Tonga Education Sector Project II (TESP II)

Independent Progress Review

Final Report

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This report is authored by the named consultants. Although the team comprised officials from DFAT and GoT MET the report cannot be assumed to reflect official policy.

Table of Contents

Acronyms

CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DP	Development Partner
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
GOT	Government of Tonga
MET	Ministry of Education and Training
MFAT	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MSS	Minimum Service Standards
PDU	Professional Development Unit
PEARL	Pacific Early Age Readiness and Learning
JPOG	Joint Program Oversight Group
SBM	School Based Management
STAT	Standardised Test of Achievement in Tonga
SWAp	Sector wide Approach
TEGRA	Tongan Early Grade Reading Assessment
TESP II	Tonga Education Support Program II
TIOE	Tonga Institute of Education

Executive Summary

The Tonga Education Support Program II (TESP II) supports the Education Policy of the Government of Tonga (GoT). It aims to improve equitable access, improve early grade student learning outcomes and strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education and Training (MET). It follows on from TESP I (2005-10) funded by World Bank and MFAT and an Interim Program (2011/12) funded by DFAT and MFAT which provided a solid foundation for reforms in curriculum, assessment, and school based management.

TESP II commenced in June 2013 and will conclude in June 2016. It is funded by Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), with an original commitment of AUD 10.5 million and New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), with a commitment of TOP 12 million. A total of 4,368,490 was disbursed in the first year of 2013. During 2014 there was no further disbursement by either DFAT or MFAT and, due to delays in implementation of activities in the first year, DFAT's funding commitment was reduced to AUD 6.5 million.

The purpose of the review is: 1) to provide information that will inform DFAT's decision about whether to continue to fund basic education in the 2015 Aid Investment Plan; and 2) inform priority actions for MET and development partners (DPs) to achieve the outcomes within the timeframe available and with a view to sustainability of achievements.

The review was undertaken by a team of five comprising two independent consultants (one Team Leader and one recruited by MFAT), two officials from DFAT Canberra office and one representative of GoT. This composition was in line with Partnership Principles to undertake reviews jointly. The in-country component took place from 20-31 July 2015.

What are the results?

Evaluating the achievements of TESP II is challenging owing to very weak systems in MET for managing information and reporting against a Results Framework. As implementation was slow to start, TESP II is only just gaining momentum in the activities that are likely to make the most difference in terms of the objectives of the programme.

Progress in delivering the intended outputs is variable. At classroom level there is evidence that the curriculum materials for teachers and students are generally available and that the systems for teacher professional development and school based management, including the school grant, are in place and generally working. Access to these resources seems equitable across the islands. **These parts of TESP II appear to be well designed and have the potential to in time make a difference to student learning.** There is slower progress on newer initiatives relating to assessment, inclusive education, early childhood education and the Education Management Information System. At the system level, progress on increasing the proportion of teachers with teacher training qualifications, on teacher assessment, and on improving the capacity of the Tonga Institute of Education (TIOE), is limited. Refurbishment of TIOE and some schools has been long delayed.

Although increasing MET capacity is included as one of the intended outcomes in the design of TESP II, and although there has always been recognition that there was insufficient management capacity for an ambitious program, the budget allocation for increased staffing has not been fully utilised and

little progress has been made in building capacity. **Expenditure was particularly slow in the first year**, while momentum was being generated. For the whole of the 2013/14 fiscal year all budget items (apart from grants for schools and ECE) were underspent by in excess of 80%. This was partly due to system slowness and partly to poor planning. There has been some acceleration in activity for 2014/15 although it still appears to well under budget.

How do we interpret the results?

Several of the assumptions underpinning the design of TESP II have proved unrealistic. Change in MET has not been possible at the pace envisaged, the modality has needed much more support than DPs were able to provide, and the activities have not worked together as a coherent whole. At the higher level it was particularly unrealistic to expect that student learning outcomes would improve in three years.

There are several enablers of change at the system and school level and some of the most important elements are in place and working. But there are **many factors that limit change**. The ambition of the program is much greater than the capacity available to implement it. The GoT system, especially for finance and procurement can be very slow and there is a critical lack of good quality information for planning, managing performance, and reporting on results. Though well intentioned, centralised management of TESP II within MET did not assist speedy implementation. Nor did the governance arrangement - the Joint Program Oversight Group (JPOG) – support effective partner dialogue between GoT and DPs at strategic level as intended.

Relevance TESP II was relevant in its design and the focus on early years, strengthening teaching and learning for all children, continues to be relevant in 2015. All components are necessary to raise student achievement but on their own, they are not sufficient without effective integration.

The choice of earmarked budget support for education as the modality was potentially appropriate at the time of design in 2013. However, it was a significant leap for MET and has placed a great deal of responsibility on it for the overall success of the program. It has proved to be too challenging for MET to develop the required capability and advance the program simultaneously. Over and above providing funds for the program, and despite significant input of scarce staff time, there is minimal evidence that DPs have added value.

Effectiveness TESP II cannot be said to be effective at this stage. Information on outcomes is unavailable but it appears unlikely that there has yet been a significant shift towards attaining the outcome level goals set out in the Results Framework. And slowness to implement and report has created a perception among DPs that TESP II is failing. However, evidence gathered during this review suggests that MET may be on the cusp of becoming effective. Whereas the main reforms were achieved under TESP I and Interim program, TESP II is, and needs to be, strongly oriented to consolidation of the developments already in place. Indicators for progress in consolidation are much more difficult to set.

Efficiency Results to date are not commensurate with the amount of time and financial input from DPs and MET. There have been weaknesses in MET decision-making systems resulting sometimes in very slow decisions and other times fast decisions that are not communicated to those responsible for implementation. Capacity to plan for such an ambitious program is still weak. In particular, the absence of a functional EMIS has had a critical effect on the ability to manage efficiently as well as

provide adequate reporting. Above all other factors, this has undermined DP's confidence in the Ministry's ability to successfully implement TESP II. But compared with TESP I, which had a whole division allocated to its management, TESP II has had only one senior manager and a very small number of support staff. This is clearly inadequate for the scale of the task.

Impact It is impossible to demonstrate whether there has been any improvement in learning outcomes as the results of the Standardised Test of Achievement in Tonga (STAT) for 2014 are not yet available. However, TESP II has only been in place for two years, which is too short a time to expect to measure impact.

Sustainability Funding for the types of activities provided for under TESP II is needed, wanted and, in part, being used effectively. GoT could not sustain the investment needed in these areas without continued funding. Some elements of the program, including the planning processes associated with school based management, are now well established, supported and accepted. For other elements, in the early stages of implementation, it is difficult to be confident about sustainability.   An important risk to sustainability is dependency on contracted personnel rather than permanent MET employees.

What do we recommend?

Key priorities until June 2016 are to address the identified weaknesses in MET systems:

1. Planning, reporting and monitoring and evaluation, including better co-ordination of core MET activities and progressive mainstreaming of key functions (e.g. school based management unit) to ensure activities align, are efficiently delivered and are sustainable
2. Information. MET critically needs a clear plan for strengthening the EMIS to produce good quality system information to support future planning, reporting and resource allocation
3. Making a difference in the classroom. MET can make the most difference to teaching and learning in the classroom by prioritising the delivery of professional development, including for principals.

Options for the future. There are three broad options:

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
More intensively-managed earmarked budget support	• Retains ownership with MET • Might make faster progress • Might improve reporting	• Needs more support which DPs would need to contract out
General budget support earmarked for education	• MET has freedom to determine its own priorities for spending • Less burden on DPs (where the mechanism exists)	• MET may not have capacity or willingness to drive progress • DPs may not agree with MET priorities.
Projectisation	• Greater DP control over inputs, outputs and activities • May increase short term results	• Removes authority from MET • May be at expense of longer term sustainability

The money makes a difference and needs to be continued. This could be done using a mixed approach: general budget support for established system support such as school grants and a more managed funding modality for other initiatives which require closer engagement from DPs.

Balancing the fact that around 80% of current TESP II funding is allocated to the key areas of school grants, curriculum and professional development with the likelihood that some elements of the

programme will continue to be underspent, appropriate funding levels in any future program would probably be lower than but still a significant proportion of current levels.

Main report

1   Introduction

1.1   Background to TESP II

1.1.1   History

The Tonga Education Support Program II (TESP II) is the third stage of Development Partners (DPs) support to the Government of Tonga's (GoT) 15-Year Education Policy Framework (EPF). This is a broad strategy from 2004 to 2019 with three overarching goals: to improve equitable access and quality of universal basic education up to Year 8; to improve access and quality of post-basic education; and to improve the administration of education and training.

The first Tonga Education Support Program (TESP I)[1] ran for five years from 2005 to June 2010.It was designed in line with the principles of a Sector-wide Approach (SWAp) which focuses on strengthening sector capacity through a set of partnership principles based on ownership of a single sector policy and expenditure framework and alignment of all official aid to education within the EPF. Management of TESP I was designed to be embedded within existing Government line units; to use government systems for disbursement and all aspects of financial management; and for Partner funds to be advanced in accordance with expenditure needs and accounted for as part of the regular budget reporting. The World Bank was the lead DP and the modality was parallel financing of ear-marked budget support comprising an IDA credit and an NZAID Trust Fund managed by the World Bank.

TESP I supported the establishment of minimum service standards (MSS), school based management (SBM), and school grants as a mechanism to ensure a more equitable provision of Basic Education. It also supported reforms in teacher education, curriculum development, student assessment and improved sector coordination, policy and planning. At the time TESP I concluded the intended longer-term program of support, which was to become TESP II, had not been designed so an Interim Program, to continue essential activities was agreed.

1.1.2   Description of TESP II

The context in which TESP II was designed was very different from its predecessor. Political reform had gathered momentum and the strike of public sector workers, including teachers, had resulted in the restructuring of MEWAC into the Ministry of Education and Training (MET) with a considerably reduced workforce. A new Minister of Education and Chief Executive Officer had been appointed, the Tonga Education Lakalaka Policy Framework 2012-17 had been developed and the Education Act was being revised. By the time TESP II commenced the primary school curriculum was well advanced, including introduction of outcome-based teaching and learning approaches, and grants to support school-based management were established.

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[1] The first program was entitled TESP but, for ease of comparison with TESP II, is referred to here as TESP I

Australia already had a long term commitment to the education sector in Tonga but had not been involved in TESP I. The World Bank did not continue so TESP II was the continuation of a partnership between GoT and New Zealand (MFAT) with Australia joining for the first time.

The goal of TESP II is to help the Government of Tonga establish a more equitable and effective education system that will enhance learning outcomes of young people for further studies, work and adult life.

The key strategic objectives align with GoT's Lakalaka Policy Framework, DFAT's Pacific Education and Skills Development Agenda (PESDA) and MFAT policy, as set out in MET's Corporate Plan 2012-2017:

- Improved access to basic education opportunities so that all children, boys and girls, and those with disabilities, will complete a full course of Universal Basic Education
- Increased early grade student learning outcomes (better reading, writing and understanding of numbers)
- Improved education sector management

TESP II is organized around seven major *thematic components*: curriculum reform and assessment; teacher training and professional development; delivery of an integrated school grants program; early childhood education; inclusive education; knowledge development and dissemination (including technical assistance); and improvements in MET capacity.

At the end of TESP I a thorough evaluation was undertaken. This identified lessons learned which were used as the basis for the design of TESP II. One was that reform was slow and DPs needed to be patient and realistic about the pace and extent of change that is possible. To allow for this one element of the design was implementation in two phases. In the first phase a narrow set of manageable activities was proposed with jointly agreed milestones. Achievement of these would then inform activities and budget for Phase 2.

There was a significant change in the aid modality. TESP I was implemented using the World Bank financial arrangement, which had involved negotiating five bank accounts and at least three currencies. According to the end of program evaluation it proved to be extremely cumbersome and obstructed fund disbursement. Procurement procedures could not be aligned with local processes and this contributed to a lack of real GoT ownership. The modality for TESP II is earmarked budget support. This means that MET plans, manages and implements the program, using GoT procurement and financial management and a Statement of Partnership Principles, signed in November 2014, lays out agreed ways of working.

Australia is the main funder with an original commitment of AUD 10.5 million for an implementation time frame of April 2013 to June 2016. An additional AUD$1.5 million could be utilised by AusAID (now DFAT) for technical assistance, research activities, progress reviews and related support for implementation. New Zealand's total commitment is TOP 12m (currently about NZD 8.2 million). However, due to significant delays in implementation and expenditure by MET, the funding commitment by DFAT was reduced in 2014/2015 to AUD 6.5 million.

1.2   Purpose and objectives of the Review

The primary purpose of the review, as stated in the Terms of Reference (Annex 3), is to provide information that will inform DFAT's decision about whether to continue to fund basic education in the 2015 Aid Investment Plan.

A secondary purpose is to inform priority actions for MET and DPs to achieve the outcomes of TESP II within the timeframe available and with a view to sustainability of achievements.

Important background to the purpose is that, during 2014, there was no Australian or New Zealand disbursement because there were still substantial unused funds in the Tongan Ministry of Finance from 2013. A potential withdrawal by Australia is situated in the context that the New Zealand aid program prioritises education in Tonga. There are also multiple donor programs in the education sector, which creates an aid coordination burden for MET. For DFAT, and also true for MFAT, there are insufficient staff at Post to manage, monitor and oversee the implementation of activities in the current modality. In this context Australia is not clear that it is adding value.

There are five objectives of the review. Broadly these are to: assess performance; assess efficiency and 'value add'; make recommendations to strengthen performance; identify components that are likely to require continued funding and technical support to be sustainable; recommend modalities that will better address identified issues.

1.3   Methodology

The review was undertaken by a team of five comprising two independent consultants (one Team Leader and one recruited by MFAT), two officials from DFAT Canberra office and one representative of GoT. This composition was in line with Partnership Principles to undertake reviews jointly.

