

**Independent Evaluation of Kiribati Technical and Vocational Education and Training Sector Strengthening
Program Phase I and II
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

Program Summary

Program Name	Kiribati Technical and Vocational Education and Training Sector Strengthening Program Phase I and II		
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
Commencement date	Phase I (Jan 2011) Phase II (July 2012)	Completion date	Phase I (June 2012) Phase II (July 2016)
Total Australian \$	Estimated total initiative value: AUD23.6 million (total contract value from 2011-2016)		
Total other \$	-		
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
Country/Region	Kiribati		
Primary sector	Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)		

Objectives	<p>Goal: To support the vision of the Government of Kiribati for an internationally respected TVET system which plays a valued role in improving national economic growth and increasing the employability of the people of Kiribati at home and abroad, especially its young women and men.</p> <p>Medium-Term Objective: To support mutually agreed improvements in the quality, quantity, scope and equity of training provided by the Kiribati TVET sector and to do so in ways which are financially sustainable and integrated with regional TVET and labour market developments as they evolve.</p> <p>Short-Term Objective: To support the development of an integrated and accountable TVET sector which responds to demand from employers and individual women and men for quality-assured training that increases workplace productivity; broadens work opportunities for i-Kiribati at home and abroad; and contributes to economic growth and social equity.</p>
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Evaluation Summary

Evaluation Objective: The evaluation was commissioned to provide advice to the Government of Kiribati and the Government of Australia on the performance of the program since inception and to guide the design of the subsequent phase known as the Skills for Employment Program (SfEP, commencing July 2016).

Specifically, the evaluation was commissioned to:

- Review the situation analysis that guided the design of TVETSSP Phases I and II and identify subsequent changes to the development context;
- Identify Phase I and II progress and further outcomes that need to be maintained;
- Assess the quality of Phases I and II against the DFAT Aid Quality Criteria;
- Suggest options that would increase value for money.

Evaluation Completion Date: 28 October 2015 (submission of final report)



Summary of evaluation findings

The Kiribati TVETSSP was designed with two components:

- Component 1: strengthening the organisational capacity of MLHRD to provide policy, planning and oversight services for the TVET sector;
- Component 2: increasing the quality, quantity, scope and equity of training delivered by KIT.

The evaluation found the program met most of the output targets against the two components.

Component 1 was discontinued in June 2014. As a result, the component partially achieved its outcome to increase MLHRD's organisational capacity in the TVET sector. The evaluation found the main area of deficiency related to the establishment of data systems at MLHRD to support strategic and management decision making.

Component 2 has progressed in achieving its outcome of increasing the quality, quantity, scope and equity of training delivered by KIT. The evaluation found significant capacity increases have been noted for KIT training staff and their ability to deliver Australian standard qualifications. Selected achievements include:

- Construction of improved KIT facilities to help increase the number of places;
- Standard of teaching quality has risen to recognised international levels;
- TVET advisory mechanisms are working well and have transitioned TVET delivery from a supply to a demand led training model with industry support;
- Transition to work activities have some success in achieving employment outcomes;
- KIT- Australia Pacific Technical College (APTC) pathway has provided access to Australian certificate III level qualifications;
- Employers have found that KIT and APTC graduates have good soft skills, making them worthwhile employees (whilst recognising that further skills development is essential).

The evaluation also found the program's component outcomes have been mostly achieved. However, there was not much data or evidence to suggest that there had been significant contribution to the three sector result areas—further study or local employment; productivity improvement in Kiribati; and international employment. While the evaluation acknowledged that the achievement of these outcomes was not the sole responsibility of TVETSSP, the program appeared to have underestimated the impact of other factors outside the scope of the program to the achievement of these outcomes.

DFAT's response to the evaluation report

DFAT is of the view that the evaluation provides a balanced assessment of TVETSSP's strengths and weaknesses. We agree with most of its findings, conclusions and recommendations and see it as a useful basis for reflection and further discussion. The evaluation identifies a number of opportunities to recalibrate the program through the design of the subsequent phase (SfEP).

