

2018 Solomon Islands Education Sector Program 2 Performance Linked Aid Independent Assessment

DFAT Management Response

Recommendation/ Statement	Response	Explanation	Action plan
<p><u>Recommendation 1: Performance payment</u></p> <p>The overall recommended Performance Linked payment for 2018 is 68.36 per cent.</p>	Partially agree	DFAT agrees with the assessor’s findings for all targets except target 2.3.2 (‘SISTA 2017 results show an improvement in both literacy and numeracy for both grades 4 and 6’). In recognition of Solomon Islands’ 2018 Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) results ¹ (released after the 2018 Independent Assessment Report was completed), DFAT believes MEHRD should achieve 100% (not 10%) of target 2.3.2. This gives an overall achievement of 70.29 per cent instead of 68.36 percent.	Pending approval of Australia’s new Education Sector Support Program 2019-2023 (ESSP, a joint program with New Zealand) and finalisation of a new Direct Funding Agreement with SIG, DFAT will make this payment in early 2020. As the level of annual budget support to MEHRD under ESSP has not been confirmed, the ESSP PLA ceiling (i.e. a set percentage of ESSP budget support) is also yet to be confirmed.
<p><u>Recommendation 2: An improved partnership approach</u></p> <p>Engage a skilled Partnership Broker to develop a genuinely agreed and understood Performance Matrix for PLA, and identify any corresponding technical advice needed. The aim of the Broker is to build and strengthen partnerships to deliver impactful programs. Skilled brokering can make a real difference to the effectiveness of partnerships and programs.</p>	Agree in principle	Under ESSP, DFAT intends to engage a Program Management Team (PMT) whose role will include facilitation of the development of the PLA matrix in liaison/agreement with MEHRD, DFAT and MFAT.	Pending approval of ESSP, to be taken forward by the PMT.
<p><u>Recommendation 3: Long-term indicators</u></p> <p>Develop a few strategically critical and agreed indicators from MEHRD’s NEAP [National Education Action Plan] and MELP [Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan] held constant over a realistic timeframe. This would be especially relevant for Access and Quality indicators that typically take longer to show improvements. Interdependent indicators to be identified early and ‘cascaded’. Payment could be graduated over a 3 to 4-year</p>	Agree in principle		Pending approval of ESSP, to be taken forward by the PMT.

¹ Solomon Islands’ 2018 PILNA results showed increases in literacy and numeracy for grades 4 and 6 since 2012.

<p>period (in line with the new ESSP design), with a percentage paid each year on achievements towards a longer-term target. Indicators could track trends over time to include teacher and student performance, transition rates, numbers of certified teachers, numbers of teachers paid on time.</p>		
<p><u>Recommendation 4: Annual indicators</u></p> <p>Identify 3 or 4 shorter-term annual indicators from MEHRD AWP [Annual Work Plan]. These annual indicators would most likely fall into the Management Systems target area. For example, grants retirement, merit-based scholarships, systems/standards improvement and responding to audit findings are within MEHRD control.</p>	<p>Agree in principle</p>	<p>Pending approval of ESSP, to be taken forward by the PMT.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 5: Maintain sight of the bigger picture</u></p> <p>The current DFA [Direct Funding Agreement] identifies the percent of SIG expenditure on the education sector, controlled scholarship expenditure and audit as higher order triggers for DFA.</p>	<p>Agree in principle</p>	<p>Pending approval of ESSP, DFAT will include high level triggers (actual triggers to be negotiated with SIG) in the new DFA and implementation of ESSP.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 6: Data and research</u></p> <p>PLA verification rests on the quality of data being collected and analysed within MEHRD. It is suggested partners consider investment in data verification. The MEHRD Permanent Secretary is keen for research to inform decision making.</p>	<p>Agree in principle</p>	<p>Pending approval of ESSP, to be taken forward as part of the anticipated Capacity Development Framework.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 7: Donor performance</u></p> <p>Donors could have PLA partner responsibilities, such as the identification and provision timely of technical assistance and the use of MEHRD systems (not financially linked).</p>	<p>Agree in principle</p>	<p>Pending approval of ESSP, to be taken forward by the PMT.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 8: Assessment as a partnership</u></p> <p>In line with the development of indicators in a genuine partnership, the assessment should be carried out in partnership too. This doesn't mean the assessor is not independent or is not able to make recommendations with which MEHRD might not</p>	<p>Agree in principle</p>	<p>The planned approach in ESSP to ensure consistency and minimise duplication of effort is for MEHRD's own systems to produce PLA assessment data (without an Independent Assessor) which the PMT will verify.</p> <p>Pending approval of ESSP, to be taken forward by the PMT.</p>

<p>agree. It does include partners in the process of data collection, verification and analysis. Consideration could be given to an Independent Assessor being engaged over a 3-year rolling period to ensure consistency of approach. This would not compromise independence if indicators were relatively consistent over time.</p>		
<p><u>Recommendation on Target 3.5: SIG Scholarships are sustainable</u> “For future PLA and linked to any new DFA: Expenditure percentage of total education budget and the ratio of local/ Rural Training Centres to international scholarships is recommended as a better measure of results rather than raw numbers of scholarships awarded.” (p.27)</p>	<p>Agree in principle</p>	<p>Pending approval of ESSP, to be taken forward by the PMT.</p>
<p><u>Statement on strategies for increasing participation rates</u> “There has been much analysis and reporting on barriers to access in the Solomon Islands for over a decade, with no corresponding strategy to increase participation rates.” (Executive Summary, p.1)</p>	<p>Disagree</p> <p>DFAT disagrees that there is “no corresponding strategy to increase participation rates.” MEHRD operates under the Education Strategic Framework 2016-2030 and the Nation Education Action Plan 2016-2020 which both focus on increasing participation rates.</p>	<p>NA</p>