An Evaluation Plan was prepared based on consideration of the review TOR and preliminary document analysis. The in-country mission lasted two weeks and consisted of interviews with key stakeholders and visits to 18 schools in Ha'apai, Vava'u , and Tongatapu.

A significant limitation to the review was the quality of information. This included the absence of even basic information and the weak validity and reliability of what was available.

At the end of the mission a presentation was made to GoT and DPs, based on discussions between team members in order to arrive at conclusions and recommendations that were jointly owned.

The methodology is explained in detail in an extract from the Evaluation Plan in Annex 2.

2   The results of TESP II

2.1   Evaluating achievements

Evaluating the achievements of TESP II is very challenging. There are two tools for assessment of TESP II. The overarching Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) sets out the three higher order goals. It has indicators and outcome targets which are intended to be measured at the end of the program in June 2016.

TESP II Goal	Indicator	Baseline Measure
Improved access to education	Gross Enrolment Ratio	GER

opportunities so that all children, boys and girls alike, complete a full course of Universal Basic Education	Net Enrolment Ratio Proportion of children starting Class 1 completing Class 6 primary school	NER EMIS Annual Report
Increased early grade student learning outcomes (better reading and understanding of numbers)	% Class 3 students reading in Tongan language at national benchmark standard % Class 4&6 achieve national literacy standard % Class 4&6 at national numeracy standard	TEGRA 2009 STAT 2011 " "
Improved education sector management	% annual budget allocation spent on agreed workplan activities Fiduciary compliance	Financial and activity monitoring report 2013 Audit Report 2013

The Results Framework was developed in October 2014 with the purpose of setting out short term outcomes so that progress towards the goals could be monitored.

Short term outcome	Source of data
Improved access to basic education	MET EMIS, IE Scoping report, ECE reports
Improved student learning	TEGRA, STAT, MET reports
Improved teacher quality	MET EMIS, Appraisal reports, PD reports, TIOE reports, TNQAB reports
Improved learning environment	MET reports, GoT reports
Improved MET performance	MET Annual Report, Audit reports, workplan, budget, JPOG reports

These short term outcomes are the starting point for the Review and the team sought to gather evidence to assess progress against the targets. For student learning, the indicators are the STAT and Tonga Early Grade Reading Assessment (TEGRA) results. TEGRA has not been repeated since the baseline. STAT was done in 2014 but the results are not yet available from the Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA)[2] which was commissioned to analyse them. However, as STAT results are the main indicator of student achievement at goal level, their lack of availability for the Review is not critical.

More critical for the Review is the lack of data for four out of five short term indicators that are intended to be measured through information supplied in MET reports. The limited nature and low quality of reporting has been a frustration for DPs throughout TESP II. For MET there have been two separate but related challenges. One is the capacity to produce reports that meet the accountability requirements of donors. The other is the capacity of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) to deliver valid and reliable data in a timely way. This is a source of ongoing frustration for internal stakeholders who cannot access even the most basic information.

2.2   Progress against outcomes and targets

Acknowledging the paucity of data, this section is structured against the agreed indicators of the Results Framework. The full updated details are presented in Annex 1.

2.2.1   Improved access to basic education

As shown in the table below, the indicators of improved access are attendance and completion for all children, increased numbers of children with disability, and increased numbers of children attending Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Results expected	Achievement
All children will be attending and moving towards completion of primary school	Official data indicates that this target has long been achieved

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[2] Recently renamed Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP)

Increased numbers of children with a disability have access to quality learning opportunities	This indicator is not tracked. The baseline of 24 students is unreliable
Increased numbers of children attend Early Childhood Education Programs	Increase in numbers of 4 year olds: Boys 955 to 1,078; Girls 877 to 1.054. GER for ECE increased from 33.8% in 2013 to 39.9% in 2014

Progress on disability inclusion has been very limited until recently. MET has had low capacity in the absence of the key staff member who has been in New Zealand undertaking a Bachelor's Degree in Human Services (Disability). Now that she is returned there is already tangible progress. There were also delays with the Scoping Study owing to non-response to repeated tenders. The Scoping Study will be useful for developing a strategic plan although addressing community and teacher attitudes concerning the educability of children with disabilities is a generational challenge. In addition, rapid progress in this area will require high level support within MET which, in the face of other priorities, it has not had to date.

For ECE, the main activity has been conducting planning and registration training for 214 ECE centre staff and owners in all five island groups. This included preparation of Planner Books and distribution of 85 copies. Activities built on earlier development of the National Policy, Strategic Plan and Curriculum. At the deadline on 31 March 2015, 83 institutions (47%) were registered and there is an expectation that all will be registered before the end of TESP II. One ECE grant payment of TOP95,000 was made in the 2013/14 year. Further payments were scheduled for the 2014/15 year but have been delayed into the 2015/16 year.

2.2.2   Improved student learning

The indicators of improved student learning are increased literacy and numeracy in primary schools and appropriate curriculum and support used by early grade teachers.

Results expected	Achievement
Increased literacy and numeracy levels of all students in primary schools	STAT was conducted in 2014 but the contract with SPBEA is ongoing and data is not yet analysed
Appropriate curriculum and resources being used by early grade teachers	No. of schools piloting EG reading in Tongan language – no consolidated[3] data No. of teachers participating in PD for reading development – no data

The new curriculum for the four core subjects[4] was written in TESP I in 2008 and rolled out in 2010/11. Most materials were distributed in 2013. It had been envisaged that the three subjects that were outstanding[5] from TESP I could be completed during the Interim program but these rolled over into TESP II and were completed in 2014. Additional challenges arose as, by February 2015, only 60% of the scheduled materials had been printed and distributed owing to breakdown of the printer. Initially there was a delay in procuring spare parts from overseas. But the decision to procure was then cancelled as one of the activities in the workplan was a review of the Production Unit, which would determine the cost effectiveness of continuing with an in–house printing facility. This is currently in progress but was long delayed owing to difficulties procuring a capable reviewer. This

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[3] The team were informed that data is available within each relevant Division. It is not available in a consolidated form or in EMIS.

[4] Tongan Language, Science, Mathematics, English Language

[5] The team were informed by CDU that these were Design & Technology, Tongan Society & Culture, and Health & Fitness for Classes 1-6 and Forms 1 and 2. However, following the First Draft of this report there were differences of opinion about what was outstanding with the official MET version being only Mathematics and Tongan Language.

small example is a good indication of the greater challenge for MET of managing the procurement system.

This is now the third year in which all schools have had access to at least the four core subjects of the new curriculum. While progress has been made in the implementation of the new curriculum, Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) are aware that not all teachers understand the materials and the underpinning philosophy of outcome based education. They know from their own visits, as well as those of other teams such as Professional Development Unit (PDU) or School Based Management (SBM) that some resources are still inaccessible.[6]

Changes have been made to the first edition of Teacher Guides and Student Workbooks, based on feedback obtained from teachers and principals during the rollout. The second editions were reprinted and distributed in January 2015. These were mentioned by some of those interviewed by the review team during school visits.

CDU have also been designing, piloting and reviewing new primary materials including the writing of 160 Tongan and English language readers.

An important current activity for CDU is the review of STAT. Phases 1 & 2 have been completed but phases 3 & 4 are dependent on receiving the results and recommendations of the analysis from SPBEA, which is taking longer than expected. The intention is that they would be used to determine benchmarks for Class 1 to 3 in languages and mathematics and to develop a new assessment instrument. Although the STAT Review is a separate activity, its progress affects sequencing of other activities. This means that the TESP II activity to develop benchmarks for class 1 to class 3 in languages and mathematics has been held back by CDU so that it can be properly sequenced with feedback from the STAT review. The benchmarks for all subjects have been incorporated into the curriculum.

Also in this result area there has been delivery of specialised training on Writing and Spelling Lea Faka-Tonga by Dr Melenaite Taumoefolau of Auckland University.

2.2.3   Improved teacher quality

Improved teacher quality is measured by three indicators: increased proportion of teachers with teacher training qualifications; improved professional development and assessment; and improved capacity of the Tonga Institute of Education (TIOE).

Results expected	Achievement
Increased proportion of teachers with teacher-training qualifications.	Data in the MET Annual Report is not in a form to report reliably on this indicator
Teacher quality is improved through professional development and assessment	PD is ongoing and reaches most of the island groups. PD through radio is weekly but visits are not as frequent as planned
Improved capacity of TIOE to deliver quality training	Minimal progress – chronic issues not yet addressed

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[6] The team was informed during one interview that some materials are locked away in cupboards or are not used because they are not valued. Whilst this is likely – or at least common in other countries – other views in MET were that such practice had not been observed.

Professional development and teacher assessment

Ongoing teacher professional development is the responsibility of the PDU. Most of the eight staff were experienced teachers who were writers of the new curriculum in CDU and later transferred to a new PDU under the Teaching and Learning Division. These staff are now very experienced with the materials and familiar with the issues teachers face when using the curriculum materials. They use a range of methods consistent with good practice to support teachers. This includes delivery of PD in the school context, linking PD to student outcomes, and providing feedback to teachers as a group to foster ongoing professional dialogue. Repeat visits help to provide a longitudinal picture of what is going on.

The PD team have made regular visits to schools on Tongatapu over the last two years. However, the travel plan is subject to budget confirmation and, as this is always slow, PD staff cannot usually complete their travel schedules. Delay in travel approval is one of the reasons why PD has only been extended to the outer islands this year. However, a more significant reason was that ACCENT – an MFAT-funded project – was working with the PD team on a new framework which would affect the number and types of visits.

By their own assessment, professional development continues to be a major task. PDU are involved not only supporting teachers to use the materials effectively in the classroom but also helping principals develop the skills to support teachers as well as providing inputs to the Area Officers who supervise clusters of schools and are responsible for follow up monitoring. Each of these professional categories have individuals who are performing at varying levels of effectiveness.

Although MET has a consistent approach to PD, there are other projects that cut across the established approach. In particular, the Pacific Early Age Readiness and Learning (PEARL) methodology for teaching phonics in the Tongan language were a source of concern, and in some cases ridicule, in those schools visited that are part of the pilot. This was seen as potentially damaging in the classrooms compared with other projects that reinforced PDU's approach.

At the same time as supporting teaching practice, PDU are also working on teacher assessment, linked to the curriculum. One method is to randomly select students and test them in Tongan language, English language, and numeracy. This data is then used to identify weaknesses in learning and to prepare resources for teachers to help them address specific difficulties.

Formal teacher assessment is the responsibility of the Staff Appraisal Team[7]. As with most of TESP II there have been long delays in starting activities. A new Staff Appraisal Process is being piloted but identifying qualified appraisers has been difficult. This seems to be currently on hold so that it can be aligned with other changes likely to be made after the report of the STAT analysis is received.[8]

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[7] Unfortunately it was not possible to meet this small team as members were out of the country or travelling at the time
[8] There were different views within MET about the extent to which TESP II activities were, or should be, affected by the desirability of sequencing with the STAT Review

Capacity of Tonga Institute of Education

A 2012 review of TIOE[9] was highly critical of capacity. It stated that four previous reviews over the previous decade had made the same points and the same recommendations but that there had been little change. Weaknesses were across the board including staffing, curricula and course delivery, learning resources and environment, teaching spaces and staff offices, facilities and equipment. At the time of this review the same concerns continue. In part this seems to be because reform of TIOE, and in particular the development of tertiary level teachers, has never been a high enough priority in MET over and above its inclusion in plans. In the face of a consistently limited budget, chronic challenges of capacity, and competing priorities within the general category of teacher training it has been very difficult to make progress over the years. All reviews have recommended semi-autonomous status for TIOE so that it can be in control of its own budget but this seems unlikely to be approved.

There was little activity during the first year of TESP II. Subsequently, through a partnership with USP Institute of Education, TIOE has completed their Five Year Strategic Plan which was based on a 2012 scoping study. They are also working on the upgrading of TIOE teachers' qualifications, strengthening of the professional and research capacity of staff and improving the content and delivery of TIOE programs and courses. All of these activities are challenging to implement because they are interlinked and delays in one aspect affect the others. Upgrading of qualifications was postponed while the Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching was under review and it was offered initially only to USP staff. Subsequently several TIOE staff have enrolled for the Master's degree at their own expense as this is not covered under TESP II. The intention is that all new qualifications will be accredited with the Tongan National Qualifications Authority Board which is aware that change is in the pipeline. The qualification of the Masters' programme at USP is already recognised.

The main delay has been in the most needed activity of refurbishment of the TIOE building. Facilities have long been woefully inadequate. The scoping of TIOE did not take place until 2014 when TA was selected by DFAT. At that time the management of both TIOE and MET were under the impression that DFAT would handle the refurbishment and it was not confirmed until later that the responsibility lay with MET. The second delay occurred during the procurement process because of the time and capacity needed to confirm a multitude of complicated and technical specifications. This took more than one year. When the contract was finally ready in April, there was a third delay because, in the absence of a timely contract, the contractor was involved in other work in Ha'apai. The contract was awarded in August and work is scheduled to start in November. It will exceed the allocated budget.

Teacher training qualifications

Following the scoping study the entry standard for the Diploma course was raised and the content revised to be completed in two years rather than three. The intention is then to move to a Bachelors qualification. The shortened 2-year diploma has run from the start of this year and there has been a drop off in numbers reflecting the higher entry requirements,

Upgrading of unqualified teachers has been very challenging and there has been significant underspend owing to the lack of availability of teachers to relieve for those who are in training. Not

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[9] Cited in *Review of Tonga Institute of Education,* Oct 2012, undertaken by University of the South Pacific

only does this reduce uptake of courses but it creates stress on the system at school level as other teachers have to cover classes. This can be seen by comparing the amount paid out to relievers, which is much less than the numbers upgrading. 33 teachers completed the secondary upgrading certificate for graduates in 2014 and 32 completed the certificate for undergraduates. Only 18 relieving teachers were funded. This year there are 10 teachers enrolled in each of the secondary graduate and undergraduate programmes. Numbers at the primary level have been much lower with no primary teachers undertaking the upgrading in 2014 and 6 doing so this year.

