

A C I L A L L E N C O N S U L T I N G

REPORT TO
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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EVALUATION OF THE NCP PILOTS



EVALUATION STRATEGY





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1 Project overview

This evaluation strategy outlines the method to be undertaken in evaluating the New Colombo Plan Mobility and Scholarship Pilots. It clarifies the conceptual approach and methodology, including the key evaluation questions and the stakeholders to be consulted as discussed at the project inception meeting.

This chapter provides an overview of the New Colombo Plan (NCP) and outlines its objectives as background to the project.

1.1 The New Colombo Plan

The New Colombo Plan is an Australian Government initiative aimed at lifting Australia's knowledge of the Indo Pacific region, strengthening individual and institutional relationships between Australia and the region, and increasing the number of 'Asia-capable' and work-ready Australian graduates. Further, the New Colombo Plan will provide opportunities for universities, businesses and other stakeholders to enhance their relationships across the region.

The New Colombo Plan has two key elements:

- a mobility program that will be widely available to support Australian undergraduates to undertake a study or internship/mentorship in the Indo Pacific region, ranging from short courses to semester study of up to one year
- a scholarship program that will provide opportunities for a select number of undergraduates to undertake periods of study for between one semester and a year and an internship/mentorship in the Indo Pacific region.

In December 2013, the Australian Government announced \$100 million of funding over five years for the New Colombo Plan. The full program will commence in 2015, following a pilot that will commence in 2014 involving Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong SAR.

The **strategic objectives** of the NCP overall are:

- Lift knowledge of the Indo Pacific region in Australia and strengthen our people-to-people and institutional relationships by increasing the number of Australian undergraduate students undertaking study and internships in the region.
- Deepen Australia's relationships with the region through the engagement of university, business and other stakeholder networks in supporting the program and ensuring such experiences are highly valued across the Australian community.
- Be transformational in establishing study in the Indo Pacific region to become a "rite of passage" for Australian undergraduate.

The **operational objectives** of the NCP pilots are:

- Select and support approximately 40 scholarships and 700 mobility grants that meet the NCP objectives for Australian university students to study across the four pilot locations of Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong SAR.
- Identify, support and promote innovative mobility programs that explore new ideas in engaging and providing opportunities for Australian undergraduate grant recipients in the Indo Pacific, with the capacity to assist in scaling up to meet the NCP objectives.

- Promote and support initiatives that explore the identification of internships / mentorships for grant recipients at the pilot destinations and provide a range of models and best practice for other destinations.
- Establish bilateral support for the Program in pilot destinations that facilitates pilot phase study and internship arrangements and supports engagement with the New Colombo Plan by the wider Indo Pacific region.
- Develop an alumni community that engages grant recipients and provides the opportunity for them to share their experiences, promote the NCP and continue to develop knowledge of and professional links with the Indo Pacific region.
- Evaluate the pilot program to identify best practice and inform the future development and scale-up of the New Colombo Plan.

Mobility Grants Program

The Mobility Grants Program offers funding for universities to provide grants for Australian undergraduate students enrolled at Australian universities to facilitate the students (grant recipients) participation in an international study experience that provides credit or is otherwise a mandatory component of their course.

The Program aims to fund an approximate proportion of 70 per cent semester-based places and 30 per cent short term places. Funding will support study options of up to two semesters (12 months), short-term (less than 6 months), language study, internships and mentorships in one of the eligible locations. Grant recipients will be subject to specific eligibility criteria as outlined in Box 1.

The pilot phase consists of two tranches of applications for funding:

- **Tranche 1** allows universities or university consortia to submit one application each – either individually or as a member of a consortium, for a single destination for study options within projects which must be undertaken in first semester, 2014. Tranche 1 applications closed on 23 January 2014. Universities that received an offer of funding for Tranche 1 may proceed based on the contents of their application and project schedule.
- **Tranche 2** allows universities or university consortia to submit applications for one or more destinations for study options within projects in second semester, 2014 and first semester, 2015.

The key dates for the pilot are outlined in Table 1.

At least 90 per cent of the funding will be provided to grant recipients in the form of direct grants. Universities can access a maximum of 10 per cent of the total funding they receive for the purpose of subsidising costs associated with Program administration, including the Evaluation Reporting requirement. Subsidies to grant recipients must be no less than \$1,000 and no more than \$3,000 for short-term study options and no less than \$3,000 and no more than \$7,000 for semester study options for each grant recipient.

Box 1 Eligibility criteria – Mobility program**Universities**

Applications for funding under the NCP will be accepted from Australian universities and consortia of universities only.

An Australian university is defined as an institution listed under Table A or Table B of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA)*.

