have stagnated and retention of children between elementary and primary school declined prior to COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, four of every ten children enrolled in the Elementary 2/Grade 2 level failed to continue to Grade 3. The 2018 PILNA results show PNG Grade 3 students are performing considerably lower than the region in literacy with over 40% of Grade 3 and 5 students performing below minimum expected proficiency levels.

5. Factors influencing these trends include:

* limited attention by government to the ‘creeping crisis’ in participation/retention in the early grades
* declining demand for education, particularly for girls and children with disabilities (CWD)
* inadequate engagement of all stakeholders to achieve education outcomes (e.g., church education service providers, School Boards of Management (SBoM), local level governments (LLGs) and parents, as well as donors and international development agencies)
* elementary teachers are underqualified
* limited capacity to operate, manage and improve the education system; and
* limited evidence of ‘knowledge-to-policy’ processes.

***What are Australia’s objectives?***

6. Support for education is embedded in the Papua New Guinea-Australia Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership (CSEP), DFAT’s PNG COVID-19 Response Plan’s (CRP) Stability pillar, and the Education and Leadership Portfolio Plan 2018-2022 (ELPP). PIE consolidates our support to ELPP priority one (Early Grade Education) and contributes to all three of the ELPP priorities:

* **Early grade education** – supporting literacy and numeracy skills in the early years of school, as this is the necessary foundation for progressing through schooling and into the workforce.
* **Secondary schools and tertiary education** – supporting students to gain improved technical and leadership skills so they can access meaningful employment and ethically serve their communities. This includes supporting secondary and tertiary partner institutions to strengthen their policies and practices so they can improve service delivery quality.
* **Systems strengthening** - working with Government of PNG counterparts to develop and implement key national education policies.

***How have stakeholder consultations influenced the design?***

7. Despite the challenges imposed by the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on movement and communications, two rounds of intensive consultations have been held with local leaders at both national and provincial levels, involving government and church education service providers, as well as representatives of people with disabilities. Each stage of the design process has been agreed to, and supported, by both the Secretary, National Department of Education (NDoE) and the Minister Counsellor, Australian High Commission (AHC). These consultations have influenced the selection of outcomes and the change pathways expected to achieve those outcomes. The consultations have also influenced the selection of the delivery approach, the governance and management arrangements and the development of the (design stage) Monitoring, Evaluation Research and Learning (MERL) Plan.

***What results are expected to be achieved?***

8. The expected end-of-investment outcomes (EOIO) for the PIE investment are:

Targeted Outcome 1:More children (girls, boys, and children with disabilities) in the early grades enrol and stay in school in selected provinces using replicable and sustainable approaches

Targeted Outcome 2: Targeted provinces are using sustainable and replicable approaches to support improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in the early grades

Enabling Outcome 3:Evidence of systemic change within the education sector that improves the delivery of early grades education

9. The current challenges facing PNG’s education sector, particularly the declining budget, are acute; and Australia’s assistance for education in PNG, while significant, represents just a very small portion of what is needed[[3]](#footnote-3). For this reason, PIE will avoid spreading its resources too thin, and provide targeted support to initially four provinces, to demonstrate effective approaches to addressing critical demand-side and supply-side challenges faced by all provinces.

10. Given the state of the sector, including funding, prospects for system-wide scaling of effective approaches will be limited over the life of the initiative. However, over time, evidence of successful approaches will be disseminated to facilitate adoption/adaption by other provinces; it is anticipated that the investment may support the direct application of effective approaches in eight to ten provinces (subject to independent review and additional resources) and indirectly affect education delivery across all PNG provinces over its lifetime. Improvements to the quality of teaching and student learning will be measured against a baseline of student learning (and teacher competencies) in target provinces supported by PIE. PIE will seek to leverage knowledge gained from its work on the ground to help the Government of PNG (GoPNG) make better use of its own financial and human resources, leveraging effective, existing partnerships, and targeting those areas where results are both technically and politically feasible.

11. The investment will also assist education service providers (government and church agencies) to identify and resolve ‘system’ blockages which inhibit implementation of the GoPNG National Education Plan 2020-2030 (NEP). This will be achieved by supporting an integrated, politically informed approach to capacity development in priority areas that considers skills needed, motivation and opportunities for results. Indicative areas include support for planning and budgeting to maximise the reach of sector budget allocations and for professional development of teachers in the early grades. Significant attention will be given to improving both the availability, analysis and use of evidence to inform decision-making at sub-national and national levels. A baseline assessment will be conducted of learning outcomes in target provinces that will be used as a basis for measurement of program impacts, on top of ongoing support for intermittent regional assessments of learning outcomes. This will provide evidence to inform policy dialogue between DFAT and GoPNG and support replicable and systemic change and the resources required to achieve it.

***What is the delivery approach?***

12. A managing contractor will be used to deliver the PIE outcomes highlighted in this Investment Design Document (IDD) related to early grade education. The managing contractor will be responsible for a ‘design and implement’ process for an additional pillar for secondary education, as a successor to the PNGAusPartnership Secondary School (PASS) Initiative involving an amendment to the PIE contract and expansion of the program logic subject to financial approval.

13. Using a managing contractor model, every attempt will be made to integrate the program with NDoE, Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) and Provincial Division of Education (PDoE) people, systems and networks. This will include placement of the PIE Team Leader and MERL Adviser positions within NDoE and placement of PIE Provincial Managers in the PDoE offices in targeted provinces.

14. A managing contractor office will provide support to: long- and short-term technical advisers inputs to NDoE, DHERST and PDoEs; and sub-contract implementing partners such as church agencies to trial demand-side approaches to increasing gender balanced, disability and socially inclusive enrolment/retention of children in the early grades. This model is based directly on lessons learned from previous implementation approaches as offering the best prospects for system wide change within current policy and budget settings. This includes the experience of direct financing support through PNG systems, and of providing direct support for education service delivery through NGO consortia.

15. For the PIE Early Grade Education pillar, the budget includes two funds which will be applied over the course of the investment. An Achieving Quality Education for All (AQEFA) fund (Targeted Outcome 1) will fund activities that will target increased participation in the early grades – enrolment and retention. These activities will target GEDSI issues as a priority. The second fund, a Teacher Upgrading Fund (TUF) (Targeted Outcome 2) will be used to 1) ‘upgrade’ the knowledge and skills of early grades teachers and improve student learning; and 2) to facilitate the ‘application’ of the new knowledge and skills in teaching practice. Technical assistance will support agreed priority reform areas at national and sub-national level, linked to outcomes and with potential for results. Budget allocations for short- and long-term technical advisers for both implementation of the program and provision of technical advice are the minimum required for delivery of intended outcomes.

16. Given the fluidity and complexity of the PNG context, further exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19, PIE will remain highly flexible, iterative, adaptive and evidence based. PIE outcomes will be pursed through adaptive management approaches so Australian support can leverage entry points for reform in priority areas as they arise. PIE will exploit opportunities to nudge the system in the right direction through piloting, demonstrating the efficacy of, as well as supporting scaling of more effective ways of working in the education sector.

17. Where synergies exist, the managing contractor will work with existing DFAT programs and other donors to achieve its outcomes. This includes: continuing to use Australia Awards for pre-service teacher training and short courses related to education; leveraging the Australian PNG Incentive Fund for education infrastructure; working closely with the Economic Governance and Inclusive Growth (EGIG) on GoPNG budget support and PFM reforms; and the Church Partnership Program (CPP) for education support activities[[4]](#footnote-4). PIE will learn from and integrate lessons from the budget support currently being provided under the Pacific COVID Response Package to address the GoPNG’s fiscal shortfall in relation to the school subsidy payments (GTFS). Australia will seek to broker increased engagement from key multilateral partners including Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, in particular coordinating policy dialogue efforts to advocate for adequate financing by GoPNG of the sector. Australia will seek to leverage and advocate for the effective use of GoPNG funding through the Service Improvement Program, 20 per cent of which is supposed to be allocated to education infrastructure under current guidelines, a contribution to the sector that Australia does not want to displace.

***What resources will be invested by Australia?***

18. The indicative budget envelope for the PIE is AUD75 million from FY 2022/23 to 2029/30. Given this represents only a small fraction of the annual PNG education budget[[5]](#footnote-5), it will be critical for PIE to work in partnership with GoPNG to improve the use of domestic resources towards intended outcomes. PIE may be scaled up, subject to an independent review after three years.

19. Funding for an additional pillar for secondary education is yet to be determined and will be additional to the AUD 75 million indicative budget.

# **B. EDUCATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE, PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND LESSONS**

## B.1 PAPUA NEW GUINEA EDUCATION SECTOR ISSUES

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a signatory to a range of international commitments including the Convention on the Rights of the Child which recognises that education is a right that belongs to all children without any form of discrimination and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), specifically SDG 4, Outcome 1: Universal primary and secondary education ensuring “…*that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes*”.

The Government of PNG’s (GoPNG) aspirations to achieve these commitments were outlined in the Universal Basic Education Plan 2010-2019 and are reflected in the PNG National Education Plan (NEP) 2020-2029.[[6]](#footnote-6) Despite these aspirations, data trend analysis of key education performance indicators (See Appendix A) reveals that GoPNG is struggling to make progress. For example:

* net enrolment rates (NER) appear to have stagnated since 2009 and declined between 2018 and 2019;
* gross enrolment rates (over-age children returning to school) have increased since 2009, but do not fully account for the large number of children leaving school before they complete Grade 8; during recent years seven of every ten children that enrol in the Preparatory level do not continue to complete Grade 8;
* retention of children between elementary school and primary school has decreased in recent years; four of every ten children enrolled in the Elementary 2/Grade 2 level failed to continue to Grade 3 in 2019;
* while there has been improvement in the participation of girls compared to boys in basic education over the past two decades, in some provinces, more boys than girls are enrolling in basic education; analysis of enrolment data suggests that, in more recent years, more girls transition than boys from Elementary 2/Grade 2 to Grade 3; and
* as measured by the 2015 Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA), Grade 5 (Level 6) students did not perform as well as their counterparts from 13 countries in the Pacific region. Literacy scores were 23.31 percent (national) and 45.73 percent regional; numeracy scores were 50.77 percent (national) and 67.94 percent (regional). The 2018 PILNA results suggest improvement from 2015; Literacy scores were 51.80 percent (national) and 67.80 percent regional; numeracy scores were 83.80 percent (national) and 83.40 percent (regional).[[7]](#footnote-7)

A number of factors have negatively affected the capacity of the education sector to provide quality education for all children. These are outlined below.

**National Government Actions**

* **A decline in levels of government funding for education**: Between 2017 and 2021, there has been a reduction in the proportion of the *proposed* government budget to the education sector[[8]](#footnote-8) from 9.46 percent in 2017 to 5.58 percent in 2021. However, if one considers the proportion for education in the *revised* government budget, the reduction is from 5.15 percent in 2017 to 4.33 percent in 2019.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Declining budget allocations for education have resulted in decreased funding to schools. The effect of this decreased funding is most evident in the shift from the Tuition Fee Free Education (TFFE) policy introduced in 2012 to the GTFS policy effective in 2020. The stable funding of the TFFE between 2012 to 2019 has fallen sharply since 2020 such that in 2021, the tuition subsidy is approximately 45 percent of the pre-2020 (TFFE) levels. This reduction in support to schools comes at a time of reduced household income due to the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. A PNG National Research Institute study on the benefits of the TFFE revealed that the greatest benefit was to disadvantaged and low-income families.[[10]](#footnote-10) With a move away from free tuition to subsidised enrolment, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the most disadvantaged families that are suffering the most.[[11]](#footnote-11)

* **Unqualified teachers and poor quality of teaching:** The government policy of universal basic education (introduced over two decades ago), coupled with the introduction of the TFFE in 2012, led to the rapid expansion of the basic education system. However, there were few qualified teachers who could be assigned to meet the high demand for teachers resulting from the expansion. As a result, teachers with lower qualifications – some with less than Grade 10 – were appointed as teachers in elementary schools with the assumption that these teachers would be able to teach children in the early grades. To compensate for the low levels of teacher qualifications and preparedness in the early grades, scripted lessons were introduced as part of the Standards Based Curriculum (SBC) to assist teachers to help children to learn.[[12]](#footnote-12) [[13]](#footnote-13) However, not all teachers have received the SBC or the scripted lessons and even fewer have received training on the way in which the SBC scripted lessons are to be used.[[14]](#footnote-14)

This also reflects on the limited training and professional development of teachers; in some provinces no training or professional development has been offered to teachers in the past two years. The concern about the quality of teaching extends to several challenges in teacher preparation as revealed in the 2019 Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) study ‘*Capacity Needs Assessment of the Primary Teacher Colleges’* which revealed weak coordination within the teacher education system, limited upgrading of teacher education faculties and limited alignment of the teacher education curriculum with the school curriculum.[[15]](#footnote-15)

* **Unresolved effects of the proposed re-structuring of the education system:** The NEP 2020-2029 includes adoption of a revised basic education structure from a 3-6-4 to a 1-6-6 structure (see Table 2 below). There are two major effects of this decision to re-structure which does not appear to have received adequate attention. One effect is that as elementary schools are phased out, few of the elementary teachers are adequately qualified to teach in primary schools. There is limited information available, even at the sub-national level, on the actual number of elementary teachers who will need to be ‘upgraded’ to qualify for an appointment to a primary school.

Second, the elimination of elementary schools will result in over-crowding of primary schools and an increased distance for many children to travel to attend school. This will potentially result in lower enrolment and decreased transition rates in primary school. A related issue is the fiscal capacity of the government to provide teacher salaries even if additional qualified teachers are appointed to teach in primary schools.

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 2: National Education System Restructure** |
| **Previous NEP (2015-2019)**3-6-4 structure |  | **Age** |  | **New NEP (2020-2029)**1-6-6 structure |
| **Classification** | **Grade** | **Level** | **Level** | **Classification**  | **Grade** |
| Children at home, play groups or day cares. Regulated by the National Office of Child and Family Services under the *Lukautim Pikinini* Act. |  | 0-3 |  | Children at home, play groups or day cares. Regulated by the National Office of Child and Family Services under the *Lukautim Pikinini* Act. |
|  | 4-5 |  | Early Childhood Education |
| Elementary | Preparatory | 3-1 | 6 | 1-1 | Preparatory | Pre-school |
|  | Grade E1  | 3-2 | 7 | 6-1 | Junior Primary | Grade 1 |
|  | Grade E2 | 3-3 | 8 | 6-2 |  | Grade 2 |
| Lower Primary | Grade P3 | 6-1 | 9 | 6-3 |  | Grade 3 |
|  | Grade P4 | 6-2 | 10 | 6-4 | Senior Primary | Grade 4 |
|  | Grade P5 | 6-3 | 11 | 6-5 |  | Grade 5 |
| Upper Primary | Grade P6 | 6-4 | 12 | 6-6 |  | Grade 6 |
|  | Grade P7 | 6-5 | 13 | 6-1 | Junior Secondary | Grade 7 |
|  | Grade P8 | 6-6 | 14 | 6-2 |  | Grade 8 |
| Lower Secondary | Grade 9  | 4-1 | 15 | 6-3 |  | Grade 9 |
|  | Grade 10 | 4-2 | 16 | 6-4 | Senior Secondary | Grade 10 |
| Upper Secondary | Grade 11 | 4-3 | 17 | 6-5 |  | Grade 11 |
|  | Grade 12 | 4-4 | 18 | 6-6 |  | Grade 12 |

Adapted from Jones, R. (2020). Papua New Guinea Early Childhood Cost and Financing Study Report. National Department of Education, National Office of Child and Family Services and UNICEF. Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

* **Limited provision of relevant supplementary teaching and learning resources:** Teaching and learning resources available in most schools are severely limited to non-existent, unless schools are participating in donor funded programs or have received donations from other countries. Most of these resources are not context appropriate. Recent work by Bilum Books, a PNG-based publisher, has aligned its supplementary teaching and learning resources with the SBC, yet limited national government funding has prevented large-scale acquisition and distribution.
* **Inequitable support for the provision of basic education:** The geographic attributes of PNG include numerous islands and difficult to access mountainous locations. National Department of Education (NDoE) applies the PNG Accessibility/Remoteness Index (PARI) to classify the relative accessibility/remoteness of different communities. In 2018, 28 percent of elementary schools and 29 percent of primary schools were classified as remote. This presents challenges in attracting qualified teachers, providing support and supervision and increases the operating costs of schools. A 2014 study ‘Go Long Ples’ by the PNG National Economic and Fiscal Commission (authors of the PARI) argued unsuccessfully for an equity-based application of the TFFE to address the challenges of delivering quality education in more remote locations in PNG.[[16]](#footnote-16)

**Sub-National Government Capacity**

* **Sub-national governments have limited capacity to support the delivery of education:** Consultations during the design process highlighted the limited capacity of sub-national governments, particularly provincial governments, in performing their functions as mandated under the 2009 ‘*The Determination Assigning Service Delivery Functions and Responsibilities to Provincial and Local-Level Governments’*. A 2014 analysis of local government arrangements in PNG suggests that the structure and functions proposed for local level governments (LLGs) were suitable, but it was the limited capacity of LLG to perform their functions that would be the issue.[[17]](#footnote-17) Citing limited funding, susceptibility to political influence and limited staff allocations and capabilities, provincial governments are challenged to provide appropriate levels of service to education, including school inspection, teacher appointment, supervision and development, provision of school supplies and support to school planning to enable the school to access funding under the government tuition subsidy policy.
* **Government and church education service providers appear to work in parallel**, rather than together, which is a missed opportunity to strengthen the sector. In previous years, church-provided basic education accounted for over 40 percent of all basic education provision in PNG – with considerable provincial variation in the proportion of church operated schools to government schools and with a wide range of different church denominations delivering education in different provinces. Of note is that the proportional share of educational services provided by churches nationally has declined from previous years and is now reported at just over 32 percent. However, the split of service provision between government and church providers varies significantly between provinces. Church provision appears to be higher in remote locations and with disadvantaged communities.