A new Bachelor of Early Childhood Education is also in development. It draws on a model developed at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) for teachers in Pasifika language in New Zealand. This has also been delayed owing to challenges of putting in place institutional arrangements for twinning with AUT. MET are now contracting the advisers individually and this process has been protracted.

2.2.4   Improved learning environment – classrooms, resources, principal training in SBM

Indicators for improved teaching and learning environments are the number of classrooms built and refurbished and the quantity and diversity of teaching and learning resources available to teachers in classrooms and primary schools planning, managing and accountable for teaching and learning performance.

Results expected	Achievement
Improved teaching and learning environments	Some progress but not to the anticipated levels
Primary schools are planning, managing and accountable for teaching and learning performance	Some progress

MET has been undertaking some refurbishment of the school environment with upgrades of toilets and the provision of 30 water tanks, mainly on Tongatapu. In addition it has had to deal with significant damage to school buildings on Ha'apai as a result of the 2014 cyclone which has necessitated the relocation of some schools while property is restored (currently in progress). However there has been a significant delay on a major refurbishment of GPS Kahoua some of the reasons for which appear to lie with wider government procurement processes rather than the MET.

 While, as noted above, re-distribution of curriculum resources including readers has been slower than planned, there is evidence of these being available and used in classrooms.

MET has continued to pay the school grant for Primary levels to Form 2and is maintaining the operation of the School Based Management (SBM) system, although the non-government secondary schools grant payment has been deferred in 2015 pending an investigation as to how the money has been used.

The SBM processes are now a well-established feature of the system. The SBM team systematically visits all schools reviewing their planning processes and resource allocation decisions. The team is a trusted source of advice and guidance for schools and particularly new principals.

As part of the system schools are required to analyse their performance over the past twelve months, identify priorities in terms of the MSS for the next twelve months and plan actions and allocate resources in line with this.

With these processes firmly established there appear to be opportunities to capitalise on them in order to lift school performance further. This would require a consistently stronger emphasis on the learning objectives of school planning with some further assistance to principals to help ensure greater consistency in the way they think about this. Specific professional development for principals beyond the coaching and mentoring provided by the SBM team and the Area Organisers is not systematically available.

Some work has been advanced on moving to a unified school grant but this has been held up due to the illness of the technical adviser who undertook the work. A report is yet to be received from this work which was undertaken in 2014.

Work on simplification of the MSS has not progressed. The intent of this work is to make it easier for schools to identify their priorities and focus their efforts. Views differed amongst those spoken to as to whether it was preferable to leave the MSS unchanged given schools are now very familiar with them and concentrate on how the schools are thinking about using the MSS or whether some rationalisation would assist schools to think differently.

Finally the review team was advised that significant salary differences between government and non-government school teachers persist and in fact have not changed much, raising questions about how the salaries grant to non-government schools is being used. The apparent dependence on these grants by non-government schools also means that the impact on them could be significant if donor support for these is suspended or discontinued.

2.2.5   Improved MET performance – sector management, evidence based policy analysis, planning, budgeting and decision making by MET, achievement of MSS

The indicators of improved MET performance are improved sector management, improved evidence based policy analysis, planning, budgeting and decision-making by MET and achievement of MET Minimum Service Standards.

Results expected	Achievement
Improved education sector management	Lack of comprehensive reporting against indicators and targets makes this difficult to assess
Improved evidence-based policy analysis, planning, budgeting and decision-making by MET	Slow progress in progressing activities and using funding suggests this has not been achieved.
Achievement of MET Minimum Service Standards (MSS)	Data not available

Pace of progress

There has been an inability to advance initiatives as quickly as planned or desired and to develop some of the core processes that are essential to support more rapid progress. This is in spite of a strong commitment at ministerial and executive level to make progress.

Expenditure in the program was particularly slow in the year which is perhaps not particularly surprising as it always takes time to generate momentum. For the whole of the 2013/14 fiscal year all budget items (apart from expenditure on school grants and ECE) were underspent by in excess of 80%.

Recently there has been some acceleration in activity. Expenditure in the key area of professional development in the December quarter of 2014 was nearly three times the level in the March quarter

of 2014. Expenditure in the curriculum area in the December quarter of 2014 was up by nearly a half on that in the March quarter (source MET acquittals information). But even then, for the 2014/15 year as whole expenditure appears likely to still be well under budget (full year figures were not available for the review team).

Over-estimation of what could be achieved in a particular timeframe appears to be a contributor to the underspend. In addition it was suggested to the review team that the budgets were developed top down rather than through a bottom up estimate of what could realistically be delivered by each Division or unit.

However, it should still have been possible for the MET to make faster progress in implementing the program. Some of the reasons that it was not able to do this appear to relate to internal dynamics within MET in relation to planning, budgeting and accountability. The review team was told by some managers that they were not aware of the resources that were available to them to advance work and/or that when they sought approval to advance work there were sometimes long delays in getting the required approval. Work also appeared to have occurred in siloes with opportunities for greater collaboration between different parts of MET not being exploited. This has given rise to concerns about the number of unconnected activities impacting on schools with the potential to disrupt rather than enhance teaching and learning.

Capacity in key areas

There also appears to be lack of capacity and capability in the MET in certain key areas. The Policy and Planning Function was abolished some years ago and the organisation appears to have suffered in terms of its ability to both plan for and report on key TESP I initiatives.[10] Reporting on progress against the results framework has not been as systematic or comprehensive as it needed to be in order to support management of the programs (e.g. identify log jams) and explain to key stakeholders what was or was not happening in the program. For instance, as a small example of this, two progress reports dated August 2014 and February 2015 show completely different figures for the expenditure of the program in the 2013/14 year. While there may be a logical reason for this, lack of clarity about such basic information makes it difficult for donors to understand what is going on and undermines confidence.

As already touched upon the Education Management Information System (EMIS) is another key area of weakness and one that seems to have been in that state for some time. Despite resources being made available in TESP II to develop systems and capability in this area, little progress has been made and there does not as yet seem to be an agreed way forward. The current state of the information systems undermines the ability of the system to provide core data so as to monitor and analyse key sector developments and chart progress (or lack of it). The inability in this review to track developments in a number of key areas relates to this.

At the heart of the information challenge is the very low capacity of EMIS. In the EMIS Unit information collection and analysis processes are very labour intensive. There is debate about appropriate methods for collecting data with existing staff wanting to physically visit schools because they do not trust other means of data collection. While staff were confident about the

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[10] At the time of the Review the Policy and Planning Department was being reintroduced.

work they had done in collecting data in 2014 using this process, they were concerned that their report had not yet been approved for release by the Government.[11] A different processes for data collection was used in 2015. Staff in the EMIS unit commented that they are "*longing and yearning for a database*". An example of the challenges they face, they were unable to access any 2013 data in order to prepare for the 2014 Annual Report. The reason is unclear but appears to be a result of very high turnover in the EMIS Unit, which created inconsistencies in data processing combined with management on individual laptops and memory sticks. This experience of such an insecure system, in which it is not known where data is held, has meant that the EMIS Unit is unwilling to deal with any information on examinations and assessment for fear of it falling into the wrong hands.

Finally, in areas such as procurement and financial management the MET still has room for improvement. MET appears to have taken some time to come to terms with the government's new procurement requirements. While not all the delays in the program caused by procurement issues have been the MET's responsibility, some of the problems could have been lessened if the MET had come up to speed more quickly with the requirements. There appears to be room for the financial processes to be strengthened further as well. For instance the review team was advised by the Ministry of Finance and National Planning that it is now managing receipt of revenues on behalf of MET in order to ensure that revenue received is appropriately recorded and receipted.[12] Currently a Review of the Finance Division is being undertaken under TESP II.

A common factor in explaining some of the issues that the MET has encountered has been continued losses of staff, movement of staff between divisions of the Ministry and an inability to recruit the right capability for key tasks. This has made it harder to make improvements in key systems.

Overall the MET has not been able to quickly address some of the key issues impacting on the progress of the program or its own capacity and capability, despite financial resources being available to support this in TESP II. Items for immediate action to improve program management identified in progress reports in 2014 are still subject to ongoing work currently.

2.3   Observations from school visits

The school visits enabled the review team to understand how the various components of TESP II fit together. We were able to verify that *most of the teachers had curriculum materials in the classrooms* visited. Some had deteriorated in condition and some had been taken by teachers when they moved schools but, in the latter cases, the teachers appeared to have access to copies made on photocopiers purchased using the school grant.

Different teachers and principals had different levels of appreciation of the materials. In some cases the teachers understood the purpose of the new curriculum and what outcomes they were supposed to achieve. This group could easily give clear examples of how they teach, how they assess, and what they see in terms of improved student learning. Others said that they appreciated the new curriculum but that they also used materials or methods from the old one. Of these

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[11] In fact the EMIS report is part of MET's Annual Report which is tabled in Cabinet before being passed to the Legislative Assembly for discussion and final approval. At the time of the review no 2014 Annual Reports had been discussed.

[12] In part this is because the substantive Procurement Officer was promoted to the Finance Division and could continue to oversee management.

teachers, some could articulate a convincing rationale for mixed methods compared with others who are probably not using the new methods.

There seem to be two main reasons for non-use. One is that some of the new materials are too difficult for some teachers to understand either conceptually or, especially for materials in English, because the language is beyond their reading and comprehension level. The other reason is that delivering the new curriculum requires the teacher to be a lot more active in the classroom than some are prepared to be. Observations of the team when walking past classrooms confirmed that some teachers were very active and engaged with students in group work. Others sat at the front of the classroom with students seated in traditional rows copying from the blackboard. Some classrooms were filled with the sound of children studying together but others were either very noisy or overly quiet, neither of which are conducive to learning.

In discussion with teachers in the classrooms it was easy to see the *wide range of capacity*. Some could easily explain how they used group work and what strategies they used to manage mixed ability classes. When asked about why some children were not achieving they could talk about the range of reasons and the importance of parental support in the home. At the other end of the scale, some teachers gave the impression that they were only interested in the performance of the brighter children and were not concerned about the 'slow learners', even when they were the majority in the class.

All teachers had several children in their class who were not ready for that level. Although some attributed this to the inability of the child to learn, most believed that the main reasons were a combination of poor teaching in previous grades and inadequate support from parents. The better teachers had specific strategies for working with mixed ability classes and promoted a culture of reading. Some spoke proudly of the results they got but others said there were limits to what they could achieve if they had large classes and if they additionally had to cover for absent teachers.

In Class 6 the team heard about the *stress of the national exam* on both student and teacher. The exam is high stakes for the students as they and their parents aspire to the Government High Schools which only take the best performing students. For the teachers there is particular stress because they are judged according to the number of children who get places at such schools. This is additionally stressful because it is often the best teachers in the school who are allocated to Class 6 and they have to cope with failures of teaching in earlier grades. Two teachers commented that they wanted to move to the early grades because of the disruption to their family lives caused by having to give extra classes before and after school, which appears to be the norm in most schools.

Teaching and learning is made more difficult if the school environment is poor. In Ha'apai all schools visited had been affected by the cyclone and most were still in temporary, cramped accommodation more than a year later. In Vav'au the classrooms were a riot of colourful teaching aids even if the rooms themselves were in poor condition. As the materials were similar it was difficult to know whether teachers were really using them for learning or whether they were simply for decoration. But it was clear that the creative ideas had been shared through PD visits between schools and that common practices such as lamination to preserve materials were attractive enough for teachers to want to copy them. In Tongatapu the physical condition of the schools visited appeared worse than Vav'au and there far fewer materials on display in the classrooms.

Overall, the team had the impression that *there were exceptional and creative teachers, who were getting good results from their students, in many of the schools visited regardless of island group.* Likewise, even the schools that were supposedly performing well there was acknowledgement of the challenges in managing teachers who were unmotivated, often absent, or ineffective.

Most teachers had received inputs from the PD team. Some were able to give clear examples of things they had learned and how they had utilised the knowledge or skill in the classroom. Every Friday teachers listen to a radio broadcast from the Teaching and Learning Division in collaboration with PDU, which is based on points the PD team have picked up during their visits. Most principals seem to be holding PD sessions, as required, after the broadcast, which includes teachers presenting lessons for peer appraisal or methods that work. There were several examples of how early grade teachers had been able to improve their mathematics teaching – an acknowledged weakness for many – based on guidance from experienced mathematics teachers. Some principals are also very active in walking around the classrooms to monitor teacher quality.

Principals almost universally see the school grant being used to improve the quality of learning. Although this is at a relatively basic level (provision of exercise books and pencils for students and teaching and learning resources for teachers such as charts and greater ability to do photocopying) the contribution that it can make to a more favourable learning environment should not be overlooked. Principals said that increased availability of resources for teachers helped them to spend more time on activities that could help to raise student learning. Provision of basic materials for students mitigated the risk of them not attending school because their families could not or would not provide materials.

There is a strong sense of schools recognising that they have accountability for outcomes and the expectations to plan and manage for improvement seem to be well established. All schools visited are following the school based management requirements to annually identify their school priorities, as they relate to the Minimum Service Standards, and plan accordingly to make progress against these priorities (including through the allocation of the school grant). As already discussed, schools are also very focused on results in the Class 6 national examination, although the extent to which they are focused on all students doing well, as opposed to what they perceive as the more able, is variable.

While the planning for improvement process is well established *SBM has more potential to make a difference to student learning.* Links between identified priorities and specific actions to address those priorities still appear weak (partly because schools have a limited range of tools at their disposal to address these) and resource allocation decisions are still rather rudimentary. Nevertheless there is a platform on which to build a stronger focus on improvement in the future.

