



## Independent Mid Term Review of the *Partnership for Human Development* **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

With the goal of a healthier, better educated Timorese population who are more able to contribute to Timor-Leste’s development goals, the *Partnership for Human Development* (PHD) program was created as a ten-year partnership (2016-26) between the governments of Australia and Timor-Leste. PHD is implemented by Abt Associates (Abt) in collaboration with Timor-Leste’s Ministry for Health (MoH), Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) and the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI).

The 2022 review, undertaken by Clear Horizon, assessed the relevance and appropriateness of the Phase 2 programmatic approach and generated recommendations to strengthen the implementation of Phase 2. It was intended to be primarily forward-looking, while engaging with lessons learned earlier in the program. This review originated from a request by the Aid Governance Board as part of their approval for an extension of the program to May 2026. Many of the recommendations made in the review are already under consideration by DFAT or being implemented; others can be incorporated into phase two of implementation.

Of the 19 recommendations, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) agrees with 14 and partially agrees with five.

### DFAT

Recommendation	Response	Action plan	Timeframe
2.1: DFAT should re-instate Annual Development Talks or similar for portfolio-wide conversations.	Agree	In August 2022, DFAT and the Timor-Leste Ministry of Finance hosted an annual Development Dialogue to jointly reflect on progress and agree priorities. Due to COVID-19 restrictions there was no dialogue in 2021, however annual meetings will now be re-established.	Commenced – will take place on an annual basis.
4.1: DFAT should develop a medium-term strategy regarding the constrained fiscal environment in Timor-Leste. PHD and other investments should then orient their work to align with this strategy, to ensure they are best positioned to support essential GoTL systems and services.	Agree	DFAT established a Development Strategy Assessment Team (DSAT) to provide critical analysis and recommendations on our development program in Timor-Leste. DFAT (in Timor-Leste) has commenced development of a medium-term strategy regarding Timor-Leste’s fiscal environment This will be informed by the DSAT analysis. DFAT and PHD will then work together align PHD’s work in line with this Strategy, re-orientating as required.	Already commenced – initial work expected in the first half of 2023.

## Managing Contractor – Abt Associates

Recommendation	Response	Action plan	Timeframe
1.2: Abt and PHD should increase strategic and management resources in the PHD Executive.	Agree	DFAT requested a PHD workforce analysis which looked at capacity within the executive team. Based on this, DFAT approved the recruitment of a senior Governance and Service Delivery specialist and a senior GEDSI advisor.	Commenced, to be in place by January 2023.
3.1: PHD should finalise the PHD MEL Framework and workplan, including at the Sector level.	Agree	Draft MEL Frameworks for PHD as a whole and for each key areas of sector investment were submitted to DFAT in August 2022. We agree this should be completed as soon as possible.	Commenced – to be complete in February 2023.
3.2: PHD should identify gaps in the evidence base for the end-of-program outcomes narrative, and develop a workplan for filling these gaps.	Agree	This is being undertaken as part of the MELF development.	Commenced– to be completed in February 2023.
3.3: PHD should re-orient progress reporting to be more concise and outcomes focused.	Agree	This is a key focus of MELF development, including at sector level.	Commenced– to be completed in February 2023.
3.4: PHD should establish a reporting process for telling the long-term performance story of PHD across Phase 1 and 2.	Agree	PHD to develop this reporting process as part of the M&E refresh currently underway; this work will be supported by M&E Advisor based at the Australian Embassy in Dili.	Underway, to be completed in February 2023.
4.3: PHD should reframe the narrative from “institutionalisation” and “transition” to systems strengthening around essential service delivery priorities and modalities set out in the DFAT strategy.	Agree	This will become an increasing focus of sector programs in Phase 2. Responsibility sits with sector program leads, with support from the new governance advisor, once recruited. This will be reflected in the 2023 PHD Workplan.	Underway and expected in be in place by June 2023.
4.4: PHD should adopt a more coherent and staged approach to transitioning select activities to GoTL, informed by a PHD-	Agree	PHD has developed a comprehensive Institutionalisation guidance note and toolkit (with Alinea) that sets out a staged approach for	Underway, ongoing.