DFAT's response to the recommendations made in the evaluation report

The evaluation made sixteen recommendations clustered under five headings. DFAT's response to each recommendation is listed below.

Quality Training Delivery

Recommendation 1	Increase the number of graduates from KIT.
<p>DFAT response: Agree. DFAT will direct the managing contractor for SfEP to look at ways of better utilising the new facilities as part of 2016 planning (noting that the current number of qualified trainers still remains a limitation). The design for SfEP will set targets for increasing the number of graduates, and will include a facilities utilisation study.</p>	
Recommendation 2	Investigate ways of reducing unit costs, whilst increasing the levels of quality output.
<p>DFAT response: Agree. SfEP will aim to reduce unit costs by increasing the levels of quality outputs. The design for SfEP will include a new 'market model' that moves away from the delivery of all Australian qualifications, to achieving a more relevant, responsive and cost-effective course profile that is driven by the demands of domestic and international labour markets. KIT will continue to offer some internationally-recognised qualifications where required for international employment. However, KIT will also be supported to seek registration under a regional quality and regulatory system, allowing it to deliver regionally-accredited qualifications. It is intended that this new approach will increase cost-effectiveness in the long run, and thus support an increase in the number of places KIT is able to offer. This will be supported by the new facilities to be completed in late 2015. Other recommended measures to improve value for money will also be considered in the design of SfEP.</p>	
Recommendation 3	Support KIT to retain and use the revenue it generates towards further investment and contribution to its operating costs.
<p>DFAT response: Agree. DFAT Tarawa post has commenced dialogue on this issue with senior Government of Kiribati officials.</p>	
Recommendation 4	Consider alternatives to the current auspicing arrangement.
<p>DFAT response: Agree. Under SfEP, KIT will move on from the current auspicing model. Instead, a Skills Development Fund will support KIT to annually plan to 'purchase' courses (and engage institutional strengthening services) in response to current labour market demand. This new 'market model' is intended to be more flexible, responsive and cost-effective than the current auspicing model.</p>	
Recommendation 5	Continue demand led TVET training model for Kiribati, with an additional focus on international demand.

DFAT response: Agree. SfEP will continue to support existing TVET advisory mechanisms, and will introduce an annual labour market demand study to inform future course development and course offerings. This study will identify demand driven skill development priorities for inclusion in the KIT annual course profile.

Employment Focus

Recommendation 6	Transition to work activities should be refocused toward international employment opportunities and graduates' skills promoted to international markets.
DFAT response: Agree. SfEP will have a much stronger focus on developing graduates' technical and soft skills through targeted transition to work activities, with a particular focus on those seeking off-shore employment. This will include initiatives to provide workplace training targeted to areas of international labour market demand, and will be complemented by marketing activities to promote the quality of KIT graduates to an international audience (see recommendation 8).	
Recommendation 7	Pathways that build on the KIT qualification should be investigated.
DFAT response: Agree. SfEP will support KIT to develop partnerships with Australian and/or regional registered training organisations (RTOs) to deliver internationally-recognised Certificate III qualifications that build on the Certificate II qualifications obtained at KIT, targeted at graduates seeking offshore employment. APTC will continue to provide KIT Certificate II to APTC Certificate III pathways where appropriate.	
Recommendation 8	KIT marketing and communication functions need to promote the quality of KIT graduates to an international audience.
DFAT response: Agree. SfEP will support KIT to develop and implement strategies to market KIT graduates internationally, as well as domestically. This will help create international labour market demand for KIT graduates.	
Recommendation 9	Coordination within MLHRD, in so far as supporting access to international employment opportunities needs to be strengthened.
<p>DFAT response: Agree. SfEP will support MLHRD to improve the management and coordination of the skills sector. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting the Ministry to improve worker mobilisation systems and procedures and liaison with employers; - DFAT and the Ministry working together to support the implementation of the Pacific Microstates - Northern Australian Worker Pilot Program for workers from Pacific microstates and the expanded Seasonal Worker Program. 	