In this regard, *professional development for principals still appears to be under-developed*. Principals receive advice that they find valuable on planning and the use of resources from the SBM team. Principals are also involved along with their staff in the professional development discussions provided by the MET and in some areas have the chance to share ideas with their colleagues in other local schools as part of forums organised by the MET's Area Organisers. But most principals spoken to had not had a chance to participate in formal development focused on equipping them as leaders of teaching and learning. At least two principals were new in position and had not received any leadership training for the role.

Looking at how the school systems operate more generally on the ground, *the review team did not notice any discernible difference in access to resources or support for schools on the different islands* (apart from the provision of professional development to the outer islands where there has been some acknowledged delay). Schools on Tongatapu are in no better condition than those in the other island groups and all schools seemed to have access to curriculum resources and local MET support which was consistent with what MET officials told us. The daily radio broadcasts appear to be a widely used way of inputting into all schools on key areas of the curriculum and appear to be a core part of each school's activities.

Although the school grant has addressed some of the acknowledged differences between government and non-government schools there is still a sense of disparity in the schools visited.

3 Analysis of the results

3.1 Are education results improving overall?

The review team is not able to offer a firm view on whether education results are improving because it did not have information on the main measures of outcomes, that is the national secondary school entrance exam and the STAT. Interviews with stakeholders in MET and at school level revealed mixed views about whether education results were improving or deteriorating over time and frustration with the lack of evidence.

At the time of the review methods of student assessment were being discussed in the political domain, including a possible return to raw results. At classroom level some of those teachers who had thought about assessment commented that the STAT test was not always a good indicator of student capability and that there were inconsistencies between what was taught in the curriculum and what was being measured.

Although the latest STAT analysis was not available there was anecdotal and observational evidence in all schools that large numbers of children are not reaching their class standard and that the gaps between the level of the class and their ability widen as they pass through each grade.

3.2 Is the theory of change realistic?

3.2.1 Theory of change

TESP II does not have an explicit theory of change. The design has an indicative Performance Assessment framework, which specifies the higher level goals, and details about the activities for the first phase. But there is no detailed explanation of the pathway between the activities and the goals, nor any hypothesis about what changes will be brought about.

Several assumptions underpin the design of TESP II. These are shown below, along with the reality.

Assumption	Reality
The sum of the activities will produce results	The resources for activities of TESP II are necessary for improved results but they are not sufficient
Change will happen fast	Change cannot happen fast. It takes time to design, plan and implement
The modality will be beneficial to GoT and DPs	The modality needs much more support than anticipated
Student learning achievement will improve in	Improvements in learning achievement take much longer

a three year timeframe

From the outset all stakeholders understood that the design of TESP II was over-ambitious. On the DP's side, the design document lays out the learning from TESP I and how it was applied for TESP II. The main lessons were that stakeholders need to be patient and realistic about the pace of change and that, when the design is over ambitious, there will still be 'unfinished business' at its conclusion. Earmarking key activities for a first phase rather than the whole program and negotiating targets that were realistic was intended to be the way of addressing it. However, as the review of progress against expected outcomes in section 2.2 demonstrates, TESP II has continued to suffer from unrealistic expectations. At this stage, we can conclude with certainty that a new program[13] needs at least one to one and a half years to establish itself before it is in a position to deliver.

The over-ambition is most evident in the Performance and Results Framework. There are three broad problems. The first is that the main indicators are improvements in learning achievement which global experience tells us are not at all realistic within a three year timeframe. The second is that several so-called short term indicators are not being measured and, given the weakness of EMIS, were never likely to be measured. The third problem is one of reporting. Activities are laid out in the annual workplan and budget and these do not align with the results framework. This means that there is tension between the indicators of progress (led by DPs and oriented to outcomes) and what is actually being done in the various divisions (led by MET and oriented by outputs). So even when MET provides reports, which is particularly difficult for them, they do not meet the accountability requirements of donors. This frustration is registered in successive JPOG minutes.

One senior stakeholder commented that 'ambition' was a word learned from donors. The implication was that, although donors are concerned about high expectations within unrealistic timeframes, Tongans are less concerned about the gap between what they would like to achieve and what they know is likely to be possible. This is based on long experience of planning which is disconnected from resources and is common in most countries where planning is under developed. It also reflects a view that plans need to be adjusted in light of the knowledge gained from trying to put them into place.

As DPs are usually flexible in this kind of modality it should have been possible to negotiate changes in the different requirements and expectations. However, with severe stress on the human resources of both DPs and MET, it appears there was not enough time for any of the partners to get to grips with them. In part this is because results frameworks are conceptually challenging and require a lot of work to become meaningful and useful. Ultimately, although getting results is a high priority, establishing the tools to demonstrate them is not.

3.2.2   Enablers and limiters of change

There are enablers of change at the system and at school level. In the system, some of the most important elements are in place and working. The curriculum is in use and there are materials available for teachers and students. School grants are supporting school based management and

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[13] TESP II is an extension of TESP I and the Interim program in that there is continuation of core reforms in curriculum and assessment as well as provision of school grants. However, there was a gap of almost two years before TESP II commenced and the modality was different so it was effectively a new program.

there is evidence that these are at least working towards learning outcomes at a basic level. Professional development is now being delivered to most teachers. In schools there are some examples of excellent practice by teachers and principals.

At the same time there are many factors limiting change. *The program management capacity is not adequate for the scale of the program.* Compared with TESP I, which had a whole division allocated to its management, TESP II has had only one senior manager and one support staff. This is clearly inadequate for the scale of the task. Although increasing MET capacity is included as one of the intended outcomes in the design of TESP II, and although there has always been recognition that there was insufficient management capacity for an ambitious program, the budget allocation for increased staffing has not been fully utilised and little progress has been made in building capacity. It has proved to be too challenging for MET to develop the required capability and advance the program simultaneously. An inability to provide sufficiently robust planning and reporting has undermined attempts to progress implementation and has not helped donors to understand what is or is not occurring in the programme and the reasons for that.

The MET internal system can be very slow, especially in processing financial payments and in moving through the procurement requirements and there are several capacity challenges. In some cases – notably finance - there are not enough staff to do the job in a timely way and this can create long delays in implementing activities. In some cases – notably procurement –understanding and using the system and processes requires a level of conceptual skill across all staff. In other cases – notably EMIS - it takes time to develop the technical skill in individuals as well as in the unit. The challenge is exacerbated when staff are moved frequently.

 The way in which change is managed is also crucial. During TESP II there was a concerted attempt to drive change in a coherent way. In part this meant establishing a more centrally driven approach to management of the programme. This had been identified in TESP I as a barrier to coherence, effectiveness and efficiency.[14] However, getting coherence required activities to be sequenced and this meant that some activities were held back until others were completed. This style of management has been interpreted by most staff as 'centralisation' and it was resented by most of those interviewed. Certainly there were lapses in communication, in part because of pressure to deliver, and an unintended consequence was that things moved slowly. But the most common complaint from staff was that they didn't know what their budget was and didn't get any feedback on their plans. Although this is related to management style, it may be more a reflection of system weakness. With a change in CEO there is currently a reversion to 'decentralisation' in which managers will be responsible for their plans and budgets and the senior management team is meeting more regularly to review work programmes.

One of the greatest limiters of change is the absence of good quality information. The limitations of available information and capacity in key information functions (particularly EMIS) have already been identified. Even the best of managers cannot plan, manage performance or report on results

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[14] The evaluation of TESP stated "There remains an urgent need for clear, formal articulation of policies to define the rationale and approach of the reform process and structural changes so that all MEWAC senior managers gain a clear strategic understanding of and commitment to the reforms.

without information. In CDU, for example, they do not know how many of each level of class there are in which schools and so cannot distribute the right number of teacher guides and student workbooks. The team heard various other anecdotes of how the absence of the most basic information affected their ability to do their job properly.   Sorting these issues is a key foundation for stronger programme management in the future.

The governance arrangement for TESP II has not supported effective partner dialogue. The JPOG was intended to enable a conversation at strategic level between GoT and DPs. This never really took place. Because things were moving slowly there was little to report and, because reports were required every 6 months, little attention was given to them in the face of struggles to get implementation off the ground. As DPs were not receiving the kind of information or reports they needed, they used the JPOG for that purpose and this led to discussion becoming bogged down in the detail of implementation. Preparation for the JPOG was viewed by DPs as inadequate but is inevitable given that preparing for such a forum is a significant amount of skilled work and there was no Secretariat to do it. Again, the very small number of staff involved in the management of the program were more than fully occupied with other priorities. Outside the JPOG it was sometimes difficult for DPs to get access to the CEO, something which is partly explained by the pressures of several programs running in parallel in MET. Overall, with limitations on all sides, it has been difficult to negotiate a partnership in which all parties understand and support each other.

Other factors limiting achievement relate to the time teachers and children spend in teaching and learning. The school day is short and the time available can be seriously eroded due to ceremonial and social obligations. This puts undue pressure on everyone as well as reducing potential to achieve the outcome and impact of improved student learning achievement.

3.3   Is the modality appropriate?

There is no doubt that *the funds provided by Australia and New Zealand are needed, wanted and, for the most part, used appropriately*. Although not provable, it is likely that schooling outcomes in Tonga would be worse if the funds were not provided. However it is also true that most progress has been made and benefit is being derived from initiatives that started well before TESP II. In terms of the initiatives that were new to TESP II and intended to give the system a real lift in performance, the results are far less satisfactory.

The modality of earmarked budget support adopted for this program places the responsibility for managing the program and ensuring progress on the GoT through the MET. In developing the program the MET had the opportunity to define its priorities and structure the program and intended resource use in line with those priorities. Overall *the modality places a great deal of responsibility on MET for overall success* of the program.

On the basis of information available at the time, the choice of this modality in 2013 would have appeared a reasonable one. The Ministry had experience through TESP I of a more managed approach and had been successful in putting in place some key initiatives. In the Minister of Education and the Director of MET it had people with a strong vision for educational improvement and a determination to drive progress. The Ministry's also has some technical capability in key areas.

Two-thirds of the way through the program there are much stronger grounds for questioning whether the current modality is appropriate. Obviously the progress on the program has not been

as planned or desired. The reasons for this, in terms of over-ambition in scope and expectations about speed of implementation as well as the lack of critical functionality in MET and an inability to acquire that capability have already been canvassed. The result is that the program has been frustrating for MET and the GoT.

Similarly the DPs have had to invest more time in interacting with MET on the program than they wanted to or could afford and with limited impact. This has led to a growing sense of frustration on their part as well.

An important question in the TOR was whether DPs add value to the program over and above providing funds. *There is minimal evidence of value add*. It has not been enough to make a difference and has not been in proportion to the investment of time and effort. One reason for this is that MET appears not to have integrated TESP II into the core of its operations as opposed to regarding it as another projects it has to support. As DFAT[15] and MFAT [16]are both supporting other projects in the Ministry, which contribute to MET overload, it is questionable whether there is value in simultaneously seeking to promote a sector approach.

Overall then it is difficult not to conclude that *the move to an earmarked budget support approach was too far too fast given the capability of MET corporate systems and governance at that time*. This does not mean that a project based approach would have been better. The review team observed even with the current projects that are occurring outside TESP I the risk of disempowerment of MET and conflicting messages on the ground. But the injection by the donors of greater contracted technical advice and management support could potentially have helped ensure a steadier implementation approach and faster progress in terms of impact on the ground. The review team noted that this approach has been adopted with respect to the health sector and seems to have supported faster progress.

The caveat to this conclusion about whether this modality has been effective, however, is that any arrangements that is put in place needs to be acceptable to all parties. Working relationships, in the sense of the ability to work together productively and the ability to have the difficult conversations when this is not happening, are perhaps as important as the specific modality. It does not seem that this happened in the context of TESP II.

4   Conclusions

4.1   Relevance

The objectives of TESP II are still relevant. There is a good match between the overall policy objectives of GoT, DFAT and MFAT and, at the time of design in 2012, the focus on early years was shared. By 2015, and with a change of government, GoT is now also focusing more on secondary and higher education. This broadening of focus does not mean that strengthening the early years is no

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[15] Interim Skills Development Facility

[16] Pacific Literacy and Leadership Programme; Quality T&L for Basic Education in Tonga; Science for Health Literacy; Maritime School Reopening; PIs Secondary Tertiary Development Project; Qualification Framework & Quality Assurance Development; Regional Assessment Support Project (in design).

longer a priority as without successful learning in the early years for all children, it will be much harder to achieve later learning success.

The activities and outputs of the program, which focus on strengthening teaching and learning for all children, are consistent with the overall goal. Those parts of the program that are most established – curriculum and school based management processes - are necessary to raise achievement. But, on their own, they are not sufficient. The parts that are still progressively being implemented, or are barely started, are essential to reaching program goals. And, in the broader context, greater political and community support for education is important.

The modality of TESP II – broadly the sector wide approach - is also relevant. The Partnership Principles seek to maximise education outcomes, increase sector coordination and alignment, and minimise duplication and unnecessary transaction costs. These are admirable objectives but are undermined to some extent by the continuation of separate projects, funded by DFAT and MFAT as well as other partners operating with similar objectives to TESP II. While these projects are notionally being done in partnership with MET, it appears that MET ownership of them is weak and that, in some instances, the projects may be cutting across the longer term objectives for the system that MET is working towards. It was a surprising finding that, although TESP II is designed so that MET can implement according to its own priorities, ownership is no greater than for other projects. Indeed, ownership may actually be less owing to the relatively small number of staff allocated for management. This suggests, with the benefit of hindsight, that the choice of an earmarked budget support modality for this program may have placed more responsibility in the hands of the MET than it was able to handle over the last two to three years.