The Education Act 1983 provides for the government to pay for the costs of teachers’ salaries, while the church education service providers own and manage educational facilities, manage and supervise teachers and utilise the national education curriculum. Aside from this understanding, there does not appear to be a well-defined delineation of roles and functions as might be captured in a Memorandum of Agreement/Understanding. Provincial consultations indicated that while churches are consulted, they are not necessarily involved in decision-making on issues which effect the education sector at the sub-national level.

The national Church Education Council (CEC) has recently adopted a constitution calling for much stronger partnership between church and government in the delivery of education services.[[18]](#footnote-18)

**Community-based Factors**

* **Reduced economic activity:** At a time when the government of PNG is projecting lower revenues to government, there is also a similar reduction occurring in household income across the country – with some areas reverting to a barter economy as there is a limited availability of cash.[[19]](#footnote-19) This situation has been exacerbated by the effects of COVID-19. The reduction in household income is likely to negatively affect the attendance of children from poor families due to the need for the child to contribute to the income of the family and resulting from the shift away from a tuition fee free policy. In 2021, families were requested to pay 38 percent of tuition costs to attend schools.
* **Low demand for education during the COVID-19 pandemic:** While not yet validated through school census data and ongoing survey efforts, anecdotal information from United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the PNG Partnership Fund (PPF) Secretariat suggested that as much as 50 percent of children did not return to attend elementary or primary school following the initial closure of schools in March 2020. However, education officials expected that there was a high rate of return to school for the 2021 school year (albeit many of these children will now be over-age), but there is no data yet available on 2021 enrolments.[[20]](#footnote-20) International studies would suggest that once children are absent from school for an extended period of time, they are less likely to return.[[21]](#footnote-21)

When these issues are taken together, it is evident that the education system in PNG is facing a significant crisis, yet design consultations did not reveal adequate awareness of the scale of this crisis. In fact, the results of the trend analysis undertaken by the design team seemed to provide new information to senior education officials. As such, the situation qualifies as a ‘creeping crisis’, one that has the potential for societal disruption and, if not addressed with urgency, a crisis which may erode public trust in the education system itself.[[22]](#footnote-22) The following section provides a discussion and analysis of the major challenges to provide guidance for identifying feasible interventions to acknowledge, understand and effectively address the crisis facing education in PNG.

## B.2 DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM / ISSUE ANALYSIS

With the number and scale of the major issues facing the education system in PNG, two questions have particular relevance to the design process:

1. ‘How can the decline in the participation of children in early grades education be reversed?’; and
2. ‘How can the education system be strengthened to improve the provision of quality education for all children?’

Since not all the challenges faced by the PNG education system are of equal magnitude and some are beyond the control of any investment (e.g., GoPNG fiscal constraints, geographic isolation), it is important to identify and focus on those issues:

* over which the system has some control or influence;
* which, if resolved, are most likely to have the greatest positive ‘effect’; and
* which are feasible for the system itself to introduce, progressively manage and sustain.

Five issues have been identified that inform the focus of the investment. Four issues are distinct areas for specific attention with a fifth issue considered as a cross-cutting issue. These are:

1. **Limited attention by government to participation/retention rates in the early grades:** The World Bank, UNICEF and United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) have all identified the primary importance of high-quality early grade education for all children as: i) the foundation for future learning; ii) having the best returns on public investment; and iii) contributing the most benefit to society.[[23]](#footnote-23) Related research from a range of sources also identifies that the single most important contribution to a child’s learning outside the home is quality of teaching.

While PNG has recognised the importance of early childhood education (ECE) with the passage of the policy on ECE, this same level of attention does not appear to be reflected in the delivery of early grades education as evidenced by:

* the relatively low levels of education, limited preparedness and in-service/professional development of school teachers in the early grades under the new 1-6-6 structure;
* continuing low NERs in basic education;
* the decreasing rate of transition of children between early grades, most evident in the transition of children from elementary to primary school (E2/G2 to G3); of ten children enrolled, meta-data analysis reveals that four will not transition to G3 (refer Appendix A);
* the lower academic achievement level of children in the early grades compared to their peers in other countries in the region;
* the limited level of supervision/support provided to schools and teachers by district and provincial education officials; even though the National Quality Schools Standards Framework was approved in 2018 there has been limited progress in applying and testing the framework to determine its utility; and
* the limited (and declining) government funding provided to education and to schools (in fact a school could technically receive no funding from government aside from teachers’ salaries if a School Learning Improvement Plan (SLIP) has not been prepared and approved).
1. **Declining demand for education:** National level consultations, findings of other programs (e.g., the PPF Education Grants) as well as the information included in the Expressions of Interest from five short-listed provinces (refer Appendix B) indicate that parents may not be placing a high value on education, nor understand the important benefits that a good educational foundation may provide. Low enrolment rates in the early grades suggest that parents are enrolling their children at later ages than expected, if at all, in many locations. Two reasons were provided (which are common in other low-income contexts).

One reason is that children may be required to contribute directly and/or indirectly to family survival – directly by engaging in work – or indirectly by looking after younger children while the parents engage in economic activity. This reason may have a high level of importance given the current economic situation faced by many families in PNG. The second reason cited is that parents and children do not find the education provided to be relevant to their lives or future. A skilled and experienced teacher is better able to bring relevance to the education a child receives. Unfortunately, as discussed above, many teachers in the early grades have neither the skills nor experience to do so, relying heavily on the scripted lessons that are to be given on a particular day of a particular week to all children in the same grade level.

1. **Inadequate engagement of all stakeholders to achieve educational outcomes:** In fiscally constrained contexts, there is a high need for the engagement of others to contribute to the delivery and quality of education services. This engagement happens at various levels and takes on different forms depending upon the relationship with the education system. In PNG, the potential of partnerships appears to be underutilised in three areas:
* *Church Education Service Providers* are mandated in the Education Act and clearly relied upon by government to delivery services. Despite this, there does not appear to be a formal Memorandum of Understanding at national or provincial levels to improve collaboration and impact. The 2020 CEC Constitution recognises this problem and establishes, as a key purpose, the intent to strengthen church – government partnership in *“more practical ways”;*
* *School Boards of Management[[24]](#footnote-24), Local-level governments and parents* tend to be viewed primarily as generators of resources for the school rather than being potential partners who can address issues of enrolment, attendance, retention, curriculum relevance and instilling the value of education in children. While the SLIP is the most probable tool to engage communities and parents in supporting education, many schools do not have SLIPs or if they do - it is outdated or has not been approved by higher levels of the education system; and
* *Donors and international development agencies* are attempting to contribute to the improvement of education quality and delivery in PNG. The Local Education Group (LEG) under the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) (formerly the Steering Committee of the Education Sector Improvement Program) has set five objectives for coordinating a sector-wide approach for supporting improvements in the education system. There does not appear to be any assessment of the effectiveness of the LEG or of ways in which its effectiveness might be improved.
1. **Limited capacity to operate, manage and improve the education system:** Two rounds of intensive consultations were conducted at the sub-national level as part of this design process (refer Appendix B). The approach to these consultations encouraged provincial teams (government, church and Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs)) to carry out self-assessments regarding the health of the education system in the province; to consider key education indicators for the province; to reflect upon the factors influencing performance; to self-assess capacity to carry out designated functions; to identify priorities and ways of addressing these priorities.

The result of these consultations was a realistic picture of the challenges faced and self-assessed limitations at the sub-national level in leadership and management capacity (at multiple levels); in numbers of qualified teachers; in opportunities for upgrading qualifications and in-service training; in professional support provided to teachers; in materials and logistical constraints.

1. **Limited evidence of effective ‘knowledge to policy’ processes:** A common thread in the consultations was an apparent lack of capacity to collect and use information to both inform sub-national decision making and communications with NDoE. For example, while limitations in the numbers of qualified teachers was consistently referred to at the sub-national level as a looming crisis, no hard data on the scale of the problem was readily available. Nor is this data apparently available within NDoE.

The limited capacity to gather and use data was most evident in the apparent ‘disconnect’ between what provincial performance data indicates (i.e., NER, Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), Retention and Achievement) and the ability of provincial officers to understand what this data reflects about the state of education service delivery in the province. Particular difficulty appeared to be experienced in understanding that static participation and declining retention of early grades children was a problem that needed urgent attention.

## B.3 EVIDENCE-INFORMED LESSONS

The design team sought a ‘line of sight’ between the problem issue/analysis outlined in section B.2 and lessons which may assist in informing a quality, design response. With this focus in mind, this section reviews the evidence-informed lessons relevant to PNG’s context. DFAT has provided a synthesis of 18 systematic reviews in the education sector to identify what interventions have the greatest impact on student learning and participation in developing country contexts[[25]](#footnote-25). In addition, it is timely that DFAT has been working with Results for Development (R4D) to synthesise the high-level impacts and emerging trends in education in the Indo-Pacific in light of the unprecedented disruption from COVID-19 on education systems. Five investment priorities have emerged from this research that are highly relevant to situational analysis described in this design (See Box 1).

**Box 1: Five COVID-responsive investments priorities consistent with the principles of a cost-effective, systems-oriented approach:**

1. **Use evidence to inform decision-making and budgets**: There is a scarcity of regional data on a number of critical educational indicators, including on girls, children with disabilities, the number of out-of-school children and rural/urban impacts. Without regular, credible, and granular data, decision-makers will struggle to maximize available resources. **Governments and their partners need to be assured that scarce resources are invested efficiently and effectively**. DFAT has long prioritised the collection, analysis and transparent reporting of education data for better decision-making[[i]](#m_4173277756366121611__edn1). Information must be presented in such a way that enables evidence-based decision making and reflects stakeholders’ binding constraints (e.g., time scarcity; clarity in approach).
2. **Target children at risk of dropout, particularly girls:**Millions more children will be at risk of dropping out or, for those countries where children were not in school, not re-enrolling. There are proven strategies for reducing out of school children, including providing parents and families with information about the benefits of schooling (considered a “best buy” in education), investing in early warning systems to alert school leaders to dropout risks, bringing learning closer to students through the use of innovative technologies, and improving school environments to ensure that they are safe and offer additional non-education services, including health and nutrition.[[ii]](#m_4173277756366121611__edn2) [[iii]](#m_4173277756366121611__edn3)[[iv]](#m_4173277756366121611__edn4) [[v]](#m_4173277756366121611__edn5)[[vi]](#m_4173277756366121611__edn6)
3. **Teach at the right level:**Prior to COVID-19, the world already had a learning crisis, with more than half of children in low- and middle-income countries unable to read and understand a simple story by the end of primary school[[vii]](#m_4173277756366121611__edn7). With education system closures and disruptions, the pressure on learning is acute. Any remedial and ‘catch-up’ approaches must focus on what young people know and can do, rather than emphasising ‘getting through’ the curriculum. ‘Teaching at the Right Level’ is a proven model, which involves rapid assessments of what students know, and teaching to that standard[[viii]](#m_4173277756366121611__edn8) [[ix]](#m_4173277756366121611__edn9) [[x]](#m_4173277756366121611__edn10). All systems need to adapt to COVID and related disruptions – **a learner-centred model will make the greatest difference**.
4. **Reimagine learning:**There is a great deal of energy around the power of innovation to drive a step-change in education and training. **Classrooms have barely changed in a century**, and COVID has enabled enormous experimentation in real-time, with at-scale approaches in distance, online and adaptive learning trialled around the world. There have been winners and losers, with the digital divide significant[[xi]](#m_4173277756366121611__edn11). **Australia has great strength in flexible approaches, and there is an opportunity to be a leader in education transformation**, featuring no-tech through to online approaches, modularisation of education and training, blended learning, micro-credentials, recognition of prior learning and dynamic approaches in partnership with industry. With a great need for education and training ‘smart catch-up’, and **with further disruptions likely, the moment for inclusive innovation is now**.
5. **People-to-people links:**With Australia Awards and international student flows heavily disrupted, the need to maintain inter-personal, industry level and national education and training connections is a clear priority. International goodwill and respect for Australia’s education and training system remains strong[[xii]](#m_4173277756366121611__edn12), but **foreign policy, trade and development effort is needed to continually reinforce Australia as a provider of choice**, built on expertise and excellence[[xiii]](#m_4173277756366121611__edn13). (Source: DFAT, Forthcoming)

[i] DFAT (2015) [*Strategy for Australia’s aid investments in education 2015–2020*](https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/strategy-for-australias-aid-investments-in-education-2015-2020).

***[[ii]](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/%22%20%5Cl%20%22m_4173277756366121611__ednref2%22%20%5Co%20%22)****Ibid*

***[[iii]](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/%22%20%5Cl%20%22m_4173277756366121611__ednref3%22%20%5Co%20%22)****UNICEF (2018) Early Warning Systems for Students at Risk of Dropping Out: Policy and Practice Pointers for Enrolling All Children and Adolescents in School and Preventing Dropouts*

***[[iv]](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/%22%20%5Cl%20%22m_4173277756366121611__ednref4%22%20%5Co%20%22)****UNESCO (2020) How many students are at risk of not returning to school?*

***[[v]](https://d.docs.live.net/1f5a5710269a5114/%5Bv%5D)***[*https://www.povertyactionlab.org/case-study/parental-engagement-improve-childrens-schooling*](https://www.povertyactionlab.org/case-study/parental-engagement-improve-childrens-schooling)

***[[vi]](https://d.docs.live.net/1f5a5710269a5114/%5Bvi%5D)***[*https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2020/10/21/can-new-forms-of-parent-engagement-be-an-education-game-changer-post-covid-19/*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2020/10/21/can-new-forms-of-parent-engagement-be-an-education-game-changer-post-covid-19/)

[[vii]](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/%22%20%5Cl%20%22m_4173277756366121611__ednref7%22%20%5Co%20%22) World Bank (2019) ‘[Learning Poverty](https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/brief/learning-poverty)’.

[[viii]](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/%22%20%5Cl%20%22m_4173277756366121611__ednref8%22%20%5Co%20%22) J-PAL (n.d.) ‘[Teaching at the Right Level to improve learning](https://www.povertyactionlab.org/case-study/teaching-right-level-improve-learning)’.

***[[ix]](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/%22%20%5Cl%20%22m_4173277756366121611__ednref9%22%20%5Co%20%22)***[*https://www.teachingattherightlevel.org/*](https://www.teachingattherightlevel.org/)

***[[x]](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/%22%20%5Cl%20%22m_4173277756366121611__ednref10%22%20%5Co%20%22)****Global Education Advisory Panel (2020): Collective approaches to improve global learning: what does recent evidence tell us are “Smart Buys” for improving learning in low and middle-income countries?*

[[xi]](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/%22%20%5Cl%20%22m_4173277756366121611__ednref11%22%20%5Co%20%22) UNESCO et. al ([Op Cit](http://tcg.uis.unesco.org/survey-education-covid-school-closures/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)), p. 25.

[[xii]](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/%22%20%5Cl%20%22m_4173277756366121611__ednref12%22%20%5Co%20%22) Deloitte Access Economics (2020) ‘Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on international education’.  A report prepared for the Department of Education, Skills and Employment.

[[xiii]](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/%22%20%5Cl%20%22m_4173277756366121611__ednref13%22%20%5Co%20%22) DFAT [Australia Awards Global Strategy](https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/australia-awards-global-strategy); DESE [National Strategy for International Education 2025](https://www.dese.gov.au/national-strategy-international-education).

**Lessons on generating demand for education**

A comprehensive summary and analysis of research on education policies, programs and interventions in developing countries[[26]](#footnote-26) found that the two most effective interventions to increase time in school where attendance and enrolment are suboptimal are: (1) provision of conditional cash transfers (24 studies); and (2) building new schools where local access is lacking (6 studies). Both of these interventions reduce the “cost” of attending school for students.

Promising interventions that need more evidence (only 1 to 2 studies reviewed) relate to providing information directly to students and parents in the form of school counselling and information on the returns to education; merit-based scholarships; labelled cash transfers; unconditional cash transfers; bicycles for student transportation; and matching remittances for educational purposes.

