

Solomon Islands Education Sector Program 2 Basic Education Component Independent Mid-Term Review – DFAT Management Response

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action plan
<p>Recommendation 1: The current delivery approach which includes direct budget support and parallel support should continue into the next phase of the program. MEHRD should be helped with spend through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) provision of TA specific to capacity building in procurement and PFM, 2) outsourcing where possible and increased use of larger contracts 3) provision of a clear, easy to use operating manual for MEHRD staff on procurement and PFM processes. 	Agreed in principle	DFAT will further consider the balance between budget support and parallel support during the design of the next phase of the program. DFAT will work with MEHRD and New Zealand MFAT (the other main budget support donor) on the three points outlined, noting that the nature of any PFM and procurement manual developed would be dependent on advice from the TA referenced in point 1.	To be factored into the design of the next phase of the program.
<p>Recommendation 2: Linked to the above recommendation, partners should continue with current PFM and Procurement Advisers and consider supplementing these with an advisor/s whose sole purpose is to strengthen capacity in a facilitative rather than compliance role. In the future, advisors should also work closely with corporate services to help develop the appropriate sections of its planned standard operating manual so that the procedures contained in the manual are clearly understood and owned by MEHRD staff.</p>	Agreed	DFAT agrees that partners (including MFAT) should work with MEHRD to provide PFM/ procurement TA focused on capacity development. DFAT notes that the nature of any TA support for an operating manual will be considered in the development of that TA position's Terms of Reference.	To be factored into the design of the next phase of the program.

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Recommendation 3: AHC maintains its use of parallel support mechanisms into the next phase and considers expanding support through this modality to high poverty regions (Honiara, Makira, Guadalcanal) identified in the 2012 – 2013 Household Income and Expenditure Survey as areas of greatest vulnerability and poverty.	Agreed in principle	DFAT will consider maintaining parallel support mechanisms and increase targeting (through these mechanisms) to high poverty regions.	To be factored into the design of the next phase of the program.
Recommendation 4: MEHRD should continue with its outsourcing especially in the area of larger contracts and pilots.	Agreed	DFAT agrees that MEHRD should outsource activities where possible to increase efficiency.	DFAT to advocate for this approach with MEHRD, including through the design of the next phase of the program.
Recommendation 5: It is recommended that for the next phase of design, AHC consider amending the DFA to reflect AHC funded components of the NEAP as reflected in MEHRDs Annual Work Plan.	Agreed in principle	DFAT will consider making the DFA for the next phase of the program clearer on what NEAP and/or MEHRD AWP activities are to be supported (and/or, to allow space for changing priorities, to include details on how DFAT and MEHRD will agree activities over time and document this).	To be factored into the design of the next phase of the program.

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Recommendation 6: DFA key governance arrangements, functions, responsibilities and expected frequency of meetings should if necessary be reviewed and adhered to.	Agreed	DFAT agrees that key governance arrangements under ESP2 need to be better adhered to in order to improve program oversight, particularly of spending rates.	DFAT, MFAT and MEHRD have reinstated quarterly management meetings. The structure and nature of the governance arrangements will also be factored into the design of the next phase of the program.
Recommendation 7: It is recommended that AHC in consultation with NZHC and MEHRD ensures that the design process reviews the current governance, management and evaluation arrangements for the continuation of the program with a view to transitioning it from separate Australian and New Zealand mechanisms (e.g. separate reviews, designs, reporting mechanisms) towards a broader based approach aligned around the NEAP to drive accountability and transparency.	Agreed in principle	DFAT agrees to work with MFAT to further align governance, management and evaluation arrangements. This has already been addressed to an extent with a planned joint design process which will facilitate more aligned governance, management and evaluation arrangements.	To be factored into the design of the next phase of the program.

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Recommendation 8: In terms of technical focus, it is recommended that a) the next phase of the program should continue to focus on basic education and continue to pursue the key high level goals of the program.	Agreed in principle	DFAT will consider continuing a focus on equitable access to quality basic education in the next phase of the program.	To be factored into the design of the next phase of the program.