4.2 Effectiveness

Although evidence is not available, it appears likely that there has not yet been a significant shift towards attaining the outcome level goals set out in the Results Framework. If the effectiveness of TESP II is judged by this standard it is failing and that has been the perception of the DPs. However, if judged by implementation of activities laid out in the mutually agreed workplan, TESP II could be on the cusp of becoming effective. One of the difficulties of evaluating progress on objectives is that many are works in progress and constitute consolidation of reforms that were undertaken in TESP I between 2005 and 2010/11. Identifying indicators for consolidation, which is generally accepted as an essential phase, is much harder than for the outputs associated with reforms.

Progress is now being made in in key areas such as delivery of curriculum material and professional development to teachers. These appear to be well designed and have the potential, in time, to make a difference to student learning. It is still the case that progress is limited in some areas, especially inclusive education, and the low priority historically afforded to IE suggests that any future progress will be incremental. Work that was started under TESP II relating to the payment of school grants and the development of school based management are now well established in the system. They appear to provide a good foundation for further lifting educational achievement in primary schools.

The major factors influencing non-achievement of objectives are setting targets that are too high for the three year timeframe and the slow start to implementation. There is no doubt that MET's systems can be slow and these frustrate most staff. There is also no doubt that change is necessarily a slow process and that time is needed to plan carefully before implementation can begin. This time

was not built into the design and, with a gap between TESP I (including the Interim Program) and TESP II, as well as a change in modality, the pressure on MET management has been very high.

4.3   Efficiency

Results achieved to date are not commensurate with the amount of time and financial input from donors and MET. In this sense the program has not been efficient in terms of how it has used scarce DP and MET senior leadership time. However, because of slowness in implementation, a much lower than anticipated amount of the available financial resources has been expended. So in this sense the program has not squandered or wasted resources. Rather, an opportunity has been lost to make faster progress.

It is possible that greater technical assistance and management input from donors may have reduced the missed opportunity. But after the experience of an influx of international TA in TESP I, which MET found very difficult to manage, there has been a strong preference for Tongan or regional TA. This is a legitimate response for a micro state with low absorption capacity. And it is consistent with taking ownership of longer term system direction and capacity development.

Efficiency of management has been low for two main reasons. One is the weak capacity in core Ministry functions such as planning and, in particular, information management. The absence of a functional EMIS has had a critical effect on the ability to provide adequate reporting. Above all other factors, this has undermined DP confidence in the Ministry's ability to successfully implement TESP II. The other has been the limited management arrangements put in place. Compared with TESP I, which had a whole division allocated to its management, TESP II has had only one senior manager and one support staff. This is grossly inadequate for such a huge task.

The chosen modality of earmarked sector budget support was potentially viable given MET's technical capability and there was a strong preference on both sides for a modality based on partnership principles. The result was a partnership with a strong foundation. But this strength did not carry through to effectiveness or efficiency. In practice too much scarce DP time has been used trying to get information needed for accountability. As MET was unable to provide it, and neither side were willing or able to renegotiate expectations, the result has been frustration. Perhaps the lesson to be learned is that a successful partnership requires a great deal more investment of time and support than has been possible.

4.4   Impact

Less than two years into the program it is too early to measure impact. However, at conclusion of TESP II in mid-2016 there is unlikely to be reliable or convincing evidence. At this stage, the very fact that implementation is slow means that the program cannot yet have had its intended impact.

To the extent that TESP II has allowed the school grant program to continue and has supported the continued embedding of the school based management system there is evidence that it is having some impact, albeit not at the level desired. All primary schools including non-government schools offering Form 1 and 2 classes receive the school grant and are very appreciative of it. While the uses to which the grant are put appear relatively basic, this needs to be seen in the context of the very low and somewhat unreliable levels of other resourcing that schools can access. At school level, it

was evident that the provision of basic teaching and learning material and improvements in the school environment were likely to be making a difference to student participation and learning. But this needs to be qualified with evidence of disparity in achievement, which continues to be a real issue at the primary level.

4.5   Sustainability

Sustainability is a challenging context in the Pacific where, it is generally acknowledged, DP financial support will be needed in the long term. It is difficult to be confident about the sustainability of some elements of the program given the early stages of their implementation. However, other aspects including the planning processes associated with school based management, are now well established, supported and accepted. The major challenge to the sustainability of these programs is dependency, particularly given some of the personnel are contractors rather than permanent Ministry employees. Sustainability would be enhanced by ensuring the tasks and knowledge of these contractors are progressively transferred to permanent Ministry employees.

5   Recommendations

5.1 Key priorities until June 2016

Given that some progress is now being made in implementing the program, it is important that momentum is sustained and increased. In the view of the review team the key priorities over the time up until June 2016 to ensure this are to address the identified weaknesses in MET systems and capability and, where there are conflicting priorities, to focus scarce resources on what will make the most difference to teaching and learning. This will not only help in the achievement of the goals of TESP II but help to restore the confidence of the DPs for the future. The three key areas for action over the coming twelve months identified by this review are:

5.1.1   Planning, Reporting and Monitoring and Evaluation

The MET's ability to plan, co-ordinate and report has been a major weakness to date in TESP II. Steps are now being taken to expand the capacity in the MET with respect to planning and reporting and monitoring and evaluation such as additional capacity for programme management, workflow monitoring and monitoring and evaluation. Additional action is likely to be required to ensure that this increased capacity also has the required capability. Provision of technical assistance in a manner that is acceptable to the MET would be the best way of tackling this.

Better co-ordination of core MET activities and progressive mainstreaming of key functions (e.g. school based management unit) are also important to ensure activities align, are efficiently delivered and are sustainable. The MET's senior management has primary responsibility for this but requires support to bring this about.

5.1.2   Information

There are concerns about the quality and processes followed in 2015. But MET does not yet appear to have a clear plan for strengthening the capacity of the EMIS. The production of quality system information to support future planning and resource allocation is critical.

The STAT process took place in 2014 but the results are not yet available. It is very important that these results are produced as quickly as possible so that key decisions about the future can be made

on the basis of information about what is happening to student outcomes. Commitment to participation in the Pacific wide Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) assessment of student learning would provide additional and independent information on how the Tongan system is delivering for its young people, relative to other Pacific states.

Additional technical advice is likely to be required to make sufficient progress on core education information systems.

5.1.3   Making a difference in the classroom

Evidence suggests that the Ministry does not have the capacity to advance all the items in the TESP II work plan at the same time. While the MET should continue to progress all areas of the work program as it is able, in the view of the review team the priority to continue to progress and expand in the next twelve months is the delivery of professional development, including for principals. This is likely to make the most difference to teaching and learning in the classroom. The delivery model being used by the MET currently has a number of positive aspects but all teachers need further engagement with the program and there would be benefit in bringing some further technical advice to bear to further develop the program.

5.2   Options for modality in the future

A key question is whether the current arrangements are value adding. As stated already it seems clear that the funding for grants, salary subsidies for the non-government sector[17], curriculum and professional development are essential to the continuing development of Tongan Education. *The money makes a difference and needs to continue.* However, the partnership arrangement that supports TESP II has not been able to secure the level of progress desired and the results are not proportionate to the investment of time and effort made.

In light of this, and assuming that the DPs will continue to invest significantly in Tongan basic education there would appear to be three broad options for the future:

1.   More intensively managed earmarked sector budget support

This option continues the earmarked sector budget support approach but with greater investment on the part of the donors to assist the MET in managing the program and building capacity. On the MET side, more staff could be recruited for coordination and to reduce bottlenecks. On the DP's side, given their human resource constraints, this greater support is only likely to be possible if contracted out. Provision of such support might assist faster progress or it might simply support more careful identification of targets and reporting on them. But its effectiveness would be dependent on finding a way of operationalising this approach that was acceptable to MET. The main advantage with this approach is that it would place longer term ownership of sector development with MET and enable it to continue to shape the development of teaching and learning in line with its vision (which has considerable merit).

Apart from resource considerations, if donors were to consider this option it would be essential for them to have confidence that the MET was successfully addressing weaknesses in systems and capability that have impeded its ability to progress TESP II to date.

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[17] It should be noted that the impact of the salary subsidy on salaries in the non-government sector needs greater scrutiny than was possible during the review and in the context of limited and confusing information.

2. Greater freedom for MET to prioritise (general budget support earmarked for education)

In the workplan agreed for TESP II some of the mutually agreed priorities have been more challenging for MET to demonstrate significant progress in than others, notably early childhood and inclusive education. These are emerging areas in the Revised Education Act, Strategic Plans and the Corporate Plan. They are also priorities for DPs. However, with multiple other programmes in MET, there are competing priorities and great stress on resources. Effectively there is a hierarchy of priorities and not all can be addressed with the level of quality that will make a difference to children's learning achievement. If donors take a step back from driving delivery and performance, MET may be in a better position to achieve the results it really prioritises. Even more than the earmarked sector budget support option, this option emphasises the MET's ability and willingness to keep driving progress forward. It also requires on the part of the donors either a willingness to allow the GoT to make its own assessment of the highest priorities for spending in education or an acceptance that views about this will align, perhaps re-enforced by what indicators are included in the policy matrix that accompanies the general budget support arrangement.

3. Stronger support for implementation (projectisation)

A third option is to adopt stronger management structures that characterised TESP I as well as current projects such as PEARL. This option could also be supported by managing contractors to relieve the burden on DPs. If accompanied by fewer change elements, this might enable more attention to be given to planning, monitoring, and reporting.

This approach potentially removes authority from the MET. Aside from questions of acceptability to it, the risk with this is that any gains in progress in the short term might be at the expense of longer term sustainability. The MET appears to have some of the technical capability to develop teaching and learning. With support it could continue to develop in this regard. The review team saw evidence that a current project, PEARL, is potentially cutting across the MET's longer term direction and a project approach might lead to more of this.

Summary of options

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
More intensively-managed earmarked budget support	• Retains ownership with MET • Might make faster progress • Might improve reporting	• Needs more support so DPs would need to contract out
General budget support earmarked for education	• MET has freedom to determine its own priorities for spending • Less burden on DPs (where the mechanism exists)	• MET may not have capacity or willingness to drive progress • DPs may not agree with MET priorities.
Projectisation	• Greater DP control over inputs, outputs and activities • May increase short term results	• Removes authority from MET • May be at expense of longer term sustainability

In assessing the different options it is useful to recognise that there are different elements to current donor support for Tongan education. Components of support help the system to operate at a level

that would not be possible otherwise. Funding for school grants and ECE subsidies are the prime examples of this. Systems are already in place to deliver these and there is little in the way of incentives or management that will make a difference.

Rather the impetus for change comes through other initiatives around curriculum (and associated resources), professional development and new policy frameworks. The design and implementation of these change initiatives should make much more of a difference to outcomes and might benefit from more detailed involvement from donors.

This suggests that a two pronged approach to future support for Tongan education might be worth considering.

1. *Funding for grants and salary subsidies* could be provided through general budget support earmarked for education with the main requirement being that the money was actually paid out.
2. *Funding for more discretionary improvement initiatives* could be provided via either earmarked budget sector support or project funding. The choice would be dependent on the level of confidence that the MET could provide as to its ability to take the lead on implementation and specifically how much progress it could demonstrate in addressing its own capability gaps over the next twelve months. Under either option provision of resources for additional technical assistance would likely be required.

   If the decisions was taken to continue earmarked budget support for these initiatives then an element of performance linked funding could be introduced. In the short term these could be tied to delivery of outputs and intermediate outcomes but over time could be focused more on learning outcomes.

5.3   Level of Funding in the Future

Judgements about the level of funding in any future support program will necessarily be influenced by the experience over the course of TESP II. However if the MET was able to strengthen its system and remove some of the blockages that have slowed progress to date it should be possible to make faster progress than has been the recent experience. Indeed as noted in section 2.2.5 there has been an increase in the rate of expenditure in the key areas over recent times.

An overall assessment of a realistic level of support for the future would require a more detailed analysis of key components of the program. For example:

1. Expenditure on school grants is required by the system, largely automatic and should be readily estimable. It is likely that a very similar level of support to currently will be required in the future
2. Support for key areas such as curriculum and professional development is also central to a lift in learning outcomes. While the level of activity in these areas is discretionary and scalable, judgements about the appropriate activity need to be informed by more detailed assessments of what it is realistic for the MET to deliver and for schools to absorb in terms of their day to day activity. Experience in the current program suggests that it is not possible to spend close to the current total budget because of practical constraints. An example of such a constraint is the significant underspend of the approximately $600,000 provision for relief teacher cover for untrained teachers while they are being trained which it is not possible to spend because of the unavailability of relief teachers.

3. The priority, timing and need for other more minor areas of expenditure are more discretionary and ideally would be worked through between donors and MET in the development of any future program.

Taking account of these factors, but recognising also that around 80% of the current TESP II funding is allocated to school grants, curriculum and professional development, suggests that appropriate funding levels in a future program would be likely lower than but still a significant proportion of current levels.