Similarly, a 2016 research paper[[27]](#footnote-27) reviewed the evidence from 223 rigorous impact evaluations of educational initiatives conducted in 56 low and middle-income countries. Key lessons derived from these studies included: (i) reducing the costs of going to school and expanding schooling options increased attendance and retention, but did not consistently increase student achievement; (ii) providing information about school quality, developmentally appropriate parenting practices, and the economic returns to schooling affects the actions of parents and the achievement of children and adolescents. A 2013 and 2015 systematic review of the interventions for improving access to education in low- and middle-income countries found that cash transfer programs have the *‘most substantial and consistent beneficial effects on school participation’* but do not appear to lead to improvements in learning achievement.[[28]](#footnote-28)[[29]](#footnote-29)

**Lessons on engaging parents/communities in school planning and management**

A 2016 review of school-based decision-making on educational outcomes found that there ‘*is a moderate positive effect on average test scores…for children in younger grade levels’* with improved school-based decision-making that engages parents and the community.[[30]](#footnote-30)

However, a 2019 systematic review of citizen participation in public service provision in low- and middle-income countries found that *‘…improving direct engagement between service users and service providers are often effective in…realizing improvements in access to services and quality of service provision’*.[[31]](#footnote-31)

**Lessons on investing in improving teacher knowledge, skills and teaching practice**

The importance of teacher quality and quality of teaching cannot be understated. This statement for the 2015 Oslo Summit on Education for Development points out that *‘ensuring that qualified, professionally trained, motivated, and well-supported teachers are available for all learners is essential for addressing today’s key education challenges in poor and rich countries alike. The quality of an education system can exceed neither the quality of its teachers nor the quality of its teaching’[[32]](#footnote-32)*

The World Bank has consistently observed that ‘teacher effectiveness is the most important school-based predictor of student learning’. [[33]](#footnote-33) The 2019 World Bank Policy Approach to Teachers draws on extensive research, pointing to the importance of investing in teachers as well as how it can be accomplished.[[34]](#footnote-34)[[35]](#footnote-35)

A critical source of evidence is DFAT’s 2015 study ‘*Investing in Teachers*’ by the Office of Development Effectiveness which analyses Australia’s own investments in improving teacher quality and the quality of teaching in developing countries. This study found that improving the quality of teaching must be part of a systematic agenda for improving the quality of education.[[36]](#footnote-36) Subsequent studies in Laos, Timor Leste and Vanuatu seek to highlight how Australian investment in teacher professional development has contributed to improved learning outcomes[[37]](#footnote-37).

A 2018 meta-analysis revealed that teacher professional development (TPD) programs that include ongoing individualized feedback have been shown to have large positive effects on teachers’ instruction, and, subsequently, on student learning outcomes.[[38]](#footnote-38)

**Lessons on effective approaches to capacity development in developing countries[[39]](#footnote-39)**

Supporting capacity development is a complex, long-term and highly political process. Individuals have skills and competencies and make decisions, use services and behave in ways that impact on the performance of organisations. Organisations have capacity and require a range of capabilities to be effective, and these capabilities are not solely technical. A whole range of important ‘soft’ capabilities – from leadership to organisational culture and incentives – contribute to capacity; sometimes an organisation or state may have the capacity to get things done but not have sufficient authority or legitimacy. According to Baser and Morgan (2008), organisations require both the capability to carry out service delivery, technical and logistical tasks, and a range of other, less tangible capabilities that allow them to remain independent, plot a strategic direction and secure a political mandate for their work. Organisations operate in a wider institutional environment that may either support or circumvent the organisation’s ability to carry out its formal goals. Institutions are the rules of the game – the formal and informal that govern society and can have a positive or negative impact on the capacity of individuals and organisations. It’s only when there is alignment across individuals, organisations and institutions that organisations are able to perform effectively. We conceptualize motivation, ability and opportunity as three interrelated but distinct antecedents of absorptive capacity[[40]](#footnote-40).

To support the process of capacity development in partner countries, DFAT has released guidance[[41]](#footnote-41) for program managers and implementing partners based on latest research, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) and DFAT’s own experience and lessons from evaluations. Aligned with these lessons DFAT has advocated for an approach that is politically aware, partner-driven, incremental, problem-focused and adaptive, summarised in the 5 steps below.

**Lessons on developing ‘knowledge to policy’ mechanisms in education systems**

Over the past 20 years, there has been a growing interest in and demand for evidence (knowledge) to inform policy and program decisions. Two important sources provide guidance on the development of ‘knowledge to policy’ mechanisms based on research and practice. One is the International Institute for Educational Planning which calls for an initial scan of the education sector (the evidence/knowledge) from which constraints and supportive factors are identified. Policy and strategy options are then developed which drive plans, budget allocations and actions. The other key resource is the World Bank’s SABER project which provides a wide range of resources, including their 2019 annual report that discusses extensively the process for using data effectively to influence education policy.[[42]](#footnote-42)

**Figure 1: Example Knowledge to Policy considerations for Education Sector in PNG**

**Data and Information**

**Recognized Accumulated Knowledge**

**‘Basket’**

**Policy**

The Value, Credibility, Accessibility, and Presentation of Knowledge affect the degree to which sources are considered

The nature of Governance, Power Structures (formal and informal) and Decision-making processes affect the use of Knowledge in Policy Development

Reliability, Validity and Integrity affect the Value of Data and Information

**Selected Evidence and Knowledge Sources**

Research (e.g., NRI)

Projects/Programs (e.g., donors)

Participatory (e.g., citizen voice)

Experiential (e.g., of stakeholders/ decision-makers)

Socio-cultural (e.g., values, beliefs)

# **C. STRATEGIC INTENT AND RATIONALE**

## C.1 POLICY AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK

While the *Papua New Guinea-Australia Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership* (CSEP) policy framework offers broad guidance for deepening bilateral cooperation, the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic has required some refocusing of this cooperation. Australia’s *Partnership for Recovery* (P4R) statement in May 2020, sought to reorient all planning and development assistance, including in PNG, to fight the COVID-19 pandemic within the context of three core action areas – health security, stability and economic recovery.

Support for education is embedded in both the CSEP and the P4R statement. The CSEP reaffirmed the commitment of both governments to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 4 – inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all.[[43]](#footnote-43) The P4R statement recognised the central role of education across all action areas; education is integral to the development of national human capital, strengthening social cohesion, promoting gender equality/social inclusion, as well as driving economic recovery.[[44]](#footnote-44)

A commitment to education for all is enshrined in all of PNG’s medium and long-term economic and social planning. This includes the PNG Vision 2050, the PNG Development Strategic Plan 2010-30, the Medium-Term Development Plan III 2018-22, the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2011 – 2030 and the NEP 2020-2029. The NEP proposes significant systems and structural reforms to the national education system.

Despite these commitments, PNG’s capacity to implement high-level policies and plans has been negatively affected by financial constraints. Since 2014, the country has had consecutive budget deficits and falling Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. In 2019 PNG recorded a Government Budget deficit equal to 4.9 percent of GDP.[[45]](#footnote-45) The recent PNG Government budget forecast a decline in real GDP of -3.5 percent in 2021 and -3.3 percent in 2022.[[46]](#footnote-46)

In addition, a recent World Bank PNG Economic Update[[47]](#footnote-47) noted that while the spread of COVID-19 had been relatively limited in PNG as of July 2020, the economy had been hit hard by the pandemic due to weaker demand and less favourable terms of trade. In June 2020, a World Bank/International Monetary Fund Debt Sustainability Assessment also found that PNG was at high risk of debt distress.[[48]](#footnote-48) This is straining the Government’s ability to meet salaries and operational costs and to fund essential services.

Clear evidence of the budget constraints has been seen in the shift from the Tuition Free Fee Education (TFFE) policy introduced in 2012 to the Government Tuition Fee Subsidy (GTFS) from 2020 onwards. In 2021, this policy requires parental contribution of 38 percent of approved tuition fees.

This deteriorating context was recognised in DFAT’s *PNG COVID-19 Response Plan (CRP)[[49]](#footnote-49)* which noted not only the disruptive effect that COVID-19 was having on education, but also predicted that many more households would be pushed into extreme poverty, further reducing their capacity to keep children in school. The ‘*Response Plan’* also noted that declining GDP and a significant fiscal deficit is affecting the Government’s ability to deliver services, including education.

## C.2 STRATEGIC FOCUS

The 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, the PNG CRP and the ELPP 2018-2022 all provide a broad strategic framework for this investment. As set out in the White Paper, supporting a stable and prosperous Papua New Guinea, including through a commitment to partner in education development, is one of our most important foreign policy objectives. The Partnerships for Improving Education (PIE) contributes to the ‘Stability’ pillar under the CRP. Specifically, the PIE Partnerships for Improving Education (PIE) investment aligns with the ELPP pillars related to Early grade education (with an increased focus on access) and also the priority that focuses on systems strengthening for NDoE, Provincial Department of Education (PDoE) and DHERST. An additional focus related to Secondary Education in line with the current ELPP outcome will be added to the PIE investment over time.

## C.3 INVESTMENT RATIONALE

**Early Grade Education:** There continues to be a high level of need for investment in early grades learning, but GoPNG is struggling to meet the full financial and capacity requirements of the proposed sector reforms. This situation has been exacerbated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Support from Australia, via the PIE investment, will be important in demonstrating ways in which critical reforms (informed by effective national and international practices) may be implemented in selected provinces, and ensuring that the evidence of effective approaches is disseminated, through a ‘knowledge-to-policy’ mechanism embedded within NDoE and the education system as a whole.

This will support NDoE’s efforts to identify and support better practice in the implementation of education sector reforms. The evidence and lessons identified will also provide significant input to policy dialogue between Government of Australia (GoA) and GoPNG, as well as between GoA and other donors in the sector.

Initial data analysis carried revealed a ‘creeping crisis’ in enrolments and retention of students[[50]](#footnote-50), particularly in the early grades.

**Geographic focus:** The process for selecting the initial two provinces (see Appendix B) took into account, among other factors, the potential they offered for demonstrating effective approaches to system level change. Through this process Enga and Sandaun were selected as target provinces. Subsequent to the initial design consultations, at the request of NDoE, additional provinces were added to ensure each geographic region is represented. The additional provinces included Central (next on the short list) and ARoB is proposed to represent the islands region.

**National Education Plan (NEP) 2020-2029:** PIE will work with NDoE and PDoE in the four target provinces to address some of the critical constraints facing implementation of the NEP, specifically in the following focus areas:

**NEP Focus Area 2 & 3: Access & Equity**

To improve access, PIE activities under Targeted Outcome 1 will seek to improve NER and retention in the early grades through engaging and incentivising families and school communities in rural/remote areas to value education and send their children to school, complementing school-based strategies outlined in the NEP. PIE will ensure strategies are inclusive of girls, CWD, children in rural/remote areas and/or in indigenous minorities.

**NEP Focus Area 4: Teachers & Teaching**

There is a significant opportunity for PIE to support and demonstrate system strengthening to address the looming teacher shortage across PNG following the introduction of the 1-6-6 structure. The development of bespoke, evidence-informed approaches to upgrading the skills and knowledge of elementary teachers will be of great interest to all provinces and NDoE.

**NEP Focus Area 7 & 8: Leadership & Partnership, Management & Administration**

PIE will support GoPNG to identify and address system blockages. This may include support for school leaders and communities to develop and implement School Learning Improvement Plans that are practical and feasible within the current resource constraints and public financial management support at national and provincial level. PIE support will support the collection and analysis of data to inform decision-making at all levels.

**Church-government partnerships:** The PIE investment offers the opportunity to demonstrate practical ways to strengthen the church-government partnership in the delivery of education services. Figures obtained by the design team indicate that 53 percent of the elementary schools and 62 percent of the primary schools in Sandaun are run by churches. In Enga, church operated schools account for 43 percent of elementary schools and 35 percent of primary schools.

The 1983 PNG Education Act calls for *“maximum involvement and co-operative effort by persons and bodies interested in education in the country “* including churches. GoPNG pays the salaries of teachers (whether in government or church-run schools) and also pays for in-service training for qualified teachers. Despite these formal arrangements, the recently approved National Churches Education Council Constitution (involving ten churches) calls for the partnership between government and the churches in education service delivery to be strengthened *“in more practical ways”.[[51]](#footnote-51)* The design process for the PIE investment has actively involved the relevant church agencies, as will the implementation arrangements. The demonstration of effective and practical approaches to strengthen collaboration in education service delivery will be of interest to provincial and national bodies of both government and churches.

**Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI):** Section G of this IDD specifically discusses the way in which the PIE investment aims to contribute to closing gaps in GEDSI, particularly in relation to improving participation in early grades education. Clearly these are high priority policy issues for the Australian aid program. However, despite PNG being a signatory to a range of international treaties[[52]](#footnote-52) and despite equality being enshrined in the PNG National Constitution and a range of legislation,[[53]](#footnote-53) gender inequality is still a major social, economic and political issue and remains prevalent in both urban and rural societies.

Similarly, although the seven national churches in PNG jointly agreed on a Theology of Gender Equality in April 2016, changes in the structure and functions of the church do not yet reflect shifts towards equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for males and females.

Clearly, greater attention needs to be given to supporting efforts to implement policies and plans. Consequently, the PIE investment has attempted to integrate practical and operational approaches to closing gaps in GEDSI across all aspects of the program.

**Secondary Education:** The provision of high quality, universal secondary education across PNG remains a high priority for the GoPNG and Australia. NER rates remain low for secondary at 18%. GPI remains low at less than 0.8 even though girls perform as well as boys as they reach the upper grades[[54]](#footnote-54). The most significant constraints relate to insufficient school infrastructure, qualified teachers especially in mathematics and science and a lack of resources.

PNGAusPartnership Secondary School (PASS) initiative was implemented from 2019 to 2021 with the aim of improving secondary school capabilities and leadership skills including people to people links between Australia and PNG. Over time, PIE will expand to include a pillar that supports PNG’s ambition outlined in the NEP to expand universal education to 13 years with an emphasis on girls’ access. This pillar will also build on the experience of the PASS initiative including recommendations from the PASS Review Report drafted in 2021 that highlighted the need to move towards a model that supports a longer-term, systems-based approach, in which lessons from implementation inform policy and systems reform.

**Other DFAT Investments:** Australia remains PNG’s largest development partner and the most significant contributor to the education sector, with support ranging from elementary school level through to tertiary level support. In addition to PASS, several other DFAT funded programs contribute directly or indirectly to PIE’s education outcomes. Some of these are coming to a close, providing valuable lessons learned while others are new and may provide opportunities for synergies in the future. This includes:

* the PPF (2017 to 2022) provided a total of AUD 63 million in Education Grants to three Non-Government Organisation (NGO) Consortia lead by Care Australia (CARE), Save the Children Fund (RISE) and World Vision (T4E) to improve early grade literacy and numeracy
* Education Support Services (ESS) provides technical advice and capacity development support to NDoE and DHERST (October 2020 to June 2022);
* Australia Awards through the provision of scholarships for teacher training in PNG and in Australia and other education related fields (on-going);
* the Incentive Fund with a high percentage of grants focused on community-based social infrastructure including school construction (ongoing);
* the Pacific Secondary Scholarship program (currently paused);
* the PNGAus Partnership Secondary Schools initiative (2019-2023) focusing on education leadership and STEM, and
* a new Child Nutrition and Social Protection Program (trialling cash transfers) to target malnutrition and stunting (to be implemented by the World Bank) to commence 2022 - 2027

In 2021, as part of the Pacific COVID-19 response package, the Australian Government provided $30 million in budget support to address the GoPNG’s fiscal shortfall in relation to the GTFS.

**Other donor work in basic education:** There are four other major donors operating in the education sector. PIE, with AHC support, will actively engage with other donors identifying opportunities to collaborate, coordinate on policy dialogue and leverage each other comparative advantage to amplify the impact of PIE’s activities and achievement of outcomes.

**GPE** approval was obtained in April 2019 for a three-year *Education Sector Plan Implementation Grant* program for early grade learning in PNG. Together with a complementary Multiplier grant that includes co-financing from the GPE and Japan, that new funding totals USD 23 million.

GPE also allocated a COVID-19 Response grant OF USD 9.4 million to PNG, via UNICEF for 2020-2021 to support distance learning, dissemination of information on health and hygiene measure, distribution of learning materials to the most vulnerable, teacher training on delivering remote lessons, a national ‘back-to-school’ campaign, handwashing stations and toilets, school hygiene kits and booster classes to bring students up to date with curriculum.

**Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)** is currently providing Papua New Guinea Kina (PGK) 14.3 million to improve the quality of teaching materials, particularly related to primary science and mathematics (Grades 3 to 6). JICA supported the development of texts and teacher guides for G3-G6 mathematics and science aligned with the standards-based curriculum. The next phase of support is expected to also focus on the pre-service curriculum for teacher training. Additionally, Japan has provided seed funding to help mobilise GPE financing for PNG.

**UNICEF** has provided USD 9.7 million to NDoE and Provincial Partners to create early learning development standards and indicators; to revise policy; to facilitate surveys; to develop curricula; train trainers, practitioners; and establish child friendly centres. UNICEF is also providing support programs, working with NDoE, provincial partners, TTU and Cheshire Disability Services to develop Child Friendly Schools. This work includes:

1. development of resource materials for community advocates to raise awareness among parents and other community members;
2. establishment of minimum operating standards for Child Friendly Schools;
3. strengthening of gender equity in the education system;
4. Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in schools;
5. addressing School-related Gender Based Violence related issues in the curriculum;
6. training on values and peace education for pre-service primary teachers in 12 teacher training colleges in a phased manner;
7. revision of school behaviour management policy and raise awareness at school and community level;
8. inclusive education, health and social inclusion for CWD in the National Capital District (NCD), Central, Autonomous Region of Bougainville (AROB) and Milne Bay Provinces; and
9. capacity building in planning, management and monitoring.

**Although the World Bank** **withdrew** from the education sector in PNG in 2016, they remain active in interrelated sectors including health, child nutrition and social protection. The READ PNG project (2011-15) worked to provide quality teacher training for teachers to improve their teaching of reading to student and the establishment of 21,000 classroom libraries. The project had a baseline (Early Grade Reading Assessment) done in four pilot provinces (NCD, Madang, Western Highlands Province and East New Britain). DFAT is working with the World Bank to re-enter the sector in the near future, providing opportunities for to leverage their expertise and coordinate on policy dialogue efforts, in particular to advocate for sufficient financing by GoPNG of the sector.