- The consortium must nominate one Australian university as the lead university. That university will be accountable for meeting the legal and reporting requirements on behalf of the consortium.

Individual universities submit applications in their own name, or they may also form part of consortia submitting additional applications.

A decision not to participate in one or both Tranches of the pilot phase will not exclude participation on the full rollout of the NCP, or any other Australian Government administered international grant recipient mobility Programs.

Grant recipients under the Program

Recipients must be:

- an Australian citizen. Applicants with dual citizenship are eligible, however they must undertake their study in a third country, of which they are not a citizen;
- enrolled in an Australian university at the time of application and throughout their study. An Australian university is defined as a supplier listed under Table A or Table B of the Higher Education Support Act 2003;
- between 18 and 28 years of age at the commencement of their study program; and
- undertaking a Bachelor's degree level program (Pass or Honours) onshore at an Australia university campus at the commencement of the program.

Source: Australian Government, *New Colombo Plan Guidelines, Mobility Program*

Table 1 Mobility pilot timeline

Date	Activity	
	Tranche 1	Tranche 2
December 2013	Round opens	
January 2014	Applications close	
February 2014	Funding offers made	Round opens
March 2014	In-country study commences	Applications close
		Applications assessed
April 2014		Funding offers made
		ILO Forum, Adelaide
May 2014		In-country study commences
August 2014	In-country study finishes Evaluation Reports due	
January 2015		Mid-way evaluation report due
July 2015	Completion Report	In-country study finishes Final evaluation report due Completion Report

Source: Australian Government, *New Colombo Plan Guidelines, Mobility Program*. Additional dates provided by the Department of Education

Further information on the Mobility Program is available from the Program Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions at: www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan/mobility-program.html

Scholarship Program

The Scholarship Program (pilot phase) provides opportunities directly for Australian undergraduates to undertake study and an internship/mentorship in one of the eligible

locations. Scholars must be in at least the second year of their degree at the commencement of their scholarship and satisfy eligibility criteria as outlined in Box 2.

Box 2 Eligibility criteria – Scholarship program

Applicants must be:

- An Australian citizen. Applicants with dual citizenship are eligible, however they must undertake their scholarship in a third country, of which they are not a citizen;
- Enrolled in an Australian university at the time of application and throughout their scholarship. An Australian university is defined as a supplier listed under Table A or Table B of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*;
- Between 18 and 28 years of age at the commencement of their scholarship program; and
- Undertaking a Bachelor's degree level program (Pass or Honours) onshore at an Australian university campus at the commencement of the scholarship. Pass degree-level applicants must be in at least the second year of their program at the commencement of the scholarship.

Additionally, the applicant's proposed scholarship program must:

- Be undertaken in one of the four pilot destinations: Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong SAR;
- Not be undertaken at an offshore campus of an Australian university in the host destination;
- Not be undertaken at a host institution in a region with a travel advice classification of Level 4 by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; and
- Commence between 1 July 2014 and before 30 June 2015.

Source: Australian Government, *New Colombo Plan Guidelines*, Scholarship Program

New Colombo Plan Scholars can receive up to a maximum of \$67,000, to be used for a range of benefits. In the pilot round, each Australian university has been asked to nominate up to five students to apply for the Scholarship Program. New Colombo Plan Scholars are being selected through a competitive, merit-based selection process.

The outcome of the application process will be determined by June 2014, and successful Scholars leave for their program between July 2014 and June 2015. The key dates for the scholarship program pilot are outlined in Table 2. Further information on the Scholarship Program is available from the Program Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions at: www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan/scholarship-program.html.

Table 2 Scholarship program pilot timeline

Date	Activity
February 2014	Australian universities nominate applicants
March 2014	Nominated applicants receive application pack, including application form via email, complete application and gather supporting documentation Applications close
April 2014	Applications are shortlisted
May 2014	Shortlisted applicants are notified
May 2014	Shortlisted applicants are interviewed
June 2014	Selections are finalised and Minister(s) are notified of selection outcomes
June 2014	All successful and unsuccessful applicants are notified regarding the outcome of their application
July 2014 – June 2015	Successful Scholars leave for their program

Source: Australian Government, *New Colombo Plan Guidelines*, Scholarship Program

1.2 This document

The remainder of this evaluation strategy is structured as follows:

- Section 2 outlines the conceptual approach, including
 - the evaluation strategy to be used
 - the project logic
 - the key evaluation questions which will guide each stage of the evaluation.
- Section 3 discusses the methodology that will be applied, including
 - the project architecture and timelines
 - key risks and their mitigation
 - stakeholder consultation to be undertaken
 - developing the consultation tools and commencing stage 1.

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