



DFAT MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW OF THE GLOBAL EDUCATION MONITORING CENTRE

The Global Education Monitoring Centre (GEM Centre) is a research hub established in 2013 and housed within the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER). The aim is to improve learning by ensuring that education policy, practice and investment are influenced by high-quality evidence and provides support to local, regional and global organisations, and governments.

In 2014, ACER and the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) entered a long-term strategic partnership through the GEM Centre. This is based on the mutual priorities articulated in ACER's mission to improve learning and DFAT's Education Strategy and education policy. The GEM Centre Pathways to Impact Strategic Framework (2020) captures the GEM Centre's overall objective to improve learning by ensuring that education policies, practices and investments are influenced by high-quality evidence.

A second Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) for Phase 3 (4 November 2020- 3 November 2023)ⁱ was commissioned to assess progress against recommendations resulting from the previous phase and to help inform the future of the GEM Centre. Evaluation questions were agreed with GEM Centre Board members and reflect the Organisation for Economic and Development Cooperation (OECD) Development Assistance Committee criteria. The evaluation was undertaken in the period July 2022 to February 2023.

DFAT welcomes the MTE findings. A response to the recommendations is tabled below to inform the future of the GEM Centre.

Recommendations for the Remainder of Phase 3

No.	SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSE (AGREE/PARTIALLY AGREE/DISAGREE)	ACTION PLAN AND TIMEFRAME
1.	The GEM Centre continues to undertake important work in global education monitoring.	Reconfirm the Partnership's shared priorities and interests and agree on acceptable ways to reduce transactions for Partnership members with respect to the existing work plan and governance functions for the remainder of Phase 3.	Agree	DFAT will work with the GEM Centre to agree an approach to streamlined management arrangements for all members by the end of April 2023.

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2.	DFAT and ACER continue to benefit from the GEM Centre partnership, but the form of the relationship and the funding modality and funding envelope need to be reconsidered.	Determine whether the Partnership will continue and what changes will be enacted regarding the Partnership modality (given each organisation’s political economy), funding modality, and funding envelope. DFAT should clarify its leadership role with the GEM Centre and involvement in global education monitoring through the Partnership and in what way/s. A DFAT–ACER arrangement that is less resource-intensive for personnel could still achieve the expected outcomes and benefits. ACER should undertake scenario planning and consider whether the MTE findings and conclusions and other recommendations should be factored into the future of the GEM Centre.	Agree	DFAT will continue to monitor demand for global education monitoring investment, including in the context of the new development policy. DFAT has fulfilled all budget commitments for the Phase 3 contract and will confirm its position on future involvement with the GEM Centre in advance of completing Phase 3.
3.	The GEM Centre has excelled in the international landscape among the global education assessment community, and can be assumed to continue to do so, given the unmet needs in SDG Indicator 4.1 as well as early childhood education, youth/adult education and global citizenship.	Begin to position the GEM Centre for increased impact and sustainability beyond Phase 3 by tightening the strategic approach and orientation around three levels of engagement at the global, regional, and country levels. Develop a crosswalk of DFAT priority countries, GPE countries, and countries in which ACER/the GEM Centre has already contributed, including via international ACER offices. Use the crosswalk to identify and agree on regional and country capacity development and education assessment systems strengthening and identify and commit to ways to promote GEM Centre engagement in specific countries and regions (including Southeast Asia). In addition, determine whether the GEM Centre or ACER branding should be used for external communication.	Agree	By end of May 2023, DFAT and ACER will identify priority countries and regional mechanisms for communication and engagement over the remainder of Phase 3. Mapping existing work, capacity gaps, and constraints related to assessment systems in priority countries and regions would be useful to inform future DFAT engagement in the education sector.
4.	The common interests of both ACER and DFAT have been realised to a large	Identify and begin to produce and market products for a broader group of audiences the global, regional, and country levels that can be carried forward beyond Phase 3. Articulate a strategic	Agree	DFAT will work with ACER to produce fit-for-purpose policy-relevant communications

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	extent through the GEM Centre.	'communication for development' approach that is aligned with and supports the tightened strategic approach (above) and effectively and efficiently contributes to the ongoing relevance, coherence, impact, and sustainability of Partnership efforts in the global education monitoring ecosystem.		products to increase utilisation by partner countries and regions (identified above) by the end of October 2023.
5.	An absence of a high-quality MELF and associated data aggregation and reporting hindered the MTE.	Refine and incorporate several of the MTE data consolidation tools into the GEM Centre monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) approach. Once the strategic direction is determined, improve the MEL plan and framework in terms of tracking and consolidation of output and outcome achievements to inform strategic decisions, implementation, and reporting beyond Phase 3.	Partially agree	DFAT welcomes improved MEL, but recognises that the timing and resources applied to change needs to be proportional to future funding and direction of the partnership. [For Phase 3, the Pathways to Impact indicates the strategic priorities and principles of the GEM Centre, providing the key elements for the phase 3 reporting cycle].

ⁱ In addition to Phase 3, the review also considered previous inputs due to the long-term, cumulative nature of the work being done by GEM Centre.