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wide institutionalisation strategy that is then translated into sector-level transition plans.		the institutionalisation of services to GoTL, including stop point to assess feasibility, fit and value for money. An Institutionalisation strategy will be further developed.	Expected completion in 2023.
4.5: PHD should re-assess the level of ambition and pace for transition and systems strengthening to be more realistic and reflect where the program is currently at.	Partially Agree	The approach to systems strengthening and transition needs to be differentiated to sector context. For example, in education the process of transitioning the school leaders program to government is well underway, while in health, PHD's engagement with health systems strengthening is at a very early stage. Clear outcomes related to sectors and sub-sectors where PHD is engaging will be identified and included in each sector MELF (aligned with recommendation 4.4).	Commenced – relevant targets to be included in sector MELFs, by February 2023
5.1: As an urgent priority, PHD should develop a clear Gender Strategy. Ideally, this would be guided by a DFAT portfolio-wide Gender Strategy and Action Plan.	Agree	PHD should focus primarily on intensifying the gender mainstreaming efforts within PHD's three sector programs. Ensuring that all gender mainstreaming initiatives are designed intentionally, to maximise the possibility of gender transformative change over time.	Commenced
5.2: PHD should increase their gender resourcing at all levels.	Partially Agree	Agree that PHD should increase their capacity on gender in the senior leadership team: a new position has been established and should be filled in early 2023. PHD and DFAT agree that staff resources on gender at other levels of PHD are sufficient.	Commenced – Senior gender advisor to be in place early 2023.
5.3: PHD should ensure the MEL Framework, workplan and reporting include dedicated sections on progress against gender priorities.	Agree	Agree that the workplan and reports will include dedicated sections and that the MELF integrates gender priorities within each sector, including and beyond sex disaggregated data.	February 2023.
5.4: PHD should progress its plan to leverage and fund women's organisations and partners to support gender mainstreaming into systems strengthening and gender transformative approaches.	Partially agree	Plans should be determined in line with PHD's new gender strategy, which will primarily focus on intensifying efforts in gender mainstreaming within PHD's three sector programs. If a WO's or partner is engaged in PHD's gender mainstreaming efforts in a sector, support may be provided. Noting DFAT supports women's organisations through other bilateral programs.	To be completed by June 2023.

## Shared (Abt Associates, DFAT)

Recommendation	Response	Action plan	Timeframe
1.1: PHD should further refine its scope to proactively address important strategic issues.	Partially agree	<p>DFAT recognises the need for PHD to refine scope. However, DFAT does not have firm plans to scale down and/or withdraw from education (particularly before World Bank has fully commenced), nutrition (a major policy agenda for the Prime Minister and new President) or disability inclusion. This would pose significant reputational and other risks.</p> <p>DFAT and Abt will undertake political economy analyses and institutionalisation assessments to underpin well-informed, pragmatic transition phases/exit strategies and timeframes. This work will also be informed by the medium-term strategy (recommendation 4.1).</p>	Throughout 2023.
2.2: PHD and DFAT should continue the sector level engagement with GoTL, drawing on GoTL structures such as Council of Directors as much as possible, with formal Ministerial level Steering Committee meetings where appropriate and effective.	Agree	Sector-level engagement with GOTL includes: technical working groups (co-chaired by the Counsellor for Human Development, and the relevant GoTL DG) and Steering Committees (co-chaired by Australia's Ambassador and the relevant Minister) in health, education, and social protection. PHD and DFAT will also engage Council of Directors where possible and appropriate.	Commenced
2.3: DFAT and PHD should use good relationships at all levels for increased policy influence on important strategic priorities and issues.	Agree	DFAT will provide PHD with its strategic policy engagement priorities as articulated in the mid-term strategy to enable PHD to update/develop its policy dialogue matrix and government engagement framework (recommendation 4.1).	Work to start before mid-2023.
2.4: DFAT and PHD should put mechanisms in place to ensure that strategic decision-making for PHD is driven from the top and informed by the sectors, and to strengthen communication and coordination between DFAT and PHD respective executive and sector level teams – in particular around work planning, budget allocations and progress reporting.	Agree	<p>In 2022, DFAT continued regular monthly coordination meetings between the Embassy staff and PHD for each sector plus nutrition, disability and gender. There is also a monthly Embassy-PHD management meeting, and regular informal catch ups between the Embassy Human Development Counsellor and PHD Team Leader.</p> <p>DFAT will also have:</p>	Underway, ongoing

Recommendation	Response	Action plan	Timeframe
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- annual strategic dialogues with PHD Executive to consider relative progress across sectors (with PHD contract representative)</li> <li>- regular (quarterly) coordination meetings across the investment portfolio on strategic and emerging areas of interest. In particular with our two largest development programs, PROSIVU and PARTISIPA.</li> <li>- Quarterly whole-of-program implementing partner meetings</li> </ul>	
4.2: PHD should engage an independent Strategic Advisory Team to assist PHD to assess which activities will continue to be transitioned in light of DFAT’s strategy.	Partially agree	<p>DFAT has requested Abt to provide additional systems strengthening/ institutionalisation technical support to PHD to support work and transition planning.</p> <p>DSAT (see 1.1) will support PHD (and PROSIVU/PARTISIPA) to think strategically about systems strengthening and transition.</p>	Prior to June 2023.