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<p>Recommendation 9: The next design team should consider continuing with a focus on literacy (in its broadest sense) and numeracy in basic education and</p> <p>b) gradually increase focus on the higher levels of basic education (junior secondary)</p> <p>c) ECE could be addressed at the policy level</p> <p>d) Consideration could also be given to focusing on integrating TVET with general provision in the sector at both junior secondary and senior secondary level.</p> <p>e) The definition of literacy could be expanded to include aspects of financial literacy.</p> <p>f) The curriculum plan to 2025 should be followed to ensure that all materials including student materials and teacher guides are completed</p> <p>g) Greater support could be given to EAs to enable them, in turn, to support schools and children.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT agrees in principle to these clustered recommendations however notes that further consideration will be given to them through the design of the next phase of the program.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the program.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 10: Linked to the recommendation above, it is recommended that during the next phase, the program consider including some of the areas which were planned for the original eight-year window of the program e.g. review of textbook delivery chain, some aspects of school grants, innovation grants to EAs. A detailed comparison of the original design with activities as tracked through MEHRD documentation is contained in Annex E. We have also highlighted activities which did not happen but which should be considered by the new design team.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT agrees in principle however notes that further consideration will be given through the design of the next phase of the program.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the program.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11: It is recommended that for the next phase of the program more focus is placed on the EA level using a range of strategies to be identified by the design team including by leveraging aspects of the AHC governance program.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle</p>	<p>DFAT agrees in principle however notes that further consideration will be given through the design of the next phase of the program. DFAT also notes the limitations of the AHC governance program referenced (the Community Governance program funded by the AHC's Justice Program which supports community liaison officers) which is modest and less relevant to the education sector.</p>	<p>To be factored into the design of the next phase of the program.</p>

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Recommendation 12: During the next phase of the program, ensure a focus on the basic opportunities to learn (OTL) exists as a prerequisite for other interventions.	Agreed in principle	DFAT will consider including a focus on basic opportunities to learn in the next phase of the program.	To be factored into the design of the next phase of the program.
Recommendation 13: During the next phase of the program, it is recommended that partners consider balancing TA investments to areas that provide a direct line of sight to the classroom while at the same time retaining and embedding current system reforms within MEHRD.	Agreed in principle	DFAT will consider the balance of TA focus between systems strengthening and classroom improvements.	To be factored into the design of the next phase of the program.
Recommendation 14: As soon as is feasible, AHC should assist MEHRD to ensure that it has copyright of materials produced on its behalf and is able to use these materials to adapt, modify or turn into digital content. In the longer term, the AHC should also assist MEHRD with procurement and contract negotiations so they are not disadvantaged in the way they have been in relation to text books.	Agreed in principle	DFAT agrees in principle with this recommendation and will support (within reason) MEHRD to gain copyright of relevant learning materials. However we note that investigations already conducted into obtaining retrospective copyright on certain learning materials has shown the purchase to be prohibitively expensive.	To be supported by the DFAT-funded MEHRD Procurement Adviser.

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Recommendation 15: Linked to the above, development partners should consider assisting SIEMIS staff to review whether the current platform of PINEAPPLE is the most appropriate to their needs.	Agreed	DFAT agrees to support MEHRD's review of the current SIEMIS platform.	An MFAT-funded volunteer (placed in MEHRD) and the DFAT-funded SPC Educational Quality and Assessment Programme are currently supporting MEHRD in this review and a shift to a more user-friendly platform.
Recommendation 16: AHC and NZHC should work together where possible, engage in joint meetings and should conduct joint reviews to ensure that the transactional cost on MEHRD is lessened. In particular, the upcoming MFAT review should build on the work of the current mid—term review. The upcoming design should involve both Australia and New Zealand to allow for a more harmonised approach.	Agreed	DFAT agrees to working with MFAT to further align their governance, management and evaluation arrangements.	To be factored into the design of the next phase of the program.