Annexes

Annex 1: Results Framework

RESULTS	INDICATORs	BASELINE	TARGET 2015	SOURCE
MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES *(i.e. by 2016, end of TESP2 program period)*				
Improved access to education opportunities so that all children, boys and girls alike, attend and complete a full course of Universal Basic Education/Primary Schooling)	• Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), primary • Net Enrolment Ratio (NER), primary • Completion Rate, primary	*2012: GER 112%* *Total 17,182* *M:8,991 F:8,191* *2012: NER 99.05%* *Total 15,226 (15,372)* *M: 7,872 F:7,354* *Completion Baseline: 2014*	GER: Target 100% (no new data) NER: Target 100% (no new data)	MET (EMIS)
Increased early grades student learning outcomes (better literacy and numeracy.	• % of Class 3 primary students reading in Tongan language at national benchmark standard. • % of class 4 and 6 primary students achieving literacy standards in Tongan and English languages at levels 3+ • % of class 4 and 6 primary students achieving numeracy standards in the Tongan language at levels 3+	*TEGRA 2009: TEGRA 2009: 70% of Cl.3 students did not know Tongan alphabet and not capable of basic reading in Tongan* *Total, male/female* *STAT 2011:* *Literacy in Tongan: 47% at Cl.4 & 65% at Cl.6 achieved L3+* *Literacy in English: 44% at Cl.4 & 39% at Cl.6 achieved L3+* *Numeracy in Tongan Language:* *20% in Cl.4 & 35% in Cl.6 achieved L3+* *Total, male/female*	TEGRA 2014: No measure - TEGRA has not been repeated STAT 2014: No measure - results not released	Tonga Early Grade Reading Assessment National standardized achievement tests (STAT Report 2012) for literacy and numeracy at Class 4 and 6. Carried out periodically: 2011 (base year), 2014 (proposed), 2017 (projected)
SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES *(i.e. annual targets, benchmarks)*	Indicators	Baseline	PROGRESS TARGETS/ BENCHMARKS	Source
a. Improved access to basic education				
i) All children will be attending and moving towards completion of primary school.	• Enrolment • Completion • Average daily attendance (ADA)	2012: 112% 2014: 99% No data	No new data No new data No data	MET (EMIS)
ii) Increased numbers of children with a disability have access to quality learning	• Number of children able to access schools that have been	No data – not tracked	No data	IE Scoping Report EMIS Annex table

opportunities.	made more accessible to children with disabilities* • Number of children with a disability completing primary	2013: 24 IE students	No data	
iii) Increased numbers of children attend Early Childhood Education Programs.	• Number of 4 year old children in registered ECE Centers • Number of children with a disability accessing ECE • Number of ECE centers meeting requirements for ECE grants	2013: Total No of Children: 1,832 4yr olds (877G/955B) in 71 centres. GER (ECE) 33.8% No data No data	2014: Total 2,132 (1054G /1078B) in 74 centres. GER (ECE) 39.9%	2013 ECE Mapping not include Niua islands ECE Registration 2014
b. Improved student learning outcomes				
i) Increased literacy and numeracy levels of students in all primary schools	• % children in class 1-3 able to read and write to minimum competence levels in Tongan language • % children at class 4 and 6 achieving test scores in literacy and numeracy at Level 3+	*TEGRA 2009: >70% of Cl.3 students did not know Tongan alphabet and not capable of basic reading in Tongan Total, male/female* *STAT 2011:* *Literacy in Tongan: 47% at Cl.4 & 65% at Cl.6 achieved L3+* *Literacy in English: 44% at Cl.4 & 39% at Cl.6 achieved L3+* *Numeracy in Tongan Language: 20% in Cl.4 & 35% in Cl.6 achieved L3+* *Total, male/female*	TEGRA 2014: 35% No data 2017: 40% STAT 2014 (2017) targets: TONGAN: 50% (53%) at Cl.4 & 68% (71%)at Cl.6 ach L3+ ENGLISH: 47% (50%)at Cl.4 & 42% (45%)at Cl.6 ach L3+ NUMERACY: 23%(26%) in Cl.4 & 38%(41%) in Cl.6 achieve L3+ 2014 data not yet released	GoT/WB PEARL project, on stream in 2014. Reports. National assessment of literacy and numeracy (STAT) at year 4 and 6 in 2014 and 2017
ii) Appropriate curriculum and curriculum support used by early grade teachers. *[Quality Indicators included in e(iii)]*	• Number of schools piloting early grade reading programs in classes 1 -3 in Tongan language. • Number of teachers of early grades participated in professional development programs for reading development	2013: Zero (0) 2013: Zero (0)	2014: No data	GoT/WB PEARL project. MET PD Reports
c. Improved teacher quality				
i) Increased proportion of teachers with teacher-training qualifications.	• Numbers (and as %) primary school teachers with certified trained teacher qualifications* • %secondary school teachers with trained teacher qualifications	2012: 755/810 (93.2%) 55 Untrained 2012: 694/1,018 (68.2%) 324 Untrained (Non GoT: 258)	2014: target 97% No data 2015: 100% No data 2014: 80% No data 2015: 90% No data	MET (EMIS)

ii) Teacher quality is improved through professional development and assessment.	• % early grade teachers that have undertaken professional development related to Tongan language, reading and writing • % primary teachers appraised and meeting the agreed minimum performance standard	2013: Zero (0) 2013: Zero (0) *2014: First Yr of Implementation of Staff Appraisal Process*	No data No data	MET Appraisal Reports PD Reports
iii) Improved capacity of TIOE to deliver quality training.	• % TIOE lecturers that meet minimum qualifications requirements • TIOE meets TNQAB accreditation	2013: 83%	2014: Target 88% No data 2015 2015: No data	MET/TIOE TNQAB reports
d. Improved learning environment				
i) Improved teaching and learning environments.	• Number of classrooms built or upgraded* • Number of learning resources (textbooks) provided* • Variety of teaching and learning resources provided	2013: Zero (0) 2013 2014	No target set / no data	MET CDU/School reports GoT/PEARL Project Reports
ii) Primary schools are planning, managing and accountable for teaching and learning performance.	• No. primary school head teachers trained in professional leadership and school management*	(2010-2012 by SBM) 113 Primary Principals trained	2014 No data 2015	MET reports on Professional Development activities.
e. Improved MET performance				
i) Improved education sector management.	• Costed annual work plans (AWPB) prepared • AWPB's activity monitored and reported on quarterly.	2013	2014 Achieved	Annual work plan and budgets. Reports to Program Oversight Group
ii) Improved evidence-based policy analysis, planning, budgeting and decision-making by MET	• x% of annual TESP2 budget allocation spent on agreed work plan activities • Recurring management issues	2013 Annual Audits	2014 Non (nil) recurrence of management issues identified in annual audits	MET financial reports Audit Reports
iii) Achievement of MET Minimum Service Standards (MSS)	• % of students, teachers and schools that achieve/exceed MSS benchmarks established by MET	2015		MET Annual Reports Report on Review of MSS EMIS Data

Annex 2: Extract from Evaluation Plan

3. Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

3.1 Purpose

The primary purpose of the IPR is to provide information that will inform DFAT's decision about whether to continue to fund education in the Aid Investment Plan for 2015. It is situated in the context of the New Zealand aid program prioritising education in Tonga.

A secondary purpose is to inform priority actions for MET and Development Partners (DPs) to achieve the outcomes of TESP II within the timeframe available and with a view to sustainability of achievements.

3.2 Objectives

There are five objectives of the IPR, as described in the TOR:

Objective 1:   Assess the performance of TESP II to date as measured against outcomes and progress towards targets set out in the TESP II Performance Assessment Framework and Results Monitoring Framework.

Objective 2: Assess whether the activities being supported under TESP II are likely to achieve the results being sought in the most efficient manner including the 'value add' of donors' support to basic education in Tonga, through TESP II.

Objective 3: Recommend changes to strengthen performance and, if necessary, to identify priority focus areas to achieve goals by June 2016 (planned closing of the TESP II funding cycle). Set out priority actions for MET and development partners to achieve the outcomes of TESP II within the timeframe available

Objective 4: Identify those components of TESP II that are likely to require continued funding and technical support beyond June 2016 if the benefits of TESP II are to be sustainable

Objective 5: Recommend programmatic and funding modalities that will better address any identified issues of TESP II for consideration of future support

4. Key evaluation questions

For the conduct of the evaluation it is important to pursue a logical line of enquiry that is easily understood by the various groups of stakeholders and that enables the team to organise itself to ensure that all questions can be answered.

Key evaluation questions as described in the TOR

- Relevance: Are TESP II program goals and objectives, and the theory of change behind the program design achievable and targeted correctly? If not, how could they be improved? To what extent has the program remained relevant to the Government of Tonga, New Zealand and Australia?
- Effectiveness: Are education results improving in Tonga, and if so, what is the contribution of development partners' assistance through TESP II? How effective have the consolidated inputs been in promoting better teaching and greater learning opportunities for children in primary schools in different locations across the islands? How is TESP II advancing gender equality and disability inclusion and women's empowerment?
- Efficiency: Is the aid modality used under TESP II (earmarked sector budget support) likely to achieve the results being sought in the most efficient manner. What is the nature of the relationships

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> between development partners and MET, and within MET and GOT? Is the M&E framework being applied in practice to guide activity implementation for results?
> - Sustainability: Are there particular blockages or enablers for education service delivery? For example, is their clarity on the roles, responsibilities and relationships within MET, and also between MET, other Ministries (particularly the Ministry of Finance and National Planning), and development partners? If there are what could be improved to free up these blockages?

Consolidating the objectives and evaluation questions are described in the TOR, the three key evaluation questions that will guide the process are:

1. *What are the results of TESP II?* This is a backwards looking review of what TESP II has achieved. It covers TOR questions relating to effectiveness and evaluates against indicators and targets of the Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) and Results Monitoring Framework (RMF)
2. *How do we interpret the results?* This is a present day analysis which supports reflection of what the results mean in terms of relevance, impact, efficiency and sustainability
3. *What do we recommend for the future?* This is a forward looking assessment which considers the implications of the findings and what they mean for programming in the future.

The sub questions for each of the key questions are shown in the table below:

Key evaluation question	Sub questions
What are the results of TESPII? (Effectiveness)	• What progress has been made against outcomes and targets? • Are the consolidated inputs[18] promoting better teaching and learning? • What support have schools had access to[19]? • Are resources distributed equitably across the islands? • Are gender equality, women's empowerment and disability inclusion being advanced?

How do we interpret the results?
 	
(Impact, relevance, efficiency and sustainability)
	• Are education results improving overall in Tonga?
	• Is the TESP II theory of change realistic?
	• What are the enablers and blockages to achieving results
	  o Is the modality of earmarked sector budget support efficient?
	  o Are relationships between DPs, MET, MoF and MNP effective?
	  o Does the monitoring arrangement tell us what we need to know?
	• How sustainable are the benefits of TESP II?

What do we	• What are the priority actions for MET and DPs to achieve the

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[18] School grants, school based management, school principal training, curriculum materials and teacher training
[19] From MET, School Officers, SBM monitoring teams, teacher professional development activities, distribution of books and materials, and parental and community involvement?

recommend?	outcomes of TESP II within the timeframe available
	• What are the options for joint donor support in the future?

5. Methodology

5.1 Data collection and management

Methods

A mixed-method approach will be used with triangulation between qualitative and quantitative methods to arrive at conclusions that reflect the range of information collected.

- *Quantitative analysis* The most important quantitative data is results on children's learning achievement. The national assessment of learning achievements (STAT) and Tonga early grade reading assessments (TEGRA) informed the design of many TESP II activities and provide a baseline. However, although the most recent STAT and TEGRA tests were held in 2014 the results are not yet released. This means there will be no new data for the IPR. The STAT will be repeated nationally later in 2015 but the TEGRA will not be repeated until post-PEARL interventions in 2017. There are likely only to be limited opportunities to undertake quantitative analysis from monitoring information as reporting has been a weakness of TESP II.
- *Qualitative investigation* is important in illuminating aspects of process, clarifying issues of relevance, sustainability and the theory of change, identifying lessons, and assessing likelihood of achievement of outcomes within the timeframe. This includes:
  - semi structured interviews with key informants
  - observations and interviews in a small sample of schools. The TOR suggest 6-10 schools, representing government and non-government, large town schools and small schools with multigrade teaching situations.

Document analysis Some of the data obtained from documents will be analysed prior to the field mission, especially by the Team Leader who is working full time on the IPR. Team members from DFAT and the MFAT consultant will prepare to the extent that their workloads allow. Careful preparation will help to ensure that interviews are oriented to gaining new knowledge rather than duplicating what can be reliably obtained from documentary sources.

Progress review

A progress review with DFAT and MFAT will be undertaken mid-way. This will probably coincide with briefing for the team member who joins only in the second week.

5.2 Data collection methods for the key evaluation questions

The following table shows which methods will be used to answer each of the evaluation questions and sub questions.

Evaluation Questions and Data Collection Methods

Key question	Sub Questions	Data collection methods
What are the results of TESPII? **(Effectiveness)**	• What progress has been made against outcomes and targets? • Are the consolidated inputs promoting better teaching and learning? • What support have schools had access to? • Are resources distributed equitably across the islands? • Are gender equality, women's empowerment and disability inclusion being advanced?	**Document analysis**: TESPII Investment Design Summary and Annexes (2013); TESP II Reports (Jul- Dec 2013, Jul-Dec 2014) Quarterly SBM Reports (Oct-Dec 2014; Jan-Mar 2015); PAF and RMF; learning assessments (STAT, TEGRA); **Observation**: to be completed at the start of week 1 **Key informant and/ or group interviews**: • MET: Acting CEO Mr Claude Tupou • MoF: Deputy Secretary and Procurement Officer - Mr Manu 'Akauola • MNP: Deputy Secretary • School level: Principals; teachers – during school visits • DFAT: Deputy High Commissioner – Ms Sophie Temby • MFAT: Deputy High Commissioner – Ms Adele Plummer
How do we interpret the results? **(Impact, relevance, efficiency and sustainability)**	• Are education results improving overall in Tonga? • Is the TESP II theory of change realistic? • What are the enablers and blockages to achieving results: o Is the modality of earmarked sector budget support efficient? o Are relationships between DPs, MET, MoF and MNP effective? o Does the monitoring arrangement tell us what we need to know? • How sustainable are the benefits of TESP II?	**Documentary analysis**: as above plus: GoT policies and strategies, PFD Education Implementation Schedule **Key informant/group interviews**: as above **Evaluation team professional knowledge and experience**
What do we recommend?	• What are the priority actions for MET and DPs to achieve the outcomes of TESP II within the timeframe available • What are the options for joint donor support in the future?	**Presentation of findings** at conclusion of fieldwork to consolidate recommendations and ensure they are appropriate and feasible to implement.

