

MFAT Management Response to Evaluation of the New Zealand English Language Training for Officials (ELTO) and English Language Training for Senior Officials (ELTSO) Programmes¹

About this document

This document describes the programme's response to the evaluation.

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| Evaluation report title: | Evaluation of the New Zealand English Language Training for Officials and English Language Training for Senior Officials Programmes 2009-2013 |
| File title of final report: | Evaluation of the New Zealand English Language Training for Officials and English Language Training for Senior Officials Programmes 2009-2013 |
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| Activity Manager: | Kirsty Pelenur |
| Activity Programme: | ASEAN |
| MFAT response approved by: | Tiffany Babington, Acting Divisional Manager, Global Development and Scholarships Division |
| Approved date: | 31 October 2016 |
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¹ ELTO and ELTSO are jointly referred to in this document as ELT(S)O.

Approval

| Approval of the MFAT Management Response to Evaluation | |
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| Approved by: | |
| Signature: | |
| | Tiffany Babington, Acting Divisional Manager, Global Development & Scholarships Division |
| Date: | |

MFAT Management Response

Evaluation team members

Members of the evaluation team were:

| Name | Role |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Andrew Kibblewhite | Team Leader |
| Miranda Cahn | Team Member |

Key findings/conclusions of the evaluation

The key findings/conclusions of the evaluation are that:

- The ELT(S)O Activities are regarded very favourably by participating countries, they have improved the English language skills of officials, and strengthened links between New Zealand and participating countries;
- The Activities should be continued and scaled up to improve their strategic value;
- The format of the ELT(S)O Activities should remain fundamentally the same;
- Some enhancements will improve the Activities impact. Suggested enhancements include:
 - developing a more effective alumni scheme;
 - improving data gathering to better able assess impact; and
 - provision of in-country English language training to minimise access barriers (in particular for women or provincial officials).
- ELT(S)O places be offered to Timor-Leste; and
- Mongolia should be removed from ELT(S)O.

Lessons for MFAT

Lessons that MFAT can take from the evaluation are:

| No. | Lesson | Programme response |
|-----|---|---|
| 1 | ELTO and ELTSO have been successful Activities and met their strategic objectives. | <p>Continue and expand ELTO and discontinue ELTSO.</p> <p>Careful consideration was given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to resourcing any expansion given the high administrative transaction costs of ELT(