D. PROPOSED OUTCOMES AND INVESTMENT OPTIONS

## D.1 OUTCOMES AND PROGRAM LOGIC

### Long Term Goal

“Our vision is an education system that is affordable for parents and Government, that appreciates Christian and traditional values, and that prepares literate, skilled and healthy citizens, each educated and trained to their fullest potential, to contribute to the economic and social development of the nation.”(Vision Statement, NEP 2020-2029)

The PIE investment is framed by the CSEP policy framework which envisages an enduring and overarching framework for deepening bilateral cooperation across a range of sectors, including education. P4R reaffirms this commitment and recognises that education is integral to the development of national human capital, strengthening social cohesion, promoting gender equality/social inclusion, as well as driving economic recovery.

The CSEP is underpinned by “*a commitment to achieving concrete outcomes by 2030”.[[55]](#footnote-55)* This commitment presents a realistic timeline within which to place the current investment (see Figure 2 below).

Within this context, the PIE investment is planned as an eight-year, AUD 75 million investment[[56]](#footnote-56) which will be implemented in three phases: Inception Phase – six months; Phase 1 – 4.5 years; Phase 2 – three years. An independent review after 3 years and satisfactory evidence of progress towards outcomes at the end of Phase 1, will determine if a further three years’ work will be supported. Figure 2 indicates that progress towards the achievement of outcomes in the initial target provinces is expected to appear from year 3 onwards. Broader adoption/adaptation in other provinces could commence thereafter depending upon interest and absorptive capacity. On this basis, the investment may directly engage with eight to ten provinces over its lifetime.

However, commencement of operations in only four provinces is the best way to ensure that DFAT’s Value for Money principles are addressed. The proposed approach will facilitate testing and monitoring of innovative ways to address priority challenges, coupled with intensive capacity development work at national and sub-national levels. This work, including careful monitoring, analysis and dissemination of performance information, will provide a sound foundation for promoting broader adoption/adaptation of successful approaches in other provinces, as well as for policy dialogue between Australia and PNG on education policy directions.

**Figure 2: Timeline for long term change in the education sector in PNG**

Program activities

Program outcomes

Strategic Objectives

**Long Term Goal**

Support to national and sub-national stakeholders to test approaches to increase enrolment/retention and GPI; to improve teaching and learning; and to strengthen policy, systems, processes and individual capacities at national and sub-national levels.

Achievement of program outcomes provides evidence of results in addressing specific, targeted challenges, and evidence of improved practices and capabilities. Additional provinces adopt/adapt effective approaches.

Emerging evidence of systemic change in priority areas.

Broader adoption/adaptation of effective approaches occurs.

Evidence of systemic change in priority areas.

National policy and programming decisions respond to evidence channelled through education system and reinforced by AHC policy dialogue.

The goal focuses on service delivery improvements that result from initial efforts to address priority challenges, and education system reform, as well as adoption/adaptation of effective approaches by a range of provinces and national policy reform. Although the investment may contribute to this goal, this is above the ‘line of accountability’ for any individual investment.

1 – 5 years

3 – 5 years

5-8 years

10+ years

### End of Investment Outcomes

This design draws upon meta-data analysis of key education indicators (Appendix A), the results of a systematic process of consultations with national and provincial stakeholders (Appendix B) as well as national/international experience.

The design process has identified challenges requiring immediate attention. These challenges represent ‘tipping points’ which, if left unaddressed, will lead to declining service delivery. The design process has also identified a range of ‘system’ blockages which have the potential to undermine efforts to roll out the NEP.

The demand-side challenge requiring immediate attention is the *‘creeping crisis’ showing static enrolments and declining retention in the early grades:* Meta-data analysis (Appendix A) reveals that in 2019 close to 30 percent of children were not enrolling in age-appropriate levels of education. When compared to the 2009 NER, a potential stagnation of the national NER is indicated over the past two decades. This is well below the national objectives for universal basic education.

Further, analysis of (pre COVID-19) data in five provinces has revealed that 4 out of 10 students enrolled in the Preparatory level will not transition to Grade 3.

Additionally, although the national GPI from Preparatory to Grade 8 has improved over the past decade, there remain pockets of inequality, including in the targeted provinces. The GPI figures also mask lower GPI figures for enrolment and retention in the early grades.

The supply-side challenge requiring immediate attention *is the chronic shortage of qualified teachers* available to implement the new 1-6-6 structure. Provincial authorities in both Sandaun and Enga provinces reported during consultations that less than 30 percent of their elementary teachers have the necessary qualifications, knowledge or skills to teach in primary schools. As a result, this issue was identified as a high priority for attention and critical to improving early grades learning outcomes.

Finally, the limited capacity (including skills, motivation and opportunity) of the education service delivery system including limitations in the collection, analysis and use of evidence to inform decision making, has the potential to undermine all/any reform efforts in the medium term.

During consultations, both national and provincial stakeholders openly discussed a range of system ‘blockages’ which need to be investigated further during implementation. These include:

* non-availability of accurate data within the Ministry (i.e., total number of schools by sector; numbers of teachers by sector and gender; number of students by sector, gender and level of disability);
* blockages in process for development, submission and approval of provincial education plans (PEPs);
* lack of capacity, at various levels of the system, in leadership, management and administration leading, for example, to failure to complete census forms, acquittal forms, SLIPs, etc.;
* this, in turn, contributes to delays in release of funds from Waigani;
* lack of sub-national capacity contributing to failures to conduct and report on school inspections, supervise teachers, distribute learning resources, etc.;
* poor coordination leaves provincial education service providers with little or no access to the Provincial Services Improvement Program and the District Services Improvement Program[[57]](#footnote-57);
* faulty procedures for teacher registration and payment; and
* inadequate/inconsistent teacher training.

A high-level program logic is presented in graphic form in Figure 3 below, followed by a narrative description of the logic chain leading to the achievement of the end of investment outcomes (EOIO). A detailed program logic is attached as Appendix C.

**Figure 3 High Level Program Logic**



**Targeted Outcome 1:** More children (girls, boys, and children with disabilities) in the early grades enrol and stay in school in selected provinces using replicable and sustainable approaches

This outcome directly addresses the ‘creeping crisis’ in enrolment and retention of children in the early grades in target provinces. The outcome statement recognises not only the need to address this crisis in its own right, but also to address gender inequalities in enrolment and retention in the target provinces, as well as disability and social inclusion.

Three intermediate outcomes (IOs) contribute to the achievement of Targeted Outcome 1, as follows:

* 1. *Parents, community members, local government and partner agencies are more engaged to improve the enrolment and retention of children in early grades learning.*

As envisaged in PNG’s Education Act, Australia will facilitate cooperation between parents, community members, sub-national government and church education service providers to develop approaches (in targeted locations) which can demonstrate ways of halting this negative trend and increase access and equity.

**It is proposed that the investment will support the achievement of this IO during inception phase**, by working with provincial education service providers (government and church) to facilitate a collaborative approach; conducting participatory action research on key issues and identifying ways of working through local networks engaged in outreach to parents and communities.

**At the implementation phase**, it is anticipated that agreements will have been reached with education stakeholders on the type of action required to remove key barriers to enrolment/retention; appropriate local networks/implementing partners to carry out agreed actions and the type of support required by these networks from the PIE investment.

* 1. *Parents are more willing to enrol school aged children (particularly girls and children with disabilities) and keep them in school*

There is a lack of hard data available on the effect on enrolments of the government payment of tuition fees from 2012 to 2019, also on changes to the rates of enrolment following the removal of tuition free education and replacement with the GTFS in 2020.[[58]](#footnote-58)

*“There has been some decline in student enrolments due to the Governments’ shift in Policy from Tuition Fee Free education to Government Tuition Fee Subsidy. Especially children from families that don’t have regular income. Some of these families have many children and only focus on the bright or those they think will perform well in schools while giving little or no attention to children who are weak or have some form of disability.”*

**Provincial consultations 31st March, 2021**

Anecdotal evidence obtained during provincial consultations indicates that there was an increase in enrolments after the abolition of fees. Further, consultations with NDoE GESI and Callan Services for Persons with Disabilities (CSPD) personnel indicate that there was a substantial increase in enrolments of girls and CWD during the tuition free period. All respondents reported a reduction in enrolments following introduction of the GTFS, which fell most heavily on girls and CWD.

Strong evidence is available on declining incomes and increasing poverty levels in PNG. DFAT’s PNG CRP predicted that “*even if COVID-19 impacts are mild with 5 percent contraction in household consumption, about 400,000 people could be pushed into extreme poverty. Many of those would be people with disabilities.”[[59]](#footnote-59)*

These predictions were validated by a 2020 UNDP Socio-Economic Impact Assessment in PNG[[60]](#footnote-60) which found that 80 percent of households were adversely affected by the pandemic, with 60 percent of respondents experiencing significant declines in their income. Those earning less were more affected than those earning more, increasing inequality in the country. Further, 84 percent of those affected were unable to supplement their incomes with alternative means. School fee debts at the household level were common.

A 2021 Cash Feasibility and Risk Assessment carried out by Save the Children Fund (SCF] PNG across eight provinces updated these findings, reporting an average decrease in household incomes of 40 percent.[[61]](#footnote-61) Within this context, a recent World Bank report noted that “*If school fees are retained to underpin local ownership and accountability for schools, additional resources will need to reach either vulnerable families or school facilities to offset the adverse equity implications of fees. Girls are particularly vulnerable to exclusion.[[62]](#footnote-62)*

The PIE design recognizes that while there could be some improvement realized through the implementation of motivation/awareness campaign with parents and communities alone (IO1.1), efforts to improve enrolment and attendance of children in the early grades will not achieve success unless they also recognise and address the income constraints being faced by parents.

International research, as well as DFAT’s own experience, indicates that in poor and disadvantaged communities, the economic impost on families of schooling costs is one of the key barriers to enrolment and retention; this barrier effects girls more than boys.[[63]](#footnote-63) International evidence also shows that the elimination of school fees has a strong impact on the participation of girls.[[64]](#footnote-64)

**It is proposed that the investment support the achievement of this IO by setting up an AQEFA[[65]](#footnote-65) fund** **to be** **used to incentivize gender balanced and socially inclusive enrolment and retention of children in the early grades.** This fund – approximately AUD 8 million (See Appendix G) over the lifetime of the investment - would be used for ‘demonstration’ activities that will target increased participation in the early grades - enrolment and retention (targeting GEDSI issues as a priority)[[66]](#footnote-66). The design of the demonstration activities will be informed by national and international promising, fit for purpose practices and would be in direct response to provincial analysis of the participation challenges being experienced in the province. The demonstration activities would be incorporated as part of Annual Action Plans (AAP) of their PEP and over time expected to be funded by GOPNG. Rigorous monitoring of these demonstrations will be critical to feed into the knowledge-to-policy mechanism. It is proposed that the PIE Provincial Mangers take on a role in ensuring the close monitoring of these demonstration activities.

**It is further proposed that the managing contractor carry out an action-research initiative, during the Inception Phase, on the feasibility of, and approaches to, trialling a cash transfer mechanism to support enrolment/retention in targeted provinces.** The results of the action-research would guide use of the AQEFA fund to achieve gender balanced and inclusive enrolments/retention in targeted provinces during Phase 1. This action-research initiative would be required to draw upon the experience of DFAT’s Social Protection Section (with the World Bank) and to identify and work with potential partners, including NGOs and the private sector to design and implement the trial in target areas.

As outlined in the Management Section (Section E.1 below) the managing contractor would be responsible for ensuring that both the action-research and any resulting sub-contract/s to conduct a trial or trials meet DFAT policies, including necessary due diligence in relation to adequate fiduciary controls and adherence to the Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policy and Child Protection minimum standards.The Annual Plan will include provision for monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of the approach including consultation with interested external stakeholders (e.g., World Bank, Asian Development Bank).

*1.3*  *School leaders engage with parents to improve school planning, management and operations.*

Encouraging parent involvement in supporting the provision of education for their children has significant benefits, including: building positive attitudes of children to education by seeing their parents engaged in helping the school; the provision of actual and in-kind contributions for the maintenance of school facilities and grounds; provision of additional assistance to teachers, providing information on local culture and history for contextualizing lessons, among other benefits.

The NEP 2020-2029 places a strong emphasis on, and priority for, the collaborative engagement of parents – in part through parental participation on the School Boards of Management (SBoM) and perhaps more importantly in contributing to school planning, management and operations through the collaborative development of the SLIP. Parent Teacher Associations can also be mobilized to provide for organized support to the school.

**It is proposed that the investment support the achievement of this IO by supporting school leadership and strengthening the capacity of the SBoM, specifically in the collaborative and inclusive development, implementation, monitoring and adjustment of the SLIP.** This focus on the SLIP is important as it is the instrument from which annual school plans are derived, but it is also a mandatory requirement for obtaining the government fee subsidy. The NEP 2020-2029 includes an indicator that will measure the increase in the number of quality approved SLIPs as many schools either do not have SLIPs or the SLIPs that have been prepared are not approved due to low quality.

**It is proposed that the managing contractor will support the achievement of this IO during the Inception phase** by working with provincial education service providers (government and church) in order to:

* determine the quantity, and assess the quality, of available SLIPs in elementary and primary schools in targeted areas in each province;
* ascertain the major barriers for SBoMs in preparing a quality SLIP drawing on existing evidence and lessons as much as possible (e.g., through ECDF); and
* document the current type and level of contributions that are made by parents to elementary and primary schools.

At program start-up it is anticipated that, based on the work carried out during pre-inception, information will be available in respect of:

1. the type and magnitude of action required to improve the quality and quantity of approved SLIPs including political economy barriers;
2. appropriate resources (training, coaching, venues) to carry out agreed actions (e.g., qualified expertise within existing government, church or local networks); and
3. the type of support required from the PIE investment (e.g., planning and budgeting workshops, training of SBoM, coaching, support, etc.).

**Targeted Outcome 2:**  Targeted provinces are using sustainable and replicable approaches to support improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in the early grades

This outcome articulates DFAT’s commitment to the demonstration of feasible approaches to strengthening the capacity of the teaching workforce in selected provinces.

As a priority, helping the education system upgrade and retain existing teachers will be a timely response rather than waiting for an adequate supply of new graduates from teacher education colleges[[67]](#footnote-67).

*“To date many of the teachers have been deregistered as their qualifications are deemed low / unqualified by the Education Department. Many more are yet to be registered and put on pay even after teaching for more than 5 years.”*

*“Due to the above issue many schools in remote locations do not have teachers and many have closed.”*

**Provincial Consultations 1st April, 2021**

For teachers who are already in schools, there is a need for continuous improvement of their knowledge, skills and teaching practice. Strengthening the provision of in-service training and appropriate supervision to teachers will be necessary. This will require system-level support to improve or develop (where they are non-existent) the provision of in-service models including systems for planning, implementation, supervision and performance monitoring. In particular, PIE will need to support the development of tools for learning assessment, as there is currently no nationwide assessment system. As an interim measure, a simple baseline of student learning (and teacher competencies) in target provinces will be undertaken with PIE support to ascertain whether PIE interventions are successful in improving the quality of teaching and learning over the lifetime of PIE.

Currently, only a few teacher education colleges are set up to provide pre- or in-service training for the early grades. Further analysis at the provincial level will be required to determine what existing systems and processes can be built on. Specific, system level support for teacher training will be identified and supported under the Enabling Outcome 3 (IO 1) and may include support to DHERST at the national level along with service providers at the sub-national level.

The PIE budget (Appendix G) includes provision for a Teacher Upgrading Fund (TUF) of approximately AUD 23 million over the lifetime of the investment. This fund will cover the cost of activities contributing to the achievement of Targeted Outcome 2. The required support would be included in the PIE Annual Plan to guide the on-going work of the managing contractor and the provision of further inputs. In-service training programs will be reflected in PDoE AAP and provision education plans.

Three IOs contribute to the achievement of Targeted Outcome 2, as follows:

* 1. *Early grade teachers from targeted province have upgraded knowledge and skills.*

The focus of the PIE program will be to upgrade the knowledge and skills of existing elementary and primary teachers. These teachers may be transferred from elementary schools or are already appointed to teach in the early grades in primary schools. There are two primary avenues to accomplish this: 1) customized in-service training programs, based on a comprehensive needs assessment of teacher knowledge and skills and proven models[[68]](#footnote-68) (See IO 2.3) and 2) improved supervision and coaching of teachers by peers, master teachers, head teachers and education supervisors (see IO 2.2). The Australia Awards program will continue to provide support for pre-service teacher training, complementing PIE’s approach and focus on in-service training.

Customised in-service programs could be delivered via qualified teacher education colleges. These in-service programs could be offered on-site at the colleges during school breaks or via college faculty visiting locations within each district to deliver in-service programs. Other options could include distance delivery of teacher professional development programs supervised by DHERST. The managing contractor would ensure that consideration is given to a gender balance in relation to teachers trained, accommodations for people with disabilities involved and also ensure other DFAT policies and minimums standards related to Child Protection and PSEAH are integrated into interventions.

**It is proposed that the PIE investment support the achievement of this IO** in targeted provinces by initially supporting the conduct of a comprehensive assessment of the priority knowledge and skills needs (and competencies) of teachers of early grades. This could be combined with the student learning baseline (See IO 2.3). Based on this assessment, the PIE will work with NDoE and PDoEs to arrange for DHERST and appropriate providers such as teacher education colleges to design and implement customized teacher in-service programs based on proven models for early grade teachers (See 2.3). To enhance teacher pedagogy and ensure teachers are teaching students at the right level (see Box 1), in-service programs will include the upskilling of teachers on formative assessment techniques.

