

# **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

## Summary of management response

DFAT agrees with the findings and recommendations of the Mid-term Review (MTR), and thanks the consultant, Dr James Jennings, for the report and the Underprivileged Children's Programs (UCEP) for its participation. The purpose of the MTR was to assess the relevance and performance of the investment, including the pivoting of program delivery in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to inform possible future programming. The Review found the investment remains highly relevant in terms of alignment with DFAT's priorities and strategies, including responding to the pandemic and supporting Bangladesh's goals of economic and social advancement. With schools closed for the most of 2020, UCEP was effective in pivoting its programs to remote learning models and supporting students to continue learning, although was not able to meet all the targets developed in the pre-pandemic context.

DFAT has already begun implementing a number of the MTR's recommendations, including endorsement of the revised Results Framework and reviewing UCEP's Action Plans for gender and disability inclusion to support full achievement of program targets in these areas. DFAT will look to support a review of UCEP's organisational reforms and resume field trips when possible. Once schools reopen, UCEP will undertake assessments to understand students' learning gaps and remedial needs, as recommended. Based on the positive findings of the Review, DFAT will consider funding a further phase of the investment, subject to internal processes and approvals.

The management response outlines planned actions by DFAT and partner in response to the mid-term review recommendations.

**AUGUST 2021**

## Individual management response to the recommendations

Recommendation	Response [Note: Select one option from the column below, delete others]	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe [If practical, please specify timeframe here]
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p><i>Endorsement by DFAT of the Proposed Revised Results Framework</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>DFAT agrees with the adjustments made to the Revised Results Framework, including revision of the indicator on job placement in light of the impact of the pandemic on the labour sector and the inclusion of new indicators to capture UCEP's actions to support and retain students during the pandemic.</p>	<p>DFAT to endorse the Proposed Results Framework</p>	<p>completed</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p><i>Holding of at least two Steering Committee meetings each year virtually or in person.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>In 2020, two high-level meetings comprising Steering Committee members were held while UCEP was undergoing management restructuring. Monthly meetings with DFAT and UCEP senior management were also held to discuss the evolving COVID-19 situation. DFAT and UCEP resumed holding formal Steering Committee Meetings in 2021.</p>	<p>A formal Steering Committee meeting was held in May 2021, and another is scheduled for November 2021.</p>	<p>completed</p>

<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p><i>Participation by DFAT staff in at least two field visits each year, either in person or virtually.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Field visits were paused in 2020 due to the pandemic situation and schools being closed.</p>	<p>DFAT will resume field visits when safe to do so. In the meantime, DFAT will look to arrange a virtual field visit.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p><i>Assessments of general education students upon their return to the classroom, adjustment of the programs of learning as needed and remediation for students with gaps in their learning.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>DFAT agrees that assessment of general education students upon their return to the classroom will be very important to identify learning gaps and remedial needs.</p>	<p>UCEP to conduct assessments of students upon their return to the classroom and provide DFAT with a briefing on the general findings. UCEP to develop a plan to address learning gaps and remedial needs in line with the finding of these assessments.</p>	<p>Within two months of school reopening (subject to the Bangladesh Government's decision)</p>
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p><i>Review of performance on inclusion efforts to identify</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>DFAT acknowledges UCEP's good work on inclusion and notes the need for further improvement to fully meet targets. Agree a performance review and development of plans to increase</p>	<p>In July 2021, DFAT and UCEP discussed progressing inclusion efforts in areas where participation of mentioned groups was below target. DFAT is in the process of</p>	<p>October 2021</p>

<p><i>areas where participation of girls and women, PWDs and/or minorities is lower than targets and development of plans to increase the participation of these groups.</i></p>		<p>participation of mentioned groups would be useful.</p>	<p>reviewing UCEP's updated Action Plans for both gender and disability.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 6 <i>Review of the Key Action Plan on Child Protection which was implemented in 2020 and revamping it for 2021 and 2022 based on progress made and outstanding issues to address.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>DFAT has reviewed and approved UCEP's Child Protection Policy and Key Action Plan for 2020.</p>	<p>UCEP to review and revamp the Key Action Plan for 2021 and 2022. DFAT to review the revised Plan.</p>	<p>August 2021 onward</p>
<p>Recommendation 7 <i>Review of the current status, issues and</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>UCEP's organisational reform and restructuring process is progressing. DFAT and UCEP agree that a review would be useful once a new structure has been in place for a period of time to</p>	<p>Review of the current status, issues and challenges related to the reform and restructuring of the organisation with recommendations on how to move forward with the reform agenda. DFAT to consider providing</p>	<p>To be decided in a high-level Steering Committee meeting in November 2021.</p>

<p><i>challenges related to the reform and restructuring of the organisation with recommendations on how to move forward with the reform agenda with Technical Assistance (TA) support from DFAT.</i></p>		<p>enable a proper assessment. A decision on the timeframe for this review will be made in a high-level Steering Committee meeting scheduled in November 2021.</p>	<p>technical assistance to support this review.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8 <i>Preparation by UCEP of a status report on funding availability and prospects for 2022 and of plans for securing funds to continue the general education program.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Based on this recommendation, DFAT requested UCEP to prepare an overview of its financial situation.</p>	<p>UCEP provided an overview of its financial situation to DFAT in June 2021.  completed</p>

<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p><i>Consideration by DFAT to provide bridge funding for 2022.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>DFAT’s current investment does not cover UCEP’s education program in 2022 as the investment finishes at the end of the financial year, which is the middle of the school year.</p>	<p>DFAT will consider the possibility of bridge funding for 2022, noting that fund decisions are subject to DFAT’s priorities and internal quality and budgetary processes.</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p><i>Initiation of the process of designing the next phase for DFAT’s financial support in order to ensure no gap in current and future DFAT support.</i></p>	<p>Agree in part</p>	<p>DFAT acknowledges the positive findings of the Review of the investment and its recommendation that a next phase be initiated. The decision to commence a next phase is subject to DFAT’s priorities and internal quality and budgetary processes.</p>	<p>DFAT to consider the possibility of a next phase, subject to DFAT internal processes and approvals. The findings of this mid-term review would be used to inform any future design process.</p>	<p>September 2021 onward</p>