

Management Response to the Pacific Research Program Independent Review – May 2022

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe
Recommendation 1: DFAT should consider providing the existing consortium with a research grant for a further phase of PRP	Agree	The independent review found the PRP was performing well and the consortium was effective and delivered value for money. In particular, the review highlighted ANU’s role as the pre-eminent centre of Pacific studies in the region and its ability to match funding through significant co-investments and that it was ‘not possible for any other university, or university consortium, to deliver a program of this magnitude for the same [value for money].’	a. Proceed with a PRP-Phase 2 with existing consortia partners	Completed in February 2022.
Recommendation 2: DFAT should ensure the modality is a research grant as not doing so would reduce research grant returns, which would, in turn, reduce ANU’s level of co-contribution thus reducing VfM.	Agree	DFAT agrees the research grant remains the most appropriate modality for PRP, as it provides the opportunity for the recipient to leverage co-financing from other government and non-government sources such as additional research grants.	a. DFAT to maintain the grant modality for Phase 2	Completed in February 2022.
Recommendation 3: DFAT should begin a process of co-design with the existing consortium members to ensure there is a	Agree	DFAT agrees a smooth transition to Phase 2 of PRP, with existing consortia members would ensure efficient forward research and resource planning, as well as maintain momentum.	a. DFAT to support a partner-led design-update for Phase 2 of the PRP.	Completed in May 2022.

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smooth transition to the next phase.				
Recommendation 4: The new design should explore ways to further improve research-to-policy communication and engagement between PRP and DFAT	Agree	DFAT agrees to collaborate with the consortium on ways to improve research-to-policy communication including through resource considerations in managing the next phase of PRP. The wide scope and interlinking nature of research outcomes will require considered, timely and digestible outputs to inform policy making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. PRP and DFAT to consider closer alignment between PRP research and DFAT information needs as part of the Phase 2 design-update. b. PRP and DFAT to work collaboratively to discuss and refine products on an iterative basis 	Ongoing
Recommendation 5: The new design of PRP should examine ways to more systematically use PRP experts in the design and evaluation of aid interventions (and at other points in the aid management cycle).	Agree	DFAT values independent technical expertise in aid program design and evaluation including opportunities for involving PRP expertise, where practicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. PRP and DFAT to consider how PRP expertise could be drawn on more systematically as part of the Phase 2 design-update. 	Completed May 2022.

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<p>Recommendation 6:</p> <p>The new design should also adopt an outcomes orientation, focusing on the communication of research outcomes (i.e. ideas, findings and conclusions) not just outputs; means to do this (such as focusing on problems and topics of expertise) should be explored.</p>	Agree	DFAT agrees that an outcomes focussed design would enhance the next phase and better illustrate the value of the PRP to the broader research and policy landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. PRP and DFAT to develop outcomes to guide Phase 2, and consider resourcing requirements to achieve this approach. 	Completed May 2022.
<p>Recommendation 7:</p> <p>DFAT should consider where best to locate the research program within its organisational structure, noting its overarching scope, and it should invest in improving the research section of its website (note: PRP is not even mentioned on the DFAT research webpage).</p>	Partially agree	The management of PRP currently sits within the Office of the Pacific at DFAT which manages a dynamic and fast-paced agenda. DFAT may make organisational changes from time to time which could result in reallocation with the organisational structure.. The overarching scope of the PRP means the program attracts interest from a range of stakeholders and as such, DFAT will investigate ways to highlight the PRP and its outcomes, including through updating the website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DFAT will ensure dedicated resources for managing the PRP. b. DFAT to update public website and to consider systematic engagement with PRP on communications as part of Phase 2. 	<p>Part a completed May 2022.</p> <p>Part b will be completed by August 2022.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 8: DFAT should develop an overarching strategic objective on labour mobility and related areas that clearly explains the objective of its fragmented investments in this area to which the next phase of PRP can align</p>	<p>Partially agree</p>	<p>Labour mobility is a key policy focus for the Office of the Pacific. DFAT will continue to engage closely with PRP to assist in coordinating research in this area.</p>	<p>a. DFAT commits to reviewing its investments in labour mobility research, to improve coherence of the research across partners; and identify priorities for future research. The findings will be shared with PRP partners.</p>	<p>Completed May 2022</p>

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<p>Recommendation 9: The new design should consider supporting a high profile multi-disciplinary flagship research project that focuses on addressing a high-level intractable problem in the Pacific. This should include elevating its partnerships within prestigious research institutions and linking leading academics with partners in the Pacific.</p>	Partially agree	DFAT agrees with this recommendation.	a. A flagship project will be developed in Phase 2 of the PRP	Topics to be finalised in July-Dec 2022