**During the Inception Phase,** the managing contractor will be tasked to work with NDoE, provincial education service providers (government and church), as well as DHERST and teacher colleges to:

* determine the number, location and training needs of teachers who require upgrading of their knowledge and skills and the willingness of candidates to fulfil these requirements;
* identify providers/implementing partners such as teacher colleges and faculty for the delivery of teacher in-service programming.

**At Phase 1 implementation,** it is anticipated that, based on the actions taken during inception, information will be available on:

1. the number, location, training needs and gender of teachers requiring upgrading;
2. agreement on criteria for the selection of priority teachers for accessing in-service programming;
3. the selection of implementing partners that will design and deliver in-service programming;
4. the number, location, training needs and gender of those who will support teachers to apply their new knowledge and skills; and
5. focal areas for engagement of technical assistance to improve the provision of upgrading programs for teachers and the support systems to enable the application of new knowledge and skills.

This information will form the basis for discussions on appropriate approaches and the development of in-service training programs (See 2.3).

* 1. *Early grade teachers are receiving improved support and supervision to apply their knowledge and skills of early grade teaching in the classroom.*

Appropriate supervision and coaching is needed to help teachers to apply new knowledge and skills and to continuously improve their knowledge and teaching practice. Augmenting the upgrading of the knowledge and skills of early grades teachers (IO 2.1) is the need for a parallel training and support process, whereby qualified peer teachers, master and head teachers and education supervisors will participate in training programs based on proven models to improve the effectiveness of their support to teachers in applying new knowledge and skills acquired through in-service programs. This includes the application of formative assessment techniques by teachers in the classroom.

**It is proposed that the PIE investment support the achievement of this IO** in targeted provinces by supporting the PDoE to:

* provide for ongoing supervision, coaching and support to ensure the application and continued use of new knowledge and skills in teachers’ practice;
* improve the systems for the effective support and supervision of teachers to apply new knowledge and skills.

**During the Inception Phase**, the managing contractor will be tasked to work with provincial education service providers (government and church) to:

* determine the number, location and training needs of peers, master and head teachers and education supervisors who will supervise, coach and support teachers to apply their new knowledge and skills;
* identify prospective training providers to deliver the training programs to those who will support teachers to apply their new knowledge and skills;
* assess the barriers and constraints to the systems that provide teacher upgrading and support and prioritise for improvement;
* review the systems, policies and processes for the provision of teacher in-service and professional development programs, drawing on proven models and identification of options for improving the quantity and quality of programming (e.g., coordination with teacher colleges);
* review the systems, policies, practices, processes and extent of supervision and coaching of teachers.

**At Phase 1 implementation** it is anticipated that, based on the actions taken during inception, information will be available on the following to guide implementation:

1. the number, location and training needs of peers, master and head teachers and education supervisors;
2. prospective training providers identified to deliver the training models to those who will support teachers to apply their new knowledge and skills;
3. the priority barriers and constraints to address in the systems that provide teacher upgrading;
4. the current systems, policies and processes for the provision of supervision of teaching practice and the type and level of support required for teachers to help them improve their teaching practices.
	1. *NDoE and PDoE identify effective and sustainable evidence based strategies to improve the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes*

There is already an extensive evidence base of successful models often sharing common principles to improve teaching and student learning in low resource contexts such as PNG[[69]](#footnote-69). The recent PPF has also highlighted some valuable ways of working in the PNG context, including support for children with a disability and use of *Bilum* books that could inform PIE’s investment. These approaches and principles will be drawn on to inform contextually relevant PIE supported models for upgrading teacher skills and knowledge at the provincial level.

**At Phase 1 Implementation,** the managing contractor will support participatory processes with key stakeholders at NDoE and in target provinces to discuss the information gathered during inception including: teacher knowledge and skills needs (and competencies) of teachers of early grades (IO 2.1); and status of current supervisory and support arrangements (IO 2.2) and agree on an appropriate, proven model that is feasible from a technical perspective, responds to the identified needs of teachers and has appropriate buy in from implementing partners. The managing contractor will work with appropriate implementing partners to further tailor the approaches to develop customized teacher in-service programs focused on improving foundational learning. To inform the content of the programs, the managing contractor should also consider the effect on teaching and learning of the curriculum, including the availability of learning materials. These programs might be different for different provinces based on the operating environment and resources available to ensure maximum potential for sustainability.

**During Phase 1 implementation** these programs will be rolled out in four provinces. A strong Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MERL) system that works in partnership with GoPNG will use baselines of both teacher and student competencies along with close monitoring and quick feedback loops to adapt the approaches based on what is working and changes in context. A simple baseline of student learning[[70]](#footnote-70) conducted prior to implementation (and then again at agreed mid- and end line points) will ensure the focus on teacher development is strongly linked to classroom learning. Given the absence of a national assessment system, such a baseline assessment may serve as a useful demonstration model for summative assessment that could inform national level policy and planning for a nationwide assessment system consistent with SDG Indicator 4.1.1a[[71]](#footnote-71). (See Enabling Outcome 3)

Over the lifetime of the program, successful models will be shared with other target provinces, non‑target provinces and NDoE to inform and influence relevant policies and system reform that will improve teacher training and student learning.

**Enabling Outcome 3:** Evidence of systemic change within the education sector that improves the delivery of early grades education

High performing systems tend to focus on a small number of ambitious goals, to develop capacity to

implement those goals and to encourage reflection and learning in order to expand the willingness and capability of the system to address a broader range of challenges.

While Targeted Outcomes 1 and 2 focus on specific crises currently challenging the education system, Enabling Outcome 3 focuses on the importance of supporting education service providers to use the experience of addressing these crises to improve the overall ‘health’ of the education system.

The NEP is a results-focused plan. However, provincial consultations carried out during the preparation of this design demonstrate quite clearly that the improved planning at the national level is not being converted into improved effectiveness in education service delivery. There is limited capacity at the provincial level to carry out the functions related to education as assigned by the national government.[[72]](#footnote-72)

Without deliberate problem analysis and targeted capacity development of local leaders, staff, systems and procedures, as well as the development of effective monitoring of performance and feedback loops to decision-makers, the aspirations of the NEP will be difficult to achieve.

Enabling Outcome 3 articulates the intent to support system owners (national and provincial) to identify and diagnose system weaknesses and to improve their capacity to address issues and deliver education services.

Three IOs contribute to the achievement of Enabling Outcome 3, as follows:

* 1. *In priority areas of early grade education reform key actors in NDoE, PDoE, DHERST and other relevant departments have capability to coordinate with stakeholders, diagnose and address system weaknesses.*

**During the Inception Phase, the managing contractor will support a participatory problem analysis[[73]](#footnote-73) process** (ideally led by partners) within selected sections of NDoE and within the four target provinces**.** The aim would be to support the system owners (NDoE, provincial, district and local governments, as well as church service providers) to identify the problems and causal factors, breaking down the problem into a manageable set of focal areas for engagement, including (but not limited to) capacity impediments within the system which may inhibit the achievement of reforms. Jointly deconstructing issues builds trust and a shared understanding of why certain issues are important. An indicative list of system weaknesses was listed in Section D1 (p.30). To refine this list (or identify new issues) and find a starting point for PIE’s support, a process of prioritisation needs to take place that focuses on those specific issues where it is both technically and politically possible for results to be achieved. Indicative areas include support for planning and budgeting to maximise the reach of limited domestic resources available to the sector, a student assessment system to inform policy and planning and systems strengthening for continuous professional development of teachers in the early grades. In deciding what solutions will be used to resolve the issues, PIE technical support should ensure consideration is given to existing local practices or ideas, technical ‘good practices’ that have worked well in similar contexts and a variety of approaches that attack the problem from several directions. This will ensure any approaches that have already been demonstrated to be political possible in the PNG political or cultural context and/or other low resource environments are not overlooked.

These participatory processes will inform the development of Activity Support Plans for agreed priorities which will, in turn, provide the framework for the provision of any inputs from the PIE investment (i.e., long-term and short-term technical assistance, coaching, training). The baseline and targets of these Activity Support Plans will also form the basis for monitoring the quality and contribution of PIE inputs.

**By Phase 1 Implementation Activity Support Plans will have been completed for the four provinces for agreed priority areas** and PIE support can commence in accordance with the requirements of those plans.

* 1. *In priority areas of early grade education reform key actors in PDoE improve collection, collation, validation, and analysis of data in targeted provinces, districts and schools.*

One of the main mechanisms underpinning systemic reform is support for educators to generate, analyse, exchange and discuss data as the basis for evidence-based decision making. Both the MERL Plan (Appendix E) and the budget allocated to its implementation (approximately 10 percent of the activity operations; 5 percent of the total budget) reflect a strong emphasis on the centrality of performance monitoring, as well as upon the development of stakeholder approved mechanisms for learning from experience and sharing evidence to influence decision-making on policy, programming (national level) and adoption / adaptation (provincial level).

**It is proposed that the investment will support the achievement of this IO starting in the Inception Phase.** The managing contractor will work with sub-national stakeholders to carry out a situational analysis:

* review and analyse the type and extent of data being collected for relevance to decision-making at the provincial and national levels; and
* document and critically review the processes for data collection, collation, validation and analysis at sub-national levels drawing on any existing reviews.

**At Phase 1 Implementation** the managing contractor would support GoPNG officials with a problem analysis process focused on the MERL system at the national and sub-national levels to be carried out. Using similar participatory processes as outlined in 3.1, an Activity Support Plan for interventions in priority areas would be drafted. This Plan will, in turn, provide the framework for the provision of any inputs from the PIE investment (i.e., long-term and short-term technical assistance, coaching, training).

*3.3 In priority areas of early grade education reform key actors in NDoE (Research and Evaluation Division) have enhanced capability to analyse data and use performance information (specifically from targeted provinces) to inform policy and planning services of NDoE (Policy and Planning Division).*

Even if appropriate data is collected, analysed and disseminated to relevant stakeholders, there needs to be an expectation and requirement that the performance information products will be communicated, discussed and considered to inform policy, strategies, plans and programs. During the design process, examples were provided that indicate that performance information is not being used as effectively as needed to effect improvements in the education system. One example is the LEG; while its objectives include the intent to *use* performance information, the LEG has tended to limit its activities to information sharing. A PIE supported baseline of student learning and teacher competencies will serve as a useful diagnostic for further analysis and ongoing monitoring, with a view to inform policy and planning including the development of a nationwide student assessment system over time.

**During the Inception Phase** the managing contractor will work with relevant NDoE stakeholders to:

* document and review the current processes for investigating and acting upon the implications of emerging performance information and analysis to modify policy and planning; and
* identify potential areas for process improvements and provide recommendations for PIE support, including potential changes in structures and processes for policy and planning to ensure inclusion of relevant evidence and analysis arising from implementation experiences at the sub-national level.

**At Phase 1 implementation** the managing contractor will facilitate a participatory diagnostic assessment of the capacity of NDoE units/stakeholders with functional responsibility for policy and planning in priority areas would be carried out. This assessment will provide a baseline of the capacity of the relevant units/individuals with functional responsibilities in this area along with other system weaknesses to be addressed. Support for priority areas where it is both technically and politically possible for results to be achieved (along with baselines) will be included in an Activity Support Plan for PIE work with NDoE and sub-national agencies and will be guiding the framework for the provision of any inputs from the PIE investment (i.e., long-term and short-term technical assistance, coaching, training).

D.2 DELIVERY APPROACH

**Consideration of modalities for PIE and potential linkages**

An analysis of Australia’s past investments in sector and their performance has informed the decision to use a managing contractor to implement PIE.

Working through an NGO consortia in PFF highlighted some effective approaches to improving learning, however, they were unable to be sustained by GoPNG. GoA was also unable to pursue a policy dialogue agenda with NDoE without access to timely performance information and analysis of the enabling environment. The Direct Financing Support (DFS) was Australia’s main aid modality for supporting improvements in education services in PNG from 2011 to 2016. Significant support was provided for school infrastructure up until 2016,[[74]](#footnote-74) and while this contributed to improved enrolments, DFAT discontinued this approach as it was assessed by DFAT as no longer generating the return on investment commensurate with spend given the escalating costs of construction and the greater success of the Tuition Fee Free policy in improving enrolments. School infrastructure is meant to account for 20 per cent of SIP funds, a contribution to the sector that Australia does not want to displace.

As mentioned under Investment Rationale, other DFAT and donor programs will be leveraged to create efficiencies and amplify the impact of PIE activities. The PNG Incentive Fund might be an option for providing priority infrastructure support to PIE in the future that cannot be met by SIP funds. The Economic Governance and Inclusive Growth (EGIG) Partnership offers PIE further options for public financial management support to the sector. Drawing on lessons learned from DFS, the trialling of targeted budget support for GTFS in 2021 as part of the COVID-19 recovery package will inform whether this modality can be used in the future to complement PIE’s approach in the sector.

While DFAT has supported direct education service delivery in PNG in the past, it is clear that without working with and through existing, mandated service delivery mechanisms, the short-term gains often offered by direct service delivery cannot be sustained and system owners learn little that can be applied within their organisational context and constraints.

**PIE’s focus and approach**

Given the fluidity and complexity of the PNG context, further exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19, PIE will remain highly flexible, iterative, adaptive and evidence based. PIE outcomes will be pursed through adaptive programming and management approaches so Australian support can leverage entry points and maximise momentum for positive change in priority areas as they arise. With a politically informed outlook, PIE will exploit opportunities to nudge the system in the right direction through piloting, demonstrating the efficacy of, as well as supporting scaling of more effective ways of working in the education sector.

The PIE will provide fit for purpose support to education stakeholders, both on the demand and supply sides, to improve education service delivery. With limited funds available, Australia is focusing initially on the early grades with a focus on girls and children with a disability, recognising that is where there is the potential for the best return on our investment[[75]](#footnote-75). Following meta-data analysis and extensive stakeholder consultations, the design process has identified immediate challenges which, if left unaddressed, will be ‘tipping points’ leading to declining levels and quality of service delivery. The design process has also identified a range of ‘system’ blockages which have the potential to undermine all/any reform efforts in the medium and long term.

The demand-side challenge requiring immediate attention relates to static enrolments and declining retention in the early grades. The supply-side challenge requiring immediate attention is the looming teacher shortage in the early grades. The ‘system’ blockages with the potential to inhibit the achievement of medium to long term NEP outcomes are outlined in Section D.1 above.

**Working in and through government systems**

While the PIE will use a managing contractor model, every attempt will be made to integrate the work of the contracted entity with NDoE, DHERST and PDoE people, systems and networks. This will be achieved in a number of ways.

First, ***placement of the Team Leader and MERL adviser position within NDoE.*** While a separate managing contractor office will provide useful benefits for mobilising and supporting long and short-term advisers (LTAs and STAs), NDoE has strongly expressed their view that placement of the Team Leader and MERL positions within NDoE will improve relations with NDoE staff and improve the effectiveness of these positions. NDoE has also indicated that space can be made available for these positions. Embedding these positions in NDoE will provide Australian High Commission (AHC) with direct insight into efforts to roll-out the NEP and a mechanism for determining where and when to engage to influence policy choices.

Second, ***placement of Provincial Managers/Activity Support Coordinators in the PDoE offices in targeted provinces.*** Again, this role will be supported by the managing contractor, but based in the provincial offices in targeted provinces to improve both the development of relationships and the effectiveness of their support. The two initial targeted provinces have indicated that space is available to accommodate these positions. However, additional support (e.g., computers, etc.) will be required from PIE. Further discussions will be required with the additional two provinces.

Third, ***establishment of separate managing contractor office to provide support to long- and short-term technical advisers and facilitate a range of inputs to NDoE and the PDoEs.*** This office will recruit, supply and (jointly) monitor and report upon the work of long and short-term personnel. LTA and STA inputs would be coordinated and supervised by the Team Leader and be supplied within the context of agreed PIE Activity Support Plans, consolidated into PDoE/NDoE approved AAP.

Fourth, ***the managing contractor sub-contracting implementing partners such as NGO and/or church agencies*** ***to trial demand-side approache*s** to increasing gender balanced, disability and socially inclusive enrolment/retention of children in the early grades.

**A focus on whole system strengthening**

At start-up and throughout implementation the consistent delivery approach, across all outcome areas, will be upon ‘whole system’ strengthening. Figure 4, below demonstrates, in graphic form, how work across all outcome areas forms part of a coherent strategy for ‘whole system’ strengthening.**Figure 4: Program Strategy - Improving Early School Education (PIE)**

**Whole system strengthening results in improved equity in the attainment of quality basic education. This refers to immediate benefits (aggregate results) as well as increased functional capacity and sustainability of the whole system to deliver these services in the medium and long term, even in the face of conflict, reducing risk and** **building resilience**.

1. Creating the foundations for change
* ***Understanding the problem***: Baseline research
* ***Understanding current responses***: Mapping current government, church and international donor responses.
* ***Building government / church / community commitment***to working together to develop a strong and integrated system of response to improve access (NEP2), equity (NEP 3), teachers and teaching (NEP4) and partnership and management (NEP 7 & 8)

C. Preparation

* ***Building partnerships***

(Provincial and local level government and church education stakeholders)

* ***Conducting / reviewing organisational / system capacity***
* ***Building understanding*** *of proven models and key approaches and methodologies to build capacity.*

E. Piloting approaches

* Support to selected provinces to develop effective approaches to improving access, equity, teachers and teaching and local management and partnership.
* Supporting demand-side activities to remove barriers to enrolment and retention.
* Supporting supply-side activities to upgrade teacher knowledge and skills.
* Testing implementation monitoring tools (*what works and what does not?)*

D. Enabling Partners

***Capacity development****:*

* Leadership
* Staff
* Systems
* Procedures
* Data Management

***Whole system development****:*

Assisting government and church education service providers to improve the effectiveness of their systems, as well as their networks and inter-agency engagement, collaboration, learning and growth.

