



Strategic Review of the PNG-Aus Joint Statement of Intent on Technical, Vocational Education and Training Investments

DFAT and DHERST Management Response to Independent Review

In January 2024, DFAT, in partnership with the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST), commissioned an independent strategic review of whether DFAT’s investments in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Papua New Guinea (PNG) had been effective in realising the commitments set out in the PNG-Australia Joint Statement of Intent on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (JSOI on TVET), signed on 5 August 2020. The JSOI on TVET contains commitments for Australia and PNG to work together to improve outcomes for the PNG TVET sector and to grow the number of skilled workers to enable PNG to seize economic growth opportunities domestically and internationally.

The review was led by independent consultants Dr Myra Harrison, an education specialist, and Mr Mark McNamara, a TVET specialist. The findings, observations and recommendations were compiled by the independent consultants and do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government or the PNG Government.

The review found that DFAT and DHERST have made good progress in 7 of the 18 commitments, there has been little or no progress in other commitments for various reasons, not least of which is a lack of definitional parameters and clarity on how to operationalise a commitment.

DFAT and DHERST agree in-principle to the 12 recommendations of the review, which address identified gaps and enhance collaboration between DFAT and DHERST. Immediate priorities include updating JSOI commitments, producing a TVET subsector strategic framework, and reinstating technical assistance to DHERST. Longer-term actions involve strengthening governance structures, conducting TVET graduate tracer studies, and exploring new approaches for TVET provision. Some immediate priorities have already been achieved including updating the [JSOI](#) on TVET at the June 2024 PNG-Australia Ministerial Forum.

#	Review Recommendations DFAT-DHERST	Response	Action	Indicative Timeframe
1	Review and update JSOI on TVET commitments	Agree	An updated JSOI on TVET was signed at the PNG-Australia Ministerial Forum on 19 June 2024 by Australia’s Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Pat Conroy MP, and PNG’s Caretaker Minister for Higher	Completed



#	Review Recommendations DFAT-DHERST	Response	Action	Indicative Timeframe
			Education, Research, Science and Technology, Lucas Dawa Dekena MP.	
2	Produce a TVET subsector strategic framework ¹ that maps elements required for subsector transformation to inform decisions about the subsector and to manage and monitor and evaluate interventions.	Agree		By December 2024
3	Identify and support additional governance structures and other mechanisms that may be needed for the rapid transformation of the TVET subsector, such as the Industry Skills Groups. Structures/mechanisms often fail because of a lack of implementation support; secretariats may be necessary (See Rec 8).	Agree in principle	DFAT will consider in the context of its forthcoming TVET program, to commence in 2025. DFAT notes there are existing governance structures that could support this recommendation, including the National Skills Development Agency and the Industry Skills Groups to develop the National Training Packages.	Ongoing
4	Carry out a tracer study of TVET subsector graduates, initially focusing on technical college graduates, but consider expanding to include other types of TVET training to understand where graduates end up and to inform subsector planning for success.	Agree	This will be carried out under the Improved TVET for Employment Project with 10 Colleges.	By Quarter 3, 2025
5	Investigate ways to incentivise industry to engage with local TVET colleges with a view to employing successful graduates, in collaboration with other GoPNG stakeholders.	Agree	This will be carried out under the Improved TVET for Employment Project with 10 Colleges.	Ongoing

¹ The strategic framework lays out in a visual form all the elements of subsector transformation and plots what specific elements are being addressed and by whom. Ultimately this map will show where there are gaps and overlaps. This map can be used as the basis for a dashboard to track subsector transformation over time. It would also benefit multi-partner meetings as well.



#	Review Recommendations DFAT-DHERST	Response	Action	Indicative Timeframe
6	Build on DFAT’s long-standing engagement in the TVET subsector and consider a leadership and coordinating role among other donors. If DFAT is committed to being a lead donor, revisit the JSOI joint and DFAT-specific commitments and consider modifications to support this leadership role.	Agree	The JSOI on TVET was updated in June 2024, at the PNG-Australia Ministerial Forum, to include a role for DFAT ‘providing leadership to facilitate functional relationships amongst development partners and TVET sector stakeholders.’	JSOI update Completed Leadership and coordinating role - ongoing
7	Reinstate TA resourcing to DHERST based on identified and priority areas of support and appropriate counterpart availability. Establish as soon as possible.	Agree	DFAT will provide modest interim TA until DFAT’s forthcoming TVET program commences in 2025.	By Quarter 3, 2024 (subject to visas)
8	Ensure that DFAT can influence decisions made about multilateral investments at the strategic, tactical, and operational levels and can help ensure harmonisation initiatives across investments. To exercise influence, DFAT will need to be well-versed in project implementation. M&E is a key area of focus. Investigate and incorporate strategies for deeper engagement as soon as possible.	Agree	DFAT will continue to engage on the Improved TVET for Employment Project, by participating in steering committee meetings, monitoring visits, and workshops. DFAT will consider appropriate governance mechanisms, in the context of designing new investments, to ensure harmonisation.	Ongoing
9	Consider new ways of working to enhance quality TVET provision for greater numbers of students, including: consideration of the political economy of TVET, working with the pool of competent TVET providers (especially faith-based providers and industry providers); instigating demand-driven planning Technical Colleges with linkages to	Agree	DFAT will consider in the context of its forthcoming TVET program, to commence in 2025. DFAT will also progress new skills training opportunities to support a greater number of Papua New Guineans to participate in the PALM	Ongoing