6. Constraints and limitations

As with most development evaluations the time allowed is short. In addition, team members are participating for various lengths of time. This means that the choice of schools to visit is influenced mainly by what is logistically possible and the time taken to travel means that the time the team can spend in each school is short. This can be partially mitigated by reducing the number of schools visited and ensuring that the team members have a particular focus to investigate rather than trying to cover all elements.

In terms of evaluating results a significant limitation is the quality of data. There has been no learning assessment data published since the baseline, which reduces the potential to answer questions related to impact and outcomes. TESP II, by virtue of not implementing in the way intended, has a weak system of monitoring. This affects questions concerning implementation progress. This cannot be mitigated although the IPR will be assessing reasons for weak monitoring.

7. Timeline and Resources

7.1 Phases

Inception phase This phase includes development of the evaluation plan and preparation for fieldwork. An agreed evaluation plan is the deliverable. In the week before the field mission the TL will undertake a full desk review of project and other related documents, provide greater clarity on specific team member roles and develop assessment schedules for school visits.

Fieldwork and data collection This is the in-country mission. It spans more than two weeks but the length of participation in the mission is different for the various team members (TM). The team leader is present for the duration as well as one of the DFAT officials. The DFAT Education Adviser from Canberra will join the mission for the second week. At the time of writing, the duration of participation of the MFAT consultant was not confirmed.

Analysis and report writing Preliminary analysis takes place towards the end of the in-country mission. It is presented to key stakeholders at the end of the second week or early in the third. This depends on how advanced the analysis is. If deeper discussion with DPs is needed on particular issues this may be done as a Round Table discussion prior to the formal presentation. An Aide Memoire is presented at the conclusion of the mission and the written report will be completed from the evaluators' home base.

7.2 Timeline

Time	Activity	Deliverable	Due date
1-17 July	Desk based preparation: document review; orientation to context; develop plan; teleconference with DFAT Canberra and Post	Evaluation Plan	Draft 6 July Final version 15 May
20 July – 4 Aug	In-country mission.	Presentation /	31 July (full team)

		Round Table	
		Aide Memoire	4 Aug (TL)
		Follow up meetings	3-5 Aug as required (TL)
5-15 August	Report writing Incorporation of feedback	Draft Report Final Report	14 Aug tbc

7.3 Program of school visits

The program of school visits is:

- Week 1 (22-24 July) in Ha'apai and Vava'u
- Week 2 in Tongatapu

Vava'u	Ha'apai:	Tongatapu
GPS Leimatu'a	Taufa'ahau/Pilolevu College	Hilliard Memorial School
GPS Liviela	GPS Fotua	GPS Fanga-'o-Pilolevu
GPS Feletoa	GPS Pangai	GPS Havelu
Kelana (Chanel) College	St Joseph	GPS Kolomotu'a
GPS Koloa	GPS Koulo	FWC Primary School
Maama'anga College		GPS Ngele'ia
		Tonga Side School

7.4 Roles of team members

There are two independent consultants who constitute the core team:

- *Sue Emmott*, the team leader is responsible for the overall conduct of the evaluation including preparation of the evaluation plan and methodology; undertaking the bulk of the document analysis and report writing; coordinating with DFAT; leading the team; drafting the Aide Memoire; and timely delivery of a quality report.
- *Rob McIntosh*, the MFAT-nominated consultant is responsible for specialist economic and institutional analysis.

Additional team members are:

- *Anh-Thu Nguyen*, DFAT Desk Officer from the Polynesia & French Micronesia Section in Canberra. She is participating for the full two weeks in country in line with her broader role of overseeing and managing the evaluation process including publication of the evaluation report and managing learning activities.

- *David Coleman*, Education Adviser, Development Policy and Education Branch, DFAT Canberra who is participating in the second week. His role is to contribute specialist analysis and to understand the program in order to provide ongoing support to Post

- *A representative of GoT*, to provide contextual knowledge and ensure that the perspective of MET is captured in team discussions

During school visits the team will be accompanied by a DFAT officer from Post in order to ensure that the visits go smoothly and the team has access to the information it needs.

Annex 3: Terms of Reference

Tonga Education Sector Program (TESP II): Independent Progress Review 2015

In response to the Government of Tonga (GoT) through its Ministry of Education and Training (MET), Australia and New Zealand jointly provide funding to support the GoT in achieving better quality education for primary school-aged children. The key strategic objectives of the TESP II are:

- Improved access to basic education opportunities so that all children, boys and girls, and those with disabilities, will complete a full course of Universal Basic Education (UBE) [20]
- Increased early grade student learning outcomes (better reading, writing and understanding of numbers); and
- Improved education sector management.

TESP II is the main vehicle where Australia and New Zealand support the GoT education reform agenda. TESP II objectives align with DFAT's Pacific Education and Skills Development Agenda (PESDA) and the GoT's Lakalaka Policy Framework. Education has been a priority sector within MFAT's aid programme in Tonga and is a strategic priority for MFAT more generally. In addition, TESP II objectives are the targets set out in MET's Corporate Plan 2012-2017, in ensuring quality of primary schooling and is consistent with the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Tonga Strategic Development Framework.

TESP II is organized around seven major thematic components each intended to contribute to improved outcomes in student achievement and to the strategic objectives listed above. The thematic components are: curriculum reform and assessment, teacher training and professional development, delivery of an integrated school grants program, early childhood education, inclusive education, knowledge development and dissemination (including technical assistance), and improvements in MET capacity. See further background information in Annex 1.

A statement of partnership principles between GOT, Australia and New Zealand, which sets out the overarching principles of engagement and program implementation, was signed in November 2014. The aid modality for TESP II is earmarked budget support, with a workplan implemented through Tongan Government Systems. MET plans, manages and implements the program, and uses GoT procurement and financial management systems.

Australia originally committed AUD10.5 million in support of TESP II for an implementation time frame of April 2013 to June 2016. However, the Australian funding commitment was reduced in 2014/2015 to AUD6.5, due to significant delays in implementation and expenditure by MET. New Zealand's total commitment is 12m TOP. There was no Australian or New Zealand disbursement for TESP II in 2014.

Australia is the main funder of TESP II and it seeks to add value to the advancement of education in Tonga through the input of its specialised adviser in policy dialogue; ongoing assistance and support of its in-country staff in ongoing discussion with MET staff in relation to program management issues and also the availability of technical support in times of need by the Ministry. TESP II contributes to Australia's economic diplomacy agenda through pursuing targeted investments in education and

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[20] For purposes of TESP II 2013-2016 results monitoring this is defined specifically for primary schooling (classes 1-6). The new Education Act 2012/2013 has defined (compulsory) UBE as covering the entire age range 4-18, from entry into ECCE at 4 years and progression into primary schooling at 5 years with completion of the school cycle at 18 years.

service delivery thus supporting Australia's national interest through enhancing stability by reducing vulnerability, poverty and risk, and contributing to economic growth in Tonga. For TESP II, this is through ensuring teachers have teaching standards across schools and that children have the basic literacy and numeracy skills which will achieve stronger workforce outcomes. New Zealand supports TESP II on the basis that it is a priority sector within the current Joint Commitment for Development with Tonga. It is also a priority under the New Zealand Aid Programme Strategic Plan for 2015-19.

However, Australia's value add and comparative advantage is less clear, due to the large number of other donor programs in the sector, which also distracts MET staff from their normal day to day work. The program is very slow in spending and implementation. There is limited evidence of its efficiency and effectiveness. There appears to be a lack of coordination amongst and communication between MET staff in different areas of the Ministry. There are insufficient DFAT or MFAT staff at the respective Posts to manage, monitor and oversee the implementation of activities in the current modality, given these significant issues.

In the context of the Aid Investment Plan development in 2015, a review of TESP II is planned for July 2015 to help management consider whether DFAT and MFAT should continue to fund work in this sector and if so, what design and modality is likely to be needed.

PURPOSE of THE INDEPENDENT PROGRESS REVIEW (IPR)

The objectives of the TESP II IPR are to:
   a) Objective 1: Assess the performance of TESP II to date as measured against outcomes and progress.
   b) Objectives 2: Assess whether the activities being supported under TESP II are likely to achieve the results being sought.
   c) Objective 3: Set out priority actions for MET and development partners to achieve the outcomes of TESP II within the timeframe available.
   d) Objective 4: Identify those components that are likely to require continued support beyond June 2016 if the benefits are to be sustainable.
   e) Objective 5: Make recommendations for consideration of future support.

The primary areas of focus in the IPR are expected to be (i) at the school level and (ii) at the organisational level of MET and its subnational agencies. The IPR should assess the impact on teaching and learning at the school and classroom level of the whole of TESP II inputs: curriculum, assessment practices, materials, training of teachers and school principals, school management of grants to achieve minimum service standards And, it should assess the capacities of the MET and its agencies to manage the scale of the system reforms as well as to coordinate the numerous projects and their implementation and reporting demands (including, but not limited to TESP II).

Findings from the IPR are expected to inform priority actions for MET and Development Partners to achieve the outcomes of TESP II within the timeframe available and with a view to sustainability of achievements. It will also inform decision making around the nature of any potential future development partner support.

SCOPE – KEY REVIEW QUESTIONS

The IPR should assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and gender equality as they apply to implementation of the TESP II. In particular, it should address the following questions:

- Relevance: Are TESP II program goals and objectives, and the theory of change behind the program design realistic? To what extent has the program remained relevant to the Government of Tonga, New Zealand and Australia?

- Effectiveness: Are education results improving in Tonga, and if so, can aspects of this be attributed to development partners' assistance through TESP II? How effective have the consolidated inputs been in promoting better teaching and greater learning opportunities for children in primary schools in different locations across the islands?

- Efficiency: Is the aid modality used under TESP II (earmarked sector budget support) likely to achieve the results being sought in the most efficient manner. What is the nature of the relationships between development partners and MET, and within MET and GOT? Is the M&E framework being applied in practice to guide activity implementation for results

- Gender: How is TESP II advancing gender equality and disability inclusion and women's empowerment?

- Sustainability: Are there particular blockages or enablers for education service delivery? For example, is their clarity on the roles, responsibilities and relationships within MET, and also between MET, other Ministries (particularly the Ministry of Finance and National Planning), and development partners?

PROCESS – METHODOLOGY

The review methodology will be developed by the team leader, and outlined in the review plan. Indicatively it will include document review, field visits (observations), stakeholder consultations (interviews and focus group discussions), and data analysis (predominantly but not limited to student performance and baseline data). A list of reference documents is provided at Annex 2. An initial list of key personnel to be consulted is provided at Annex 3.

Whilst the national assessment of learning achievements (STAT) and early grade reading assessments (TEGRA) informed the design of many TESP II activities, the STAT will not be repeated nationally until 2015 and the TEGRA will not be repeated until post-PEARL interventions in 2017. It is proposed therefore that the IPR include a case study approach to qualitatively assess the impact of TESP II inputs at the school and classroom levels. It is expected that the case studies would be based on a small sample of schools (6-10), representing government and non-government schools, large town schools and small schools with multigrade teaching situations. It is expected that the school visits and with stakeholder consultations would also provide an opportunity to assess schools access to support from MET, from School Officers, from others such as school-based management monitoring teams, teacher professional development activities, distribution of books and materials and parental and community involvement.

TEAM COMPOSITION

The IPR will be undertaken by a team of:
- Team Leader, preferably education specialist and organisational capacity specialist experienced in small states.

- Team member, independent consultant engaged by New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- DFAT representatives: Senior Education Adviser, DFAT Tonga Desk Officer.
- Government of Tonga representative.

Skills required within the team include:

- Extensive monitoring and evaluation experience using quantitative and qualitative methods
- Experience in the primary education subsector, preferably with a focus on early grades teaching and learning
- Understanding of teacher professional development especially in preparing teachers to improve literacy, and teaching in 'bridging' from one language of instruction to another
- Knowledge of development partner priorities and issues in Tonga in particular and small states of the Pacific in general
- Experience in aid program design, development, planning, monitoring and evaluation and budget support mechanisms.
- Understanding of political economic dimensions of service deliver
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including proven ability to liaise and communicate effectively with national stakeholders; and
- Ability to provide timely delivery of high-quality written reports.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REVIEW TEAM

The Team Leader of the IPR is responsible for the development of a draft IPR Plan to be submitted to DFAT for approval prior to the in-country mission. The IPR Plan will be based on a collaborative approach and will include: (a) brief statement of purpose, (b) a summary of the overall review design, (c) a list of the key review questions , (d) a description of the approach to sampling, (e) an overview of appropriate data collection methods and approaches to triangulations, (f) and explanation of how data will be analysed, (g) an overview of ethical issues that may emerge and how they will be dealt with, (h) some guidance on scheduling and allocation of tasks. The IPR Plan should be consistent with the intent of Standard 5 of the DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards provided separately.

The IPR will be undertaken according to the plan, within the timeframe in Table 1.

Specifically, the Team Leader will:

- Plan, guide and develop the overall approach and methodology for the performance and assessment including the development of the IPR Plan;
- Manage and direct review activities, representing the team and learning consultations (and this includes deciding the most appropriate level of participation in certain meetings of DFAT personnel);
- Manage, compile and edit inputs from other team members, to ensure the quality of reporting outputs;
- Produce and present an aide-memoire;
- Synthesise review material into a draft and final IPR Report; and
- Participate in any further DFAT quality assurance processes.

Other team members will:

- Work under the overall direction of the Team Leader;

- Provide specialist advice, access to networks, and an understanding of GoT and DFAT processes; and
- Participate in the IPR as directed by the Team Leader.