***AQEFA Fund:***

Creating space for local creativity and innovation to improve gender balanced and socially inclusive enrolment and retention.

***TU Fund:*** working with teachers colleges where appropriate

F. System Improvement

Government, churches and communities demonstrating capacity to address priority issues:

* Capability to commit and engage
* Capability to carry out management and supervisory functions
* Capability to carry out technical, service delivery and logistical tasks.
* Capability to relate as part of a collaborative, systematic approach to deliver equitable educational services.
1. Design, innovation and adaptive management
* Continued use of baseline study results.
* Application of agreed principles of organisation development and management, and agreed approaches to building organisational and individual capacity.
* Monitoring and evaluation including (i) progress monitoring with tight feedback loops; (ii) periodic outcome monitoring and (iii) independent strategic monitoring.

G. School aged children in selected provinces have equal access to education, and the support of well-trained teachers and schools to enable quality learning to take place.

### *Each element of the strategic approach – A.B.C.D.E.F.G –*

*will have an underpinning, agreed approach and methodology*

*which reflects both pre-existing knowledge and experience,*

*as well as the demands of the development context.*

*All stakeholders will need to understand what is being attempted and why.*

*And they will need to be committed to the approach/es.*

E. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS



## E.1 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The approach to governance and management of the PIE is based upon two key lessons:

1. both the quality of decision-making and the probability of effective implementation are increased if donor support programs work with and through existing, local governance mechanisms; and
2. the GoA has a comparative advantage in terms of its long-term engagement in the education sector and commitment to regular, on-going policy dialogue with NDoE on key issues effecting education service delivery.

The governance and management arrangements attempt to incorporate both of these lessons. The governance and management arrangements for the PIE investment seek to maintain a clear delineation between the responsibilities of GoPNG to improve early education outcomes and Australia’s role in supporting these efforts. This approach not only maintains clarity around responsibilities and accountabilities within the context of this investment, but also facilitates monitoring of *both* results achieved by GoPNG agencies *and* Australia’s contribution to the achievement of those results.

Figure 5 (national level) and Figure 6 (provincial level) present a graphic representation of the way in which the PIE will work with and through the government systems. The approach will involve:

* ***placement of the Team Leader and MERL Positions within NDoE*** (most likely working with the DepSec Policy and Corporate Services);
* ***placement of Provincial Manager/Activity Coordinator Positions in PDoE offices***
* ***establishment of separate managing contractor office*** tasked withrecruiting, supplying and (jointly) monitoring and reporting upon the work of long and short-term personnel, and supervising the work of sub-contractors and grant management; and
* **LTA and STA inputs,** **including the GEDSI role**, supplied via the managing contractor would be coordinated and supervised by the Team Leader and be supplied within the context of agreed strategies and plans co-designed with education stakeholders. These would be reflected in AAPs (within NDoE sections and targeted provinces) and, ultimately, consolidated into a PIE Annual Plan guiding the inputs to be provided by the managing contractor. This would be approved by DFAT. Implementation would be monitored in accordance with DFAT’s normal accountability standards ensuring adherence to polices on Environment Safeguards, Child Protection and PSEAH. Quality assessments (e.g., of the performance of individual TA) would be jointly carried out with education stakeholder partners and reported to DFAT in due course.

**NATIONAL LEVEL** (Figure 5)

At the national level, support is provided by Australia through a managing contractor. The intent of the design is for the external inputs to *respond to* identified problems and support co-designed solutions where it is both technically and politically possible for results to be achieved. The agreed priorities and PIE inputs will be outlined in Activity Support Plans showing alignment with the priorities and functional needs reflected in the NEP 2020-2029 and other plans as approved by the National Executive Council.

The support required at the national level will be operationalised via an AAP which will guide the provision of all inputs. The approach for formulating the AAP, depicted in Figure 5, meets the requirement to work within government systems but also to ensure that DFAT’s accountability standards are met.

All technical advisers will receive oversight and guidance from the Team Leader, a position which is embedded in NDoE and aligned with appropriate Deputy Secretaries in the NDoE and DHERST.

Figure 5 also shows the key functional areas within the NDoE which will engage with, and provide direction to, the investment.

A Joint Steering Committee will be established to govern PIE similar to other PNG-Australia Partnership investments. The Terms of Reference, including the membership, will be developed between AHC and GoPNG.

There is an expectation that the AHC and the Secretaries of NDoE and DHERST will engage in regular dialogue concerning education in general and, on occasion, on issues emerging out of the performance monitoring of the PIE investment. Evidence of effective approaches supported by the PIE will be channelled to AHC, via the managing contractor, and strengthen Australia’s ability to engage in policy dialogue with GoPNG on key issues effecting the sector.

AHC will also continue to engage with NDoE through the multi-stakeholder Local Education Group (LEG) on education policy issues and continue to co-chair the Education Donor Partners Coordination Committee (EDPaCC).

**Government of PNG**

**Australia Support**

 **NDoE Secretary**

**Australian High Commission (DFAT)**

 GOVERNANCE

**Figure 5: Governance and Management Arrangements - National Level**

Deputy Secretary,

Policy and Corporate Services

 MANAGEMENT

First Assistant Secretary, Policy and Research

Deputy Secretary,

Schools and Education Standards

First Assistant Secretary, Provincial Services

 **DHERST Secretary**

Key NDoE Positions

 Teaching Service Commission

**Top Management Team**

First Assistant Secretary, Teacher Education and Standards

 Assistant Secretary,

Policy and Planning

* **ANNUAL PLANS**
* **PROGRESS MONITORING**
* **EVALUATION**

 Assistant Secretary, Research and Evaluation

 LONG-TERM ADVISERS FOR:

* MONITORING AND EVALUATION
* GEDSI / ACCESS / RETENTION
* PROVINCIAL MANAGERS/ACTIVITY COORDINATORS
* SHORT-TERM ADVISERS
* FUND MANAGEMENT
* OPERATIONAL SUPPORT (training programs, workshops, meetings)

 TEAM LEADER

**MANAGING CONTRACTOR**

**PROVINCIAL LEVEL** (Figure 6)

At the provincial level, support is provided by Australia through the managing contractor. Support will involve:

* *placement of Provincial Managers or Activity Coordinators in the PDoE offices in targeted provinces;*
* *capacity development support* to government/church education service providers following a participatory problem analysis process and the development of Activity Support Plans (incorporating support required by functional units/individuals within the Provinces) for agreed priority areas. The support to be provided must align with the PEPs approved by the Provincial Education Boards in each targeted province and will be reviewed at the national level against the priorities of the NEP 2020-2029;
* *sub-contracting, monitoring and oversight of appropriate partner agency/ies* to work at community level to enhance gender balanced and socially inclusive enrolment and retention in the early grades. This will involve deployment of motivators/awareness raisers at the community level (via a sub-contracted entity) and trialling of a cash transfer mechanism for poor families (via a sub-contracted entity).

A PIE Technical Working Group will be established in each of the PIE target provinces. This will include representation from the Provincial Education Office, the Provincial Education Adviser, the PIE Provincial Manager. In addition, district representatives and relevant implementing partners will be invited as appropriate or agreed with PDoE. These meetings will be held monthly or as otherwise agreed with PDoE. These meeting will be guided by a Terms of Reference developed in partnership with PDoE.

As is the case with support to NDoE, the intent of the design is for the managing contractor to *respond to* approved plans of government for support assistance, which may be provided through technical assistance (both long and short-term), fund management (AQEFA and TUF), facilitation of training programs, workshops, meetings and MERL activities.

The PIE Provincial Managers will engage directly with the PDoE through the office of the Provincial Education Adviser (PEA) and through the PEA to other education officials at the provincial government and district levels. Considering the role and function of the department of Community Development and Religious Affairs of the provincial government in influencing family participation in education, they have also been identified as a key stakeholder and contributor to planning processes. District level engagement will also be required as directed by the PDoE and the PEA.

Figure 6 also demonstrates the important role and contributions that churches make to education service delivery and they are reflected as a full partner in improving the quality of early grades learning. While the government has the legislative authority for the provision of education services, churches are recognized as a full partner in education in PNG.

The support required at the provincial level will be operationalised via an AAP which will guide the provision of all inputs. The AAP meets the requirement to work within government systems but also to ensure that DFAT’s accountability standards are met.

**Government of PNG**

**Australia Support**

 **Provincial Administrator**

**Australian High Commission (DFAT)**

 GOVERNANCE

**Figure 6: Governance and Management Arrangements - Provincial Level**

Provincial Education Adviser

Provincial Education Directors and Inspectors

 MANAGEMENT

Teacher Colleges

Provincial Education Management Team

Church Education Secretary

Provincial Community Development Team

Church Education Officials

 District Officials

* **ANNUAL PLANS**
* **PROGRESS MONITORING**
* **EVALUATION**

 Targeted LLGs/Schools

 Targeted Schools

 LONG-TERM ADVISERS FOR:

* MONITORING AND EVALUATION
* GEDSI / ACCESS / RETENTION
* PROVINCIAL MANAGERS

 TEAM LEADER

(& PROVINCIAL MANAGERS)

**MANAGING CONTRACTOR**

* SHORT-TERM ADVISERS
* FUND MANAGEMENT
* OPERATIONAL SUPPORT (training programs, workshops, meetings)

## E.2 PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT AND POLICY DIALOGUE

DFAT is keen to see enhanced communications and political engagement between AHC and NDoE/ Provincial administrations within the context of a more cohesive approach to Australia’s support for the education sector and comprehensive monitoring performance.

A detailed Policy Dialogue Matrix is attached as Appendix D.

The matrix envisages an increased, and increasingly focused, role for the Minister Counsellor, supported by the Head of Mission as appropriate. The intent is for this dialogue to:

1. reinforce and strengthen progress towards the achievement of the EOIO; and
2. draw upon diagnostics and analysis being produced by the managing contractor at national and sub-national levels to improve the opportunities for AHC to engage in evidence-based dialogue.

For example, under Targeted Outcome 1, AHC will have access to robust data analysis within the target provinces on enrolment and retention, as well as the equality of access of girls and CWD. The PIE will also provide AHC with evidence of progressive improvements in gender equal and socially inclusive enrolments and retention and the reasons for improvements.

Under Targeted Outcome 2, the managing contractor will provide AHC with robust data on teacher skills and knowledge and priority upgrading requirements across the target provinces as well as the support systems to help teachers to apply new knowledge and skills. This, coupled with advice from the managing contractor, will provide an opportunity for the AHC to facilitate improved dialogue between DHERST, the Teaching Service Commission and NDoE.

Under Enabling Outcome 3, the Team Leader and the Provincial Managers/Activity Coordinators will work with the NDoE and provincial education service providers to identify problems and assess their capacity to implement current government policies. The AHC may then build upon these analyses to engage in dialogue with NDoE and DHERST on the realism of the pace of change anticipated by the NEP and the type and nature of capacity development required to implement existing policies and plans.

The work under the PIE investment will also provide a platform for AHC to advocate for the practice of ‘evidence-informed’ decision making, as well as the importance of enhancing collaboration between, and among, different agencies, levels of government and church education service providers.

Finally, the MERL Adviser will work to strengthen the alignment of the PIE MERL system with the NEP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF) and to develop methods for capturing Australia’s specific contribution to the achievement of NEP outcomes. While this serves DFAT’s purposes, monitoring the effectiveness of approaches being trialled under PIE fits neatly into what the NEP MEF refers to as ‘*Implementation Monitoring’.* The sub-national administrations are required to do this monitoring – determining what works and what doesn’t and advising NDoE – but to date there has been limited capacity to do this.

Capturing information in this space will have significant public diplomacy benefits for Australia. First, this work will demonstrate Australia’s commitment to supporting and strengthening government MERL systems. Second, it will be possible to produce and disseminate information products which DFAT can use when discussing Australia’s specific ‘value add’ to strengthening early grades education in PNG.

## E.3 SUSTAINABILITY

The design acknowledges the limited fiscal capacity of the PNG Government to support the delivery of education services across the country, a situation that is likely to continue for some time. As a result, heightened consideration has been given to identifying and assessing approaches and opportunities for benefits of the investment to be sustained beyond the completion of the program. These considerations have resulted in the investment design requiring:

* **alignment and support of existing government priorities and plans** specifically the NEP 2020-2029 and PEPs; this is demonstrated by the alignment of the design’s proposed program logic with the NEP’s focus areas, objectives and indicators;
* **engagement and active participation of key stakeholders throughout the design process,** as outlined in AppendixB;
* **working** **with existing government and church education service provider systems** and avoiding the introduction of parallel governance structures and processes; assigned technical assistance will work alongside those responsible for the functions targeted for improvement;
* **a focus on capacity building of critical systems within the education sector** to enable improvements in service delivery and management decision-making, including: effective support to parents, communities and schools to ensure participation of all children; teacher development and support; and ‘knowledge to policy’ processes. Improvement in these critical systems will outlast the duration of the investment;
* **preparation and approval of sustainability assessments and plans** prior to activity implementation; and
* **regular and independent review of performance** of all program activities to determine the on-going relevance and effectiveness of PIE support and activities.

The above efforts will maximise the likelihood of PIE supported activities being embedded within NDoE and provincial administrations (Enabling Outcome 3) and the likelihood of a significant cadre of teachers having their knowledge and skills upgraded in order to improve early grades education in targeted provinces (Targeted Outcome 2). The proposed ‘feedback loop’ to the national level and other provinces also increases the likelihood of effective approaches having an influence on central policies and programming and/or of other provinces adopting/adapting successful approaches.

While all of the above efforts will maximise the likelihood of enduring benefits from the implementation of Targeted Outcome 2 and Enabling Outcome 3, more detailed and careful attention has been given by the design team to mechanisms for sustaining the benefits arising under Targeted Outcome 1. In this case, the design team attention has looked beyond the mere issue of benefits enduring for individual children, families and communities. The design team’s attention has also turned to the question of how effective *approaches* may be sustained. Two approaches are critical.

**Community motivation/awareness raising on enrolment/retention of early grades children:**

As discussed in Section D – *Proposed Outcomes and Investment Options* - it is proposed that existing church networks be supported to carry out motivation/awareness raising activities amongst parents and communities to enrol school-aged children and to keep them at school.

For example, the Family Life Mission of the PNG Catholic Church already deploys Family Life Coordinators in every village; this network has the potential to have a significant positive impact on enrolment/retention if adequately trained and supported.

Dialogue with church agencies during the design process revealed openness to strengthening the motivational/awareness raising role of these networks. During the Inception Phase, the Team Leader would take these discussions further to the point of preparing partners to enter into formal agreements.

While the PIE may provide these networks with training and support to carry out the work in the target provinces during the lifetime of the investment, these networks will continue to exist after the investment concludes. Moreover, if the motivational/awareness raising work is perceived to be valuable by the church networks and communities they serve, these networks have a range of options available for receiving on-going funding from international church donors.

**Action research into mechanisms for incentivising gender balanced and socially inclusive enrolments:** The evidence reviewed, as well as the results of consultations, indicate that motivation/awareness raising will not significantly influence enrolments/retention unless it is recognised that low-income families simply cannot afford to enrol and keep their children in school - or certainly not their girl children or CWD.

The evidence is clear that school fees have a strong negative impact on the participation of girls and CWD. While there is no disputing the evidence, the question of *how* to incentivise enrolment/retention requires considerable further work.

During the Inception Phase the managing contractor will be tasked to carry out an action-research initiative, to explore the feasibility of, and approaches to, trialling a cash transfer mechanism to support enrolment/retention in targeted provinces. The results of the action-research would guide use of the AQEFA fund to achieve gender balanced and inclusive enrolments/retention in targeted provinces during Phase 1.

# **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

## F.1 MERL APPROACH

It is important to recall *what* changes the PIE investment is aiming to achieve and *how* these changes are expected to occur as this determines the appropriate MERL approach.

The PIE investment will work at the sub-national level, in four provinces (Sandaun, Enga, Central and ARoB). As envisaged in the PNG Education Act 1983, the investment will recognise the importance of engaging a broad range of education system stakeholders including parents, community members, churches, local government and partners. The investment will support the development of effective approaches to address two major challenges to the achievement of early grades learning outcomes, namely, static enrolments/declining retention in the early grades and low skilled teachers.

In parallel, the PIE investment will support and help build NDoE address system weaknesses and improve their capacity to capture, analyse and use sub-national performance information (particularly evidence arising from implementation of the program in the targeted provinces) to enhance the functionality and sustainability of the education system. This information will also be utilised to enhance policy dialogue between NDoE and AHC on education service delivery.

With Australia’s assistance, NDoE’s Education Management Information System (EMIS) captures information on *what* is being achieved, referred to in the NEP as ‘results-based monitoring’[[76]](#footnote-76). This includes information, for example, on enrolments and retention of early grade students, as well as percentage of teachers with qualifications, pupil teacher ratios, teachers access to in-service training and so on.

However, the EMIS is not able to provide dynamic information about *how* progress is (or is not) being achieved and to identify impediments to the achievement of outcomes. This type of monitoring, referred to in the NEP as ’Implementation Monitoring[[77]](#footnote-77)’ is in an early stage of development.