Capacity Strengthening

Recommendation 10	The delivery of capacity strengthening support needs to be flexible. Targets set against this need to focus on capacity building outcomes rather than the delivery of outputs.
DFAT response: Agree. SfEP will deliver flexible capacity strengthening support to MLHRD through a range of activities. The targets set by these activities will focus on building outcomes. This includes supporting MLHRD to realise regional and international labour mobility opportunities and assist in the development of policy, systems and processes that will help develop the national TVET system.	
Recommendation 11	The mechanism of short term assistance (STA) needs to be carefully planned and described in the terms of reference, so there is a sustainable capacity building process supported by KIT beyond the STA input.
DFAT response: Agree. SfEP will engage short term advisors (as appropriate) to work collaboratively with the MLHRD to strengthen their capacity to deliver certain program activities. Their engagement will be carefully planned and described so there is a sustainable capacity building process supported by KIT beyond the STA input.	
Recommendation 12	Options to support the creation of two MLHRD data systems (one to track labour supply and another to track employment data) should be investigated.
DFAT response: Agree. SfEP will scope the functionality for the two new systems for data collection and analysis. They will be implemented through MLHRD's National Career Counselling and Employment Centre and KIT.	

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Recommendation 13	The M&E system for Phase III should be simple and fit for purpose. This means it should focus on core data required to monitor performance.
DFAT response: Agree. Paucity of data has limited the scope for evidence-based decision making. M&E during SfEP will focus on gathering and analysing the core data required to monitor program performance. The design for SfEP recommends this approach to M&E and sets out indicative tools, processes and requirements for the M&E system. These will be further reviewed and—where necessary—adjusted on commencement of SfEP, and throughout its implementation.	

Recommendation 14	Data demand and use in M&E will need to take cognizance of the difficulty in maintaining quality and useful databases.
<p>DFAT response Agree. SfEP will take cognizance of the difficulty in maintaining quality and useful databases in Kiribati – not just in terms of administrative capacity, but also in terms of enabling data systems and IT. The managing contractor for SfEP will need to establish, as part of the M&E plan, a quality assurance process for data collection and storage. This should provide consistent and reliable data to inform management decision making.</p>	

Gender and Social Inclusion

Recommendation 15	Gender inclusion needs to be more fully addressed through Phase III. This will require an evolution in approach from one that meets targets to an approach that emphasises gender and social inclusion as a core strategic development issue.
<p>DFAT response: Agree. SfEP will advance gender equality and promote the empowerment of women and girls, through applying the following principles to planning and implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data collection in a form which can be readily analysed to inform planning, analysis and reporting of gender impacts; - Personnel and consultants understanding the importance of, and having the capacity to address, gender equality; - Promoting gender equality, and the importance of gender equality for program activities, through communication to a wider audience; - Needs and priorities of women as well as those of men, identified and addressed in the program’s training and employment support activities; - Information and communication undertaken as part of program activities indicate that opportunities are open to both women and men; - Commitment to building the knowledge, understanding and practical capacity of both women and men, in traditional and non-traditional roles by giving equal opportunity for their participation, including in leadership roles; - Providing and promoting equal opportunities for women to participate in SfEP program committees, planning groups and course review activities. 	
Recommendation 16	Phase III should consider lessons learned from the existing focus on supporting people with disability during Phase II, so that inclusion targets and targeting strategies can be set for inclusion at KIT.

DFAT response Agree. SfEP will continue to maintain the commitment of both the Governments of Australia and Kiribati to supporting people with disabilities access opportunities for training at KIT and subsequent employment through the Job Search Centre. DFAT will work with the SfEP managing contractor to develop appropriate targets and targeting strategies to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities from enrolment through to graduation and beyond.