DFAT will:

- Provide logistical support by way of organising and confirming meeting schedules'
- Assist with domestic travel arrangements;
- Host the Aide-Memoire presentation.

OUTPUTS

The following are to be provided:

(a) Draft IPR Plan to be submitted by the Team Leader to DFAT by 8 July. The final IPR Plan is due 15July 2015. The Plan should meet standards set out in the DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards, particularly Standard 5 – Independent Evaluation Plans.

(b) In-country IPR Aide-Memoire will be prepared by the IPR team at the end of the in-country visit to (i) summarise initial findings, (ii) validate facts and assumptions; and (iii) discuss the feasibility of initial recommendations. The key audiences for this document will be the DFAT IPR manager and initiative manager, the partner government and the other active stakeholders. The Aide-Memoir will be presented by the Team Leader to representatives from the TESP II Joint Program Oversight Group (JPOG), MET and any other interested party at the completion of the in-country mission. Aide- Memoir Meeting is proposed for 5 August.

(c) Draft IPR Report to be submitted by the Team Leader by 14 August. This report must meet the standards set out in the DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards, particularly Standard 6 – Independent Evaluation Reports. DFAT will present the draft report to the Chair, TESP II JPOG by 17 August and provide feedback to the Team Leader by 30 August. DFAT will not alter the findings or recommendations but reserves the right to ensure in-country stakeholder views are accurately represented.

(d) Final IPR Report to be submitted by the Team Leader to the DFAT by 4 September. The report will be no more than 30 pages (plus annexes). Lessons and recommendations should be clearly documented in the report. The final IPR Report will be provided to JPOG by 7 September.

TIMING AND DURATION

The IPR will commence on or around 2 July 2015 (preliminary document reviews) and be completed no later than 7 September 2015. All aspects are subject to discussion and agreement with DFAT. A teleconference will be scheduled to discuss timing and various aspects of the outputs anticipated 10 July 2015.

TASK	INDICATIVE DATES	LOCATION	Input-Team Leader
Review documents	1 -17 July		4 days
Prepare IPR Plan and discuss draft IPR Plan with DFAT and MFAT: (a) 6 July submission of draft IPR Plan (b) 13 July teleconference with DFAT	6 July		2 days
Making revisions to the draft as agreed.			1 day

Submit final IPR Plan to DFAT and MFAT	14 July		

In-country mission: Proposed key (tentative) dates and activities as follows (a detailed schedule will be developed separately to these TORs):
   (a) 19 July arrive Nuku'alofa, Tonga
   (b) 20 July initial team meeting and briefing
   (c) 21 – 31 July consultations including (other) island school visits, early conclusion drawing, preparation of Aide-Memoir
   (d) 3-5 August presentation of Aide-Memoire (TBC)
	20 July – 7 August	Tonga – Tongatapu and two other islands	15 days

Prepare Initial Draft of IPR Report including data processing and analysis.	6 – 14 August		5 days

Submit Draft IPR Report
   (a) 14 August submission of draft IPR report
   (b) 17 August draft IPR provided to JPOG
	14 August		

JPOG consider Draft IPR Report and provide feedback.
   (a) 17–30 August Draft IPR Report with JPOG for feedback
   (b) 30 August JPOG feedback provided to IPR team			

Prepare Final IPR Report			1 days
Submit Final IPR Report	4 September		
Final IPR report provided to JPOG	30 September		
Travel days			2 days
TOTAL			**30 days**

Annex 1 – BACKGROUND

OVERVIEW

In the past five years Tonga has embarked on a major reform program for the education sector. Key elements of the reforms are set out in the *Tonga Education Lakalaka Policy Framework 2012-17,* codified in the new Education Act of 2013 and supported by ten implementing regulations finalised February 2015. Tonga's education reforms aim to (a) provide universal compulsory basic education for all children in Tonga from 4-18 years, (b) revise the school curriculum for primary (classes 1-8) and secondary levels, (c) develop and offer alternative pathways to students at higher secondary levels that increases their chances of success and employment, (d) nationalise all examinations taken in Tongan schools, (e) provide a unified grant to enable and promote equitable Government and non-government education systems, and (f) establish Minimum Service Standards for students, teachers and teaching and learning environments.

Tonga's concerns at low achievements of primary school students on national assessments of literacy and numeracy (*Standardised Tests of Achievement in Tonga)* and diagnostic testing of children's reading abilities in the first years of schooling (*Tongan Early Grade Reading Assessments)* provided the evidence base for a focus on programs to strengthen children's readiness for schooling (ECE programs) and the development of language, reading and writing skills especially in Tongan language in the early grades of primary, classes 1-3 especially, as the basis for further success in learning and life opportunities.

It was in this evolving education sector reform context that Development Partner (DP) support for the second Tonga Education Support Program (TESP II) was agreed. Development of a number of reform activities that were begun under the Tonga Education Support Program (TESP I), a partnership of GoT, New Zealand and the World Bank, were carried over to TESP II with support from Australia and New Zealand. These included: a new primary school curriculum that placed an emphasis on student-centred teaching and learning approaches and on Tongan language and literacy in classes 1-3 with transition to English in upper primary classes. School grants for school-based management programs had been introduced under TESP I and have been extended to include school leadership training. DP funded grants for primary and secondary schools have continued as well as new grants for Early Childhood Education centres. Under TESP II the school grants and school-based management and planning activities have begun to focus on helping schools achieve Tonga's Minimum Service Standards.

Under separate project agreements (a) the World Bank, with funds from the Global Partnership for Education, is supporting a three-year program of school readiness and early grade reading development in about one third of Tonga's primary schools and (b) New Zealand, in addition to its budget support for TESP II, is also supporting a separate three-year project of Professional Leadership for Literacy in 15 primary schools. These two projects are managed and reported on individually and separately from TESP II.

At the time of the investment design Australia was directly funding World Bank regional activities (including Tonga) on early grade reading assessments and surveys of early childhood development. Due to changes to Australia's regional funding arrangements, funds for the World Bank early grade

reading activities were subsequently sourced from the Global Partnership for Education of which Australia is a major contributor for Pacific region activities. As such the Pacific Early Age Readiness for Learning (PEARL) project in Tonga is now managed by World Bank reporting directly to MET and to the Global Partnership Trust Fund. Its program activities are not included in the TESP II framework of funding and reporting mechanisms. Both the PEARL project and the Pacific Professional Leadership for Literacy (PPLL) projects draw on MET staffing and institutional resources with support of international and national technical assistance managed under contract to World Bank (PEARL) or MFAT/New Zealand (PPLL).

TONGA EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAM II (TESP II)

Based on lessons learnt from TESP I and other educational programs in Tonga and the Pacific, assessment of the Ministry of Education and Training (MET) Implementation Plan 2012-2017 and consultation with the Government of Tonga, Australia (and New Zealand) agreed to support a set of earmarked activities in MET's sector plan. The activities were selected to be consistent with Australia's *Pacific Education and Skills Development Agenda,* in particular for 'ensuring that all Pacific children have access to a basic education' and 'making sure that education is of an acceptable quality, particularly to guarantee literacy and numeracy and to provide a basis for learning beyond schools'. It was agreed with MET that Australia's (and New Zealand's) investment in TESP II would therefore primarily focus on assisting MET to improve children's levels of literacy and numeracy, particularly in the early grades, to ensure a sound foundation for future learning of both boys and girls. Australia committed AUD12 million in support of TESP II for an implementation time frame of January 2013 to June 2016.

The key strategic objectives of the TESP II are:

- Improved access to basic education opportunities so that all children, boys and girls, and those with disabilities, will complete a full course of Universal Basic Education (UBE) [21]
- Increased early grade student learning outcomes (better reading, writing and understanding of numbers)
- Improved education sector management

The TESP II program was organised around seven major thematic components each intended to contribute to improved outcomes in student achievement and to the strategic objectives listed above. The thematic components are: curriculum reform and assessment, teacher training and professional development, delivery of an integrated school grants program, early childhood education, inclusive education, knowledge development and dissemination (including technical assistance), and improvements in MET capacity.

The theory of change behind the program was that TESP II outcomes such as improved literacy and numeracy in primary school classrooms will result from a well-supported curriculum reform that will provide quality learning materials (such as books, readers and teachers guides), combined with

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[21] For purposes of TESP II 2013-2016 results monitoring this is defined specifically for primary schooling (classes 1-6). The new Education Act 2012/2013 has defined (compulsory) UBE as covering the entire age range 4-18, from entry into ECCE at 4 years and progression into primary schooling at 5 years with completion of the school cycle at 18 years.

teacher professional development activities including in-service training for primary teachers and upgrading for uncertified secondary school teachers. To support improved teaching and learning outcomes, primary teacher appraisal policy and processes are being developed, along with improved primary school assessment practices and procedures. Support for the Tonga Institute of Education was seen to be critical to ensure accreditation of its teacher training courses and to improve the quality and relevance of the training. In addition, the provision of primary and secondary school grants aims to support an outcome of better teaching and learning environments by linking the grants to Minimum Service Standards and effective support for school-based management.

In the area of ECE, TESP II supports activities including grant provision, policy development and scoping of existing provision and projected needs. Given the lack of baseline data on children with special learning needs and sustainability concerns, Australia's support of inclusive education was planned to be iterative and phased, beginning with a scoping study (commenced in 2015).

TESP II includes activities for knowledge development and dissemination with an emphasis on data collection and analysis together with monitoring and evaluation (inclusive, results based) to provide reliable reporting and an evidence based platform for policy development, planning and decision making.

The design of TESP II was at an early stage of GoT's ambitious education sector reform design and development. TESP II design attempted to recognise the institutional demands of the system reform especially for a small state such as Tonga with a dispersed school system across 54 islands. However, the pace of reform and the institutional demands arising from this have been at a peak in the TESP II implementation period. Tonga has also suffered considerable infrastructure damage from both a tsunami (year) and cyclones (2014) during the TESP II implementation period. These events have put strains on organisational capacities at all levels (MET, field offices and schools) to initiate, develop and monitor implementation of reform activities including those supported by TESP II. TESP II design included a Performance Assessment Framework setting out goals and expected outcomes at project end in June 2016, and an annual Results Monitoring Framework setting out indicators for progress towards goals on an annual basis[22]. It has been difficult for MET to monitor system results in this way which means that reporting has been predominantly descriptive rather than quantitative, qualitative or results related. It is expected that the IPR will provide information on progress towards goals as originally outlined for TESP II.

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[22] The Performance Assessment Framework and the Results Monitoring Framework are attached.

Annex 4: List of Documents

TESPII Investment Design Summary and Annexes (2013)

TESP II Semi Annual Reports (Jul- Dec 2013, Jul-Dec 2014)

TESP II Workplans

Quarterly SBM Reports (Oct-Dec 2014; Jan-Mar 2015);

Performance Assessment Framework and Results Management Framework

Minutes of Joint Program Oversight Group (3)

Partnership for Development Education Implementation schedule

Institutional capacity load resulting from Project Management, Feb 2014 (Audrey Aarons)

MET Guide to Minimum Service Standards in Schools

Consultant reports relating to school grants (Peter Buckland)

CBM – Nossal Institute Partnership for Disability Inclusive Development Scoping Report

DFAT Aid Quality Check report 2015

Report of the Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs and Culture/MET 2012

TESP Final Review 2010 and Midterm Review 2008

TIOE Review 2012

Researching SWAps in Pacific Education 2011

Annex 5: Schedule of Interviews and School Visits

Date	Time	Meeting	Venue
Monday 20 July	2:00 – 3:00 pm	Telusa Tu'i'onetoa & Vika Lutui	AHC Conf. rm.
	3:00 – 4:00 pm	Sophie Temby (Deputy High Commissioner DFAT) Brett Aldam (High Commissioner DFAT)	AHC Conf. rm
Tues 21 July	9:00 – 10:15 am	Acting CEO MET- Claude Tupou TESP2 Coordinator – Kalo Moeaki	CEO's office
	10:20 –11:00am	MFAT Deputy High Commissioner – Adele Plummer	NZ MFAT office
	11:40 –12:40pm	Principal Tonga Institute of Education (TIOE)-Ms Liuaki Fusitu'a Lunch	TIOE Office
	12:40 – 1:40pm	MET Finance & Procurement – Manu 'Akau'ola, Lupe Goulton & Lilika Fifita	
	1:40 – 2:40pm	MoF Procurement – Manfred & Pisila 'Otunuku	MET Main office
	3:00 – 4:30pm		AHC Office
Sat 26 July	12:00 – 2:00pm	Former MET CEO – Ms Emeli Pouvalu	Escape Café
Mon 27 July	9:00 – 10:15am	CedO CDU – Ms Teresa Pahulu	CDU Office
	10:20-11:30am	SBM Team	SBM Office
	11:40am – 12:40pm	MoFNP – Tatafu Moeaki (CEO), 'Aholotu Palu, Kilisitina Tuaimei'api Makeleta Siliva	MoFNP Main Office/ Tungi Colonade
	12:40-1:40pm	Lunch	

	1:40:00 – 2:40pm	EMIS-Ms Ma'unga	EMIS office
	2:45 – 3:50pm	Disability/Inclusive Edu.-Matelita Taufa	Matelita's office
	5:00 – 6:00pm	Sophie, Adele, Telusa, Vika	NZHC office
Wed 29 July	1:00 – 2:30pm	Professional Development team	CDU office
	2:30 – 3:50	Staff Performance Appraisal team	SPA Office
	4:00 – 5:00pm	ECE	ECE office
Thur 30 July	9:00 – 10:00am	Telusa & Vika	AHC Conf Rm
Fri 31 July	8:30 am	Debrief DFAT, MFAT	AHC Conf Rm
	10:30 am	Debrief GoT (MET, MoFNP)	MET's main office