Australia will continue to support the development of the EMIS. In addition, the ‘value-add’ of the investment level MERL system must be continuous monitoring and provision of information on, for example, the links between:

* measures to pro-actively engage parents and improve enrolments and retention;
* measures to specifically encourage the enrolment and retention of girl children and changes in the school level GPI; and
* measures to strengthen local education leadership (at district, community and school levels) and improved quality of SLIPs.

These changes would not be expected to happen quickly (see Figure 2); however desired changes can be facilitated by participatory processes to diagnose problems and support for politically informed solutions. For example, by placing technical support in NDoE, working directly with a senior NDoE official and informing the work of NDoE’s Research and Evaluation Division, PIE has the opportunity to assist and guide NDoE to not only periodically monitor the process and results of implementing key policy directives, but also to improve institutional performance in real time, what is referred to from DFAT’s perspective, as a ‘continuous improvement’ approach.

## F.2 MERL PLAN

A MERL Framework at Design, including an embryonic Performance Assessment Framework, is attached as Appendix E. This Plan does *not* set out a complete MERL system but provides the basis for developing such a system. During the Inception Phase, a MERL Adviser would be tasked to develop this MERL Framework into a full MERL system. This system would comprise performance indicators, detailed methodology, implementation responsibilities, timelines and budget and should be prepared in accordance with DFAT’s latest M&E Standards. The MERL System developed during the Inception Phase will be ready for use at the commencement of Phase 1.

In developing the full MERL system the following points should be taken into account:

The **primary audiences** for the information products will be NDoE; AHC; targeted provincial administrations; provincial education service providers (government and church); as well as district and school personnel actively engaged in demonstration trials. The **secondary audiences** for the information products will be non-targeted provinces interested in the results of demonstration trials, as well as other donors working in the education sector.

The **purpose** of MERL for the PIE investment is to:

* *support evidence-based decision making***:** To provide accurate and reliable evidence that enables decision makers to continually adapt to maximise the extent to which the investment achieves the outcomes;
* *enable learning***:** To enable the managing contractor (Team Leader and Provincial Teams) and the NDoE to learn which activities, approaches and techniques prove to be most effective in improving access and equity (NEP Focus Areas 2 and 3); Teaching and Learning (NEP Focus Areas 4 and 5) and Partnership and Management (NEP Focus Areas 7 and 8);
* *provide accountability* for funds spent.

The **principles** underpinning the MERL system for the PIE investment are:

* *shared responsibility* between stakeholders in reporting against work schedules and budgets;
* *building upon existing MERL arrangements;* the indicators identified for results-based monitoring of progress will be those identified in the NEP MERL Framework; in addition, the MERL Adviser will work with the provincial teams and NDoE Research and Evaluation Division to agree on appropriate ways and means to measure *how* progress towards the achievement of outcomes is achieved;
* *provision of MERL technical support* to NDoE to both strengthen their approach to monitoring and to ensure that the nature, as well as the performance and quality, of Australia’s contribution is monitored; and
* *MERL reflects DFAT’s monitoring and evaluation standards*.[[78]](#footnote-78)

The **focus of the MERL system** will be to monitor performance and quality at each of the cause/effect levels in the change pathways in the program logic (i.e., leading to Outcomes 1, 2 and 3). In addition, the system will monitor the continuing validity of the theory of change (ToC) underpinning these change pathways and underlying assumptions. These are discussed in Appendix E. The focus of monitoring at each level of the program logic, for each change pathway, is described below. Each level of monitoring feeds into the next level:

* **Input Level:** Focused on tracking input indicators in all areas (e.g., funds allocated, use of resources in accordance with annual plans and budgets, in-country logistical support, DFAT policy dialogue efforts, strategic and management oversight).
* **Output Level:** This will track attainment of the specified outputs under each of the change pathways, measure the efficiency of implementation and analysing risks.

*For the Targeted Outcome 1 pathway*: Australia’s ‘value add’ at this level will be evidence gathering, research and analysis to inform the development of approaches/mechanisms to motivate and incentivise disadvantaged families/communities to enrol their children (particularly girls and CWD) in school and keep them there.

Appropriate implementing agencies will be identified, sub-contracted and supervised to carry out this work. Finally, the value add under Targeted Outcome 1 will be the running of workshops, training and coaching, in accordance with the AAP.

*For the Targeted Outcome 2 pathway:* Research and analysis will identify the most appropriate response to address teacher upskilling in each target province, as well as the barriers and constraints to the system for teacher upskilling and continuous professional development. A key output will be a teacher upgrading implementation plan (including throughput, timeline, budget and management) developed in collaboration with provincial administrations, and DHERST. If appropriate, a Teacher College faculty upgrading implementation plan will also be developed in consultation with DHERST.

Drawing on proven models the managing contractor will undertake baselines (and later end-lines) of both teacher competencies and student learning[[79]](#footnote-79) followed by support to improve the skills and knowledge for selected teachers, as well as a teacher professional development information system.

Barriers to female teachers’ participating will be identified and addressed through an Advocacy and Incentives Plan that is contextually relevant for each province.

*For the Enabling Outcome 3 pathway:* The managing contractor will support the development of Activity Support Plans for agreed priorities within selected sections of NDoE, as well as targeted provincial administrations which will, in turn, provide the framework for the provision of any inputs from the PIE investment (i.e., long-term and short-term technical assistance, coaching, training). There will also be a strong focus upon improving the systems for collecting, analysing and using evidence to inform decision-making at all levels.

The PIE MERL Adviser will support NDoE to improve monitoring for results; the PIE monitoring system will also track the specific contribution that PIE inputs have made to the achievement of results, as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of Australia’s contribution.

* **Intermediate Outcomes Level:** At this level, the MERL system aims to capture and present evidence on the extent to which the achievement of specific outputs has resulted in the achievement of the anticipated IOs:

*For the IO 1 pathway:*monitoring will not only relate to the evidence of results (as per NEP MEF indicators: NER, GER, GPI in selected areas), but also consideration of the way in which these results have been achieved (PIE Implementation Indicators). The PIE MERL system will, therefore, be tracking the performance and quality of sub-contractors implementing innovative approaches to motivating/incentivising parents to enrol children (particularly girls and CWD).

*For the IO 2 pathway:* monitoring will relate toevidence of results (as per NEP MEF indicators: percent of teachers with appropriate qualification; percent of teachers accessing up-grade training opportunities). The PIE MERL system will also monitor the influence of a range of approaches designed to address the blockages in current systems for teacher upgrading, as well as the influence of scholarships and advocacy/incentives on rates of upgrading (particularly amongst female teachers).

 *For the IO 3 pathway*: monitoring will not only relate to the evidence of results (as per NEP MEF indicators: i.e., the performance of designated functions at sub-national levels), but also to tracking influence of Australia’s contributions to improving the performance of entities within NDoE address priority areas including those involved in analysing, disseminating and using evidence to inform decision-making (e.g., Research and Evaluation Division, Policy and Planning Division)

Depending upon the inputs provided, the PIE MERL system will also need to capture data on the performance and quality of capacity development efforts carried out in both NDoE and the PDoEs to achieve these IOs.

* **End of Investment Outcomes Level:** At this level, the PIE MERL system needs to produce evidence to demonstrate whether, and to what extent, effective approaches have been developed to:
1. address the ‘creeping crisis’ in enrolment/retention in the early grades, particularly for girls and CWD;
2. deal with the shortage of qualified teachers in the early grades; and
3. create systemic change and improve the functional capacity and sustainability of the whole education system, by engaging national and sub-national stakeholders in a collaborative effort to improve education services.

At this level, the PIE MERL system needs to be able to monitor results, processes and the on-going relevance of ToCs and assumptions.

The PIE budget is ample to review results and implementation data to provide an answer to the question “*Did we get it right? Was our thinking about the way in which change would occur – and the most appropriate way to support that change - accurate? Were our assumptions sound?”* Here, the emphasis is upon determining the extent to which progress in achieving the IOs has, in fact, led to progress in achievement of the EOIO.

The **role of the MERL system in fostering communication and dialogue between NDoE and selected PDoEs, as well as with DHERST and the Teaching Commission** is also critical. While monitoring produces information to satisfy reporting requirements for both GoPNG and GoA, information products may also be used as the basis for ‘learning events’ potentially involving national and provincial government, church education service providers and donors. The MERL Framework outlined in Appendix E provides for Quarterly Progress Review and Plan Adjustment events – by province and nationally – to share evidence and consider the significance of the evidence to inform current thinking and planning.

The PIE MERL system also has a key role to play in **addressing gender equality and social inclusion concerns.** The MERL Specialist will be responsible for ensuring that the PIE MERL system meets DFAT standards. This will include assisting the full-time, national GEDSI/Access/Retention Adviser to ensure that gender analysis is integrated into baseline assessments (at national and sub-national levels. The MERL Adviser will also be tasked to design and supervise implementation of a baseline survey of CWD in target provinces to inform on-going programming. Where appropriate, this work will draw upon, and build on, work already done by CSPD and SCF under the PPF grants program.

Finally, the monitoring missions may focus on answering the question “*To what extent does Australia’s support via the PIE investment close the gender equality gap and integrate children with disabilities?”* In order to do this, it may be necessary to further develop tools or build capacity among PIE program staff and advisers to understand the gender equality and disability inclusion policy priorities of both governments.

## F.3 INDEPENDENT REVIEWS OF PROGRESS

The PIE budget makes provision for monitoring to provide direct advice on the progress and process of the investment during implementation. The design provides for this function to commence after six months and, thereafter, involve six-monthly visits.

The focus for each monitoring mission will be determined by AHC. However, key review questions are outlined in the Skeletal Performance Assessment Framework included in Appendix E. **Early consideration of the key review questions by both DFAT Program Management and the PIE MERL Adviser is advisable** because it is important for the PIE monitoring system to be collecting the information required by the monitoring team to address the questions posed by the DFAT Program Management. After the first 3 years, **consideration to scale up the program will follow an Independent Review,** which will draw on the program MERL evidence of impact.

# **G. GENDER EQUALITY AND DISABILITY INCLUSION**

## G.1 GENDER EQUALITY

**Context**

Despite PNG being a signatory to a range of international treaties[[80]](#footnote-80) progress has been weak[[81]](#footnote-81). and despite equality being enshrined in the PNG National Constitution and a range of legislation,[[82]](#footnote-82) gender inequality is still a major social, economic and political issue and remains prevalent in both urban and rural societies. The most recent United Nations Gender Inequality Index (2017) ranks PNG 159th of 160 countries. Gender violence, gender inequalities and violations of the rights of women and girls are endemic across the country.

Similarly, although the seven national churches mandated to delivery education services in PNG jointly agreed on a Theology of Gender Equality in April 2016, changes in the structure and functions of the church do not yet reflect shifts towards equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for males and females. This is also reflected in the church functions as an education service provider.

Appendix F, prepared in August 2019 during an earlier Education for Prosperity (E4P) design process, provides detailed background on the gender equality context in PNG.

The limited progress in addressing gender equality in PNG is reflected in lack of progress within NDoE and the PDoEs as well. A 2019 literature review commissioned by the DFAT funded Education Capacity Development Facility, quoted an NDoE Gender Audit report from 2015 which stated that: *“The NDoE GESI desk is not proactive in generating data and information for provinces feeding into relevant division and not seen as credible source of information and knowledge. The desk does not receive any recurrent funding and is totally dependent on donor funds. There is a need to strengthen the capacity of the gender desk to conduct awareness and training on gender policies.[[83]](#footnote-83)”*

Consultations carried out during this design process suggest that little has changed. While Gender Equality is now a branch in NDoE, the National Coordinator is the only staff member. The branch has little or no budget. Budget that is available is limited to the provision of training programs in selected provinces in four regions.

**Enrolment, access and retention in the early grades**

In the five ‘short-listed’ provinces studied during this design process, the Gender Parity Index (GPI)[[84]](#footnote-84) was less than one in all five provinces. In the two provinces selected during the design consultations, Sandaun has a GPI of 0.86 and Enga has a GPI of 0.81. Data analysis of enrolment and retention in the early grades indicates a far lower GPI for initial enrolment in preparatory and for transition from elementary to primary school.

GPI data at district and school level was not able to be collected during the design process.

Provincial consultations held in the five short-listed provinces revealed that the barriers to enrolment, attendance, retention and completion of schooling among girls in the early grades included cultural and gender-based practices and beliefs (i.e., school is not a priority for girls because they are culturally obligated to assist with household chores and other family responsibilities); the belief that formal jobs are for males only; isolation and fear of Sanguma/superstitions; socio-economic pressures.[[85]](#footnote-85) Anecdotal evidence was provided of gender-based choices regarding who should be sent to school within the context of limited family resources (see discussion on GTFS, below)

* *The proposed focus on increasing enrolment and retention (Targeted Outcome 1) will specifically aim to improve the GPI in target provinces.*

**Early grades teaching staff**

Data on teaching numbers across the five provinces studied during the design process (refer Appendix B) indicate that approximately 60 percent of primary and elementary teachers are male; approximately 40 percent are female. However, the gender breakdown between provinces varies.

In the targeted provinces, the gender breakdown of teachers at the elementary level in Enga is approximately 55 percent M/45 percent F; at the primary level the gender breakdown is approximately 63 percent M/37 percent F. In Sandaun, the gender breakdown of teachers at the elementary level is approximately 62 percent M/38 percent F; at the primary level the gender breakdown is approximately 64 percent M/36 percent F.

As more elementary teachers are required to upgrade their skills and qualifications to take up their role as primary teachers under the new 1-6-6 structure, there is potential to improve the gender balance of the teaching staff in target provinces.

* *The proposed focus (Targeted Outcome 2) on identifying barriers to female early grade teachers upgrading their knowledge, skills and qualifications, offers the potential to advocate with DHERST and the Teaching Service Commission to develop incentives to increase the number of qualified female early grade teachers and address the gender imbalance in teaching staff.*

**Teacher training**

A 2019 synthesis of gender literature and data on education in PNG[[86]](#footnote-86) noted that:

*“Based on 13 Teachers colleges surveyed, there is one female College Principal out of 13 Teachers Colleges. Males also occupy 80 percent of Deputy Principal roles, 78 percent Heads of Subjects, while 45 percent females occupy teaching positions. Nine Teachers Colleges are affiliated to religious organisations. The last known gender training for teachers’ colleges was in 2009 and most Teachers Colleges do not have gender policies in place.”[[87]](#footnote-87)*

Consultations with the Gender Branch National Coordinator in NDoE indicate that since pre-service training responsibilities were shifted to DHERST she has no knowledge of the quality and focus of pre-service gender equality training. She further advised that while the PDoE’s run their own in-service training, “*this has nothing to do with GESI.”* The National Coordinator advised that she has tried to carry out gender training for inspectors, who double as gender focal points at the provincial level. Her hope and intention was for the inspectors to integrate gender equality principles into in-service training and support to teachers. However, she found that the inspectors did not pass the training onto teachers but focused instead on their mandated duties.

The National Coordinator has ceased training inspectors and now provides in-service training directly to teachers in the Southern and New Guinea Islands regions. While she reports that this is more productive, the numbers she can train are limited, as is the overall impact.

* *The proposed focus on systemic change that improves the delivery of early grades education (Enabling Outcome 3) offers the opportunity to integrate GEDSI training into leadership and management capacity development in NDoE and the PDoEs. This also offers the opportunity to strengthen the capacity of the Gender Branch to engage in dialogue with DHERST and the Teaching Service Commission to improve the quality and focus of pre-service gender equality training (under Targeted Outcome 2).*

**Gendered effect of Government Tuition Fee Subsidy**

The current requirement for parents to contribute 38 percent of school fees is a significant impost on poor families, particularly within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the flow-on reduction in household incomes. Anecdotal evidence was presented to the design team indicating that enrolments of girls increased during the tuition free period. However, following the introduction of the GTFS, enrolments fell. Further, where low-income parents need to make choices about which child will attend school, embedded gender norms reduce the likelihood that girls will be enrolled/retained in school.

* *The proposed focus on enhancing approaches to removing barriers (particularly gender-based barriers) to student enrolment and retention in the early grades (Targeted Outcome 1) offers the potential to mitigate the gendered effect of the GTFS on reducing female enrolment/retention.*

**How will the PIE investment contribute to closing the gender gap?**

The PIE investment meets the requirements to be marked as “significant” (Score 1) under the OECD-DAC Gender Equality Policy Markers.[[88]](#footnote-88) Specifically, it is a basic education program designed to benefit boys and girls, but with a specific objective and activities that address the gender-specific barriers to girls’ education. In accordance with OECD-DAC Guidance:

* the total indicative budget of the PIE investment (AUD 75 million) is counted as gender equality focused aid;
* responsibility for validating the gender marker applied to this investment sits with the Program Manager, AHC, Port Moresby, in consultation with Gender Branch, DFAT; this will be done during the internal design appraisal process; and
* the monitoring and evaluation framework (Appendix E), as well as the policy dialogue matrix (Appendix D) give specific attention to both measuring progress in closing the gender gap and to engaging in policy dialogue around gender equality issues.

Attention to gender equality needs to be embedded within all aspects of the PIE investment. A full gender analysis has not been conducted as part of the design process. A detailed gender analysis will need to be carried out at early implementation to inform implementation strategies across all outcome areas.

**The PIE budget provides for the appointment of a full-time national GEDSI/Access/Retention Adviser to ensure that gender analysis will be integrated into the participatory processes, baselines and training needs assessments** which will be carried out to underpin strategic and operational planning to achieve Outcomes 2 and 3.