#	Review Recommendations DFAT-DHERST	Response	Action	Indicative Timeframe
	Australian Training Providers; and incorporating organisational capacity/gendered political economy assessments and development plans for technical colleges that can be monitored and evaluated.		scheme, in line with the Joint Action Plan to Scale Up Labour Mobility agreed at the PNG-Australia Ministerial Forum.	
10	Engage an in-house TVET subsector expert ² to support the Post.	Agree	DFAT will procure TVET subsector expertise, including to inform design of its new TVET program to commence in 2025.	By Quarter 3 2024 (subject to visas).

² The TVET Subsector expert should have experience in organisational development, change management, institutional strengthening, and human capacity development would be advisable.



Review Recommendations DFAT	Response	Action	Indicative Timeline
6	Agree	The JSOI on TVET was updated in June 2024, at the PNG-Australia Ministerial Forum, to include a role for DFAT ‘providing leadership to facilitate functional relationships amongst development partners and TVET sector stakeholders.’	JSOI update Completed Leadership and coordinating role - ongoing
7	Agree	DFAT will provide modest interim TA until DFAT’s forthcoming TVET program commences in 2025.	By Quarter 3, 2024 (subject to visas)
8	Agree	DFAT will continue to engage on the Improved TVET for Employment Project, by participating in steering committee meetings, monitoring visits, and workshops. DFAT will consider appropriate governance mechanisms, in the context of designing new investments, to ensure harmonisation.	Ongoing



Review Recommendations DFAT		Response	Action	Indicative Timeline
9	Consider new ways of working to enhance quality TVET provision for greater numbers of students, including: consideration of the political economy of TVET, working with the pool of competent TVET providers (especially faith-based providers and industry providers); instigating demand-driven planning Technical Colleges with linkages to Australian Training Providers; and incorporating organisational capacity/gendered political economy assessments and development plans for technical colleges that can be monitored and evaluated.	Agree	DFAT will consider in the context of its forthcoming TVET program, to commence in 2025. DFAT will also progress new skills training opportunities to support a greater number of Papua New Guineans to participate in the PALM scheme, in line with the Joint Action Plan to Scale Up Labour Mobility agreed at the PNG-Australia Ministerial Forum.	Ongoing
10	Engage an in-house TVET subsector expert ³ to support the Post.	Agree	DFAT will procure TVET subsector expertise, including to inform design of its new TVET program to commence in 2025.	By Quarter 3 2024 (subject to visas).

#	Review Recommendations DHERST	Response	Action
11	Complete human resources tasks related to the migration of personnel from other GoPNG entities to DHERST, with the aim of completing within 18 months.	DHERST agrees to all recommendations	The pace of implementation will be subject to financial support.
12	Complete Registered Training Organisations' assessments/accreditation, with the aim of completing within 18 months.		

³ The TVET Subsector expert should have experience in organisational development, change management, institutional strengthening, and human capacity development would be advisable.



#	Review Recommendations DHERST	Response	Action
13	Support the NSDA to successfully undertake its role and responsibilities, including establishing Industry Reference Groups ⁴ , to deepen and strengthen sustainable linkages between PNG and Australian TVET systems to enhance industry engagement, and education market integration, including assistance to complete high-quality curricula rapidly, trial efficient development methods, and prioritise fields/trades that urgently provide the most job opportunities. Consider immediate additional secretariat support.		
14	Reinstate the previous process of site visits for collecting data from technical colleges and simultaneously support the development of a functional management information system that can provide trustworthy data on students, personnel, and colleges. ⁵ In addition, clean and mine existing data to start to gain a clearer picture of what is happening in the subsector (DHERST and NDoE).		
15	Undertake an organisational functional review and assessment of DHERST (national level) with regard to its TVET role and responsibilities (such as curriculum development and contract supervision) and consider a targeted workplace-based competency-based staff development program.		
16	Identify and consider drafting regulations that would support enactment of the <i>Higher and Technical Education Reform Act 2020</i> , which would enable DHERST to fulfil its role as a regulator, along with clear and robust guidelines within the existing legislation that address quality assurance control.		
17	Through NSDA, conduct a stakeholder mapping and social network analysis that will enable the NSDA to understand the range of stakeholders and analyse their		

⁴ The proposed Industry Reference Groups (IRGs) are different from the Industry Skills Groups under the NSDA that have an industry representative per group. IRGs would have a much broader representation of industry leaders and would be established at the subnational level. There might be a peak IRG body at the national level as well.

⁵ The Mathematica Education to Workforce Indicator Framework and resources are excellent and could be of benefit. <https://www.educationtoworkforce.org/>.



#	Review Recommendations DHERST	Response	Action
	interactions over time, and implement a targeted visibility strategy to highlight the value of the TVET subsector. Integrate a communication strategy to effectively convey updates and progress to industry and stakeholders.		