In accordance with OECD-DAC Gender Equality Guidance, priority areas for reform at national and sub-national levels should consider the extent to which *all* functional positions and organisational areas of responsibility have the potential to impact on gender equality. In this way, all plans to strengthen the capacity of individual positions or organisational unit functions should embed attention to gender equality issues within them.

While a Gender and Development Strategy is listed as a cross-cutting output under this investment, this should be not be a theoretical ‘think piece’ but, rather, an evidence-informed strategy which organises and consolidates ‘action areas’ under each outcome area, based upon the results of the participatory problem analyses. Once this strategy is completed, the investment MEF should be adjusted to ensure that the on-going validity of the strategy, as well as individual measures to close the gender gap, are monitored. The performance information collected should, in turn, be the basis for adjusting the Gender and Development Strategy over time.

At design stage, it is only possible to identify areas where the combined gender and institutional analyses *may* be expected to produce tangible and feasible strategies/activities to close the gender gap. These include the following:

**Targeted Outcome 1:** More children (girls, boys, and CWD) in the early grades enrol and stay in school in selected provinces using replicable and sustainable approaches.

* Pro-actively encouraging parents to enrol girls and to keep them in school;
* Provision of financial incentives to encourage disadvantaged families to allow girls to enrol and remain in school.

**Targeted Outcome 2:**  Targeted provinces are using sustainable and replicable approaches to support improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in the early grades.

* Pro-actively supporting upgrading of the knowledge, skills and qualifications of female elementary school teachers with a view to redressing the gender imbalance in teachers at the primary level (i.e., as elementary teachers move into primary under the new 1-6-6 structure);
* Reviewing/upgrading pre-service and in-service training on GoPNGs gender equality policies, as well as **gender sensitive** teaching practices.

**Enabling Outcome 3:** Evidence of systemic change within the education sector that improves the delivery of early grades education.

* Strengthening the capacity of the NDoE Gender Branch and provincial GESI desks to conduct awareness and training of staff on gender policies and to advocate and promote gender equality in education management and the teaching workforce;
* Specifically designing and funding activities to upgrade the leadership and management skills of women in education management (at national and sub-national levels), support the development of mentors and sponsors for women leaders in education, as well as women’s leadership networks;
* Specifically designing and funding activities to increase women’s involvement in decision making bodies in provincial and church education service providers (e.g., Provincial Education Boards, SBoM).

## G.2 DISABILITY INCLUSIVENESS

During the preparation of this design disability representatives were consulted at the national level and were also specifically invited to join the provincial teams engaged in intensive design consultations in Enga and Sandaun.

**Context**

PNG was ahead of other countries in the region in introducing the first PNG National Special Education Policy (NSEP) which opened the way for CWD to access education. The three key features of the policy required:

1. that where feasible, children with special needs should attend regular schools along with their peers;
2. that teachers be trained through pre-service and in-service courses; and
3. that the department allocates funding for special education activities.[[89]](#footnote-89)

One of the most important aspects of the NSEP was the mandating of Special Education Resource Centres as the main mechanism through which the education of CWD would be supported. In particular, it outlined that the ‘primary role of a resource centre is to in-service and support field teachers in their role as inclusive teachers’ according to the National Special Education Policy and Plan’. By 2008, the number of SERCs had increased to 23 operating in 17 provinces.[[90]](#footnote-90)

CSPD is the largest provider of disability services in PNG and works with government departments to implement inclusive development services. In the education sector, with substantial support from Australia, CSPD has set up and operates 19 Inclusive Education Resource Centres (IERCs) which are responsible for identifying and working directly with children and adults with disabilities in the community. However, the centres are not permitted to provide services beyond a 15 km limit, so CSPD is attempting to extend their services through the establishment of sub-centres and by providing support to schools, upon request, via mobile teams to carry out screening and testing and to encourage parents to bring their children to the nearest IERC.

CSPD also runs the Callan Inclusive Education Institute (CIEI), recognised by NDoE and the Teachers Institute. The CIEI provides training to teachers who, upon satisfactory completion, are awarded with an Applied Diploma in Special Inclusive Education (ADSIE). Australia provided scholarships for teachers to study for this diploma which, according to a September 2020 evaluation, proved to be a very successful intervention. However, this support ceased in June 2020.

**Barriers to inclusion**

There are no official statistics about people living with disabilities in PNG. And although the school census surveys include a question on ‘*childhood disability’* this is poorly defined, poorly addressed and the resulting data is not robust.

Despite the intent of the NSEP, a range of barriers appear to prevent CWD from being enrolled and retained in the early grades. These range from community/parental attitudes downgrading the importance of education for CWD, which have been exacerbated by the introduction of the GTFS; lack of screening and testing facilities in schools; inappropriate school infrastructure; poorly trained teachers, bullying and social exclusion by other students. All of these factors were mentioned during provincial consultations carried out as part of this design process.

**DFAT’s past efforts to address barriers to inclusion**

Australia has supported a succession of investments to address barriers to inclusion in primary education but has not necessarily capitalised upon these investments in order to ensure that benefits are sustained and effective approaches promoted more broadly.

Primary and Secondary Teacher Education Project**:** Australia funded the AUD 38 million Primary and Secondary Teacher Education Project from 1999-2004 with six technical components, one of which was Special Education Teacher Education. The focus appeared to be upon special education curriculum writing and teaching and learning strategies.[[91]](#footnote-91) During the current design process it has been difficult to determine the extent to which these materials were, or are, being used. A recent PNG National Research Institute status report indicates that pre-service teachers are not given enough units on special education and are still trained to each using a teacher-centred pedagogy, rather than focusing on the needs of the child with disabilities.[[92]](#footnote-92)

**Education Opportunities for All:** Australia supported the AUD 4 million Education Opportunities for All PNG Children project from 2016 to June 2020 implemented by CSPD, managed by the Education Capacity Development Facility (ECDF). This investment aimed to: (i) improve in-service training for teachers in special education; (ii) support children and adults living with disabilities to participate in education (and in local communities); (iii) to increase the awareness of rights, knowledge and advocacy skills of people with disabilities; and (iv) to expand the network of service providers.

Of specific relevance to the current design is the finding of an evaluation of this investment commissioned by AHC, Port Moresby, produced in October 2020, which found that (i) was mostly achieved. Specifically, the evaluation reported that: “*The short courses for teachers in inclusive education have been well received by IERC staff and are recognised as filling a critical gap in inclusive education training.” [[93]](#footnote-93)*

Further, the evaluation made a range of recommendations to build upon the achievements:

* expanding the availability of in-service teacher training on inclusive education;
* working with IERC sub-branches to support outreach officers based in schools in regional areas to provide a link with the IERC for CWD in remote and rural areas; and
* a pilot study targeting a school in each district to have one to two teachers training in the CIEI Applied Diploma and providing inclusive education expertise for the district, with a link to the IERC; this study could also support IERC’s working with other disabled people’s organisations training individuals to act as teaching assistants for CWD in remote areas.

**PNG Partnership Fund** (**PPF) Education Grants:** From July 2017 to June 2022, Australia provided a total of AUD 63 million in PPF Education Grants to three NGO Consortia lead by Care Australia (CARE), Save the Children Fund (RISE) and World Vision (T4E). The grants were designed to improve early grade literacy and numeracy and implementers were required to address DFAT’s policy priorities, including social inclusion. A Mid-Term Review (MTR) Report on the PPF, presented in June 2020, found that all three grantees had mainstreamed disability inclusion in their training programs, with RISE having specific targets for disability inclusion (i.e., better quality and more inclusive classroom practice; screening and support program for CWD through funding of additional staff and resources at IERCs; teacher training in inclusive education).

The following quotation from the MTR Report highlights one area which may be built upon during the PIE investment is:

*“During the review, with the participation of an NDOE senior official there is now a clearer understanding of the NDOE expectations regarding training programs to develop the SLIP. It is of note that both T4E and PKS training packages include extra modules on child protection, gender and disability inclusion that are not part of the 2007 NDOE SLIP format outline. It is anticipated that these extra modules will become part of the NDOE SLIP format and training programs[[94]](#footnote-94).”*

The design team was unable to confirm whether or not NDoE has taken up the GEDSI modifications to the SLIP manual promoted under the PPF. However, it is likely that further adjustments to the SLIP format will await approval of the NEP and the SLIP policy.

**How will the PIE investment promote disability inclusion?**

The PIE design will build upon successful strategies developed by previous DFAT-funded investments to promote disability inclusion and address recommendations made from review/evaluations of these investments. The PIE approach to disability inclusion will also maintain partnerships established under previous investments (e.g., with CSPD) in order to sustain previous gains and in order to ‘*watch and learn*’ from work currently being carried out in the sector.

The PIE approach will include:

* continued funding of scholarships (in coordination with Australia Awards PNG) for early grade teachers in target provinces to obtain the CIEI Applied Diploma in Special Inclusive Education;
* provision of these scholarships within the context of a strategy to pilot an approach to targeting a school in selected districts to have one to two teachers trained in the CIEI Applied Diploma with the intent that these teachers will provide inclusive education expertise for the district, with a link to an IERC in the province;
* tied financial support to IERCs in target provinces to provide back-up support to the SIE trained teachers, via mobile teams, to carry out screening and testing and to encourage parents to bring their children to the IERC;
* monitoring of the results of an initiative being undertaken by CIEI with support from Mary McKillip Foundation to develop and test a remote delivery model of education for CWD in Sandaun (Vanimo and Aitape); if successful this approach could be adopted/adapted for broader application under the auspices of the PIE investment; and
* support to NDoE to review and update the SLIP format and training programs, to build on the work carried out under the PPF, as and when appropriate.

In addition, strategies already discussed under each outcome area will have benefits for CWD and their families. Specifically:

**Under targeted outcome 1:** motivation/awareness raising with parents and exploring the potential (during the Inception Phase) for the provision of financial incentives to disadvantaged families will aim to increase the enrolment/retention of CWD.

**Under targeted outcome 2:** building upon previous efforts to improve teacher training on inclusive education will aim to improve teaching and learning practices for CWD.

**Under enabling outcome 3:** the focus will be upon carrying out a baseline survey on CWD in target provinces in the Inception Phase and feeding this information back to NDoE to inform decision-making.

# **H. BUDGET AND RESOURCES**

## H.1 BUDGET

The total indicative budget envelope for PIE is AUD75 million over eight years over three phases – an Inception Phase of six months, Phase 1 – 4.5 years and a subsequent Phase 2 of three years pending the results of an independent appraisal of progress. It is anticipated that eight to ten provinces may be engaged during the timeframe of the investment, subject to the independent appraisal of phase 1, and additional resources.

The indicative budget includes a mix of funding for strategic technical assistance[[95]](#footnote-95), operational costs and grants for local education service providers.

# **I. RISK MANAGEMENT AND SAFEGUARDS**

In accordance with DFAT aid risk management policies and requirements, a risk assessment has been carried out as part of the design process. The completed risk and safeguard screening tool is attached as Appendix I. The overall risk rating at design is assessed as ‘Medium’. Some of the risks currently rated as high and perceived by DFAT as of most concern are discussed below, along with proposed treatments that will lower risk ratings to low or medium.

**Resources, Management and Planning:** There is a risk that due to a range of issues including a protracted COVID-19 crisis**,** PNG’s fiscal deficit will continue to worsen, reducing the ability of GoPNG to fund education services. This will impact on interventions but also threaten the longer-term sustainability of PIE outcomes. Australia has already provided budget support in 2021 to help mitigate this risk and enable the Government’s Tuition Fee Subsidy to roll out to schools. However, DFAT will be required to engage in policy dialogue with GoPNG to advocate for, at minimum, the current level of resourcing for education to be preserved and through technical assistance, the managing contractor will need to support public financial management to address system blockages - so available funds can be used as efficiently and effectively as possible.

**Operating Environment:** PNG is prone to natural disasters and tribal unrest in the highlands. These operating risks are heighted with the potential impact of the further spread of COVID-19 (or other disease outbreaks) resulting in the disruption to education service delivery. AHC will monitor these risks as part of standard post risk management processes. The managing contractor will also put in place a Security Plan that provides for business continuity through both COVID-19 preparedness and mitigation measures and operational responses to unforeseen natural disasters or unrest.

**Fiduciary Risk:** PIE will be working with local partners to achieve its outcomes. This will involve entering into legally binding service agreements, providing partnership grants to other organisations, including civil society organisations, teachers’ colleges and potentially other implementing partners. The managing contractor will ensure due diligence assessments are completed and provide fraud and procurement training to all program staff and partners. Regular spot checks and formal audits will ensure any fraudulent activities are highlighted early. Any issues will be raised with DFAT as soon as possible with regular updates on action taken provided as part of monthly management meetings.

**Environmental and Social Safeguards:** Child protection risks are high. Activities supported through PIE will be working to help improve the education opportunities available to young boys and girls, including children with disability. Accordingly, DFAT, through the managing contractor, will be responsible for ensuring that program staff and all implementing partners understand and adhere to DFAT’s safeguard policies, including on Child Protection and PSEAH. It will also be necessary to ensure that minority groups (e.g., language minorities) are not excluded from PIE activities. Risk assessments and management measures will be put in place and DFAT’s minimum standards implemented across the program and monitored on a regular basis.

1. Recent public announcements indicate a possible return to tuition fee-free education in 2022, [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. World Bank Group – PNG Economic Update January 2021 *Dealing with a Triple Crisis* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Economic modelling by the Australian National University in 2016 has estimated that additional education sector funding of almost A$1 billion per year would be needed to service PNG’s education needs adequately through to 2030. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. CPP support has facilitated the recent establishment of the National Churches Education Council, which gives the churches education authorities representation at the National Education Board (NEB) and will give representation to NDoE Top Management Team (TMT). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. PNG allocates around 17% of its budget spend to education (WB Economic Update, Triple Crisis Report, p.38). This equates to around K3.3 billion per annum, while the PIE budget is around K24 million per annum. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. GoPNG Universal Basic Education Plan 2010-2019 *Achieving Universal Education for a Better Future* and the National Education Plan 2020-2029 *Achieve Quality Education for All: leaving no one behind*. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Discussions with NDoE personnel during the design process indicate that there may have been a sampling bias in the administration of the 2018 PILNA as students in more accessible, more urbanised schools were assessed. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The World Bank estimates total education sector budget allocation around 17% p.a. [https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/png/publication/papua-new-guinea-dealing-with-a-triple-crisis](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worldbank.org%2Fen%2Fcountry%2Fpng%2Fpublication%2Fpapua-new-guinea-dealing-with-a-triple-crisis&data=04%7C01%7CEloise.Saif%40dfat.gov.au%7C0e243a830b5b40b8ca5708d979a33ba5%7C9b7f23b30e8347a58a40ffa8a6fea536%7C0%7C0%7C637674564686821648%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=JkaklzSmxjjkF1O0FyvSKH54Sb9m%2BWbDYJOeIjmguy4%3D&reserved=0). Explanation for these lower percentages are provided in Vol2 Appendix A, which looks at budgets of the two PNG Departments responsible for education. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. During the year, proposed budget allocations may be revised to reflect changes in government expenditure priorities or to reflect information that indicates a change in the budget allocation is required due to under or over-expenditures. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Honga, Thomson. *Benefits of The Tuition Fee Free Policy as Perceived by Port Moresby Residents,* Spotlight, Volume 13; Issue 13, July 2020, PNG National Research Institute. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Papua New Guinea Covid-19 Development Response Plan, Partnerships for Recovery: Australia’s COVID-19 Development Response, Australian Government, October 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) was the curriculum approach introduced in the 1980 and received considerable criticism for its perceived or real failures to improve the quality of educational outcomes in PNG. In 2012, with the election of a new government and review of the OBE, introduction of the Standards-Based Curriculum (SBC) has been progressively introduced with curriculum materials being prepared and distributed and teacher training taking place since 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Scripted lessons are highly structured and often have specific time allotments and specific periods for the lesson to be taught. These lessons often provide word-for-word ‘scripts’ to guide the teacher on what to do and to say. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Information provided from five provinces during the design process indicated that in the more remote locations schools had yet to receive SBC curriculum resources and teachers had not yet been trained to use the SBC resources. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Preliminary findings of the Capacity Needs Assessment of the Primary Teacher Colleges. Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology. October 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
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67. For Enga and Sandaun, the estimated number of teachers that are not qualified is close to 1,000. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Given the low levels of education among elementary teachers, PIE support should focus on an approach that directly addresses student learning (rather than credentials led), working with the teaching body that exists and drawing on proven models in similar contexts such as BRAC model which provides structured (not scripted) learning plans tailored to young children, coupled with ongoing, and intensive teacher support by well-trained mentors. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. The Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) Programme is a global research endeavour that seeks to understand how education systems in developing countries can overcome the learning crisis. The [ALIGNS Insight Note](https://riseprogramme.org/publications/aligning-levels-instruction-goals-and-needs-students-aligns-varied-approaches-common) presents a set of principles shared by varied approaches that have all succeeded in improving foundational learning in developing countries.  [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. There are proven, low-cost methods that are relatively simple to administer that could be used by PIE (e.g., citizen-led, household-based assessment initiatives convened by the [PAL Network](http://www.asercentre.org/p/76.html)), and DFAT’s partnership with ACER (the GEM Centre) could be leveraged. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. #####  SDG Target 4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. Indicator 4.1.1: Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex

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79. Low cost and simple diagnostics such as the [ASER reading and math testing tool](http://www.asercentre.org/p/50.html) could be used to provide a baseline of student learning in classes where teachers are receiving an intervention. http://www.asercentre.org/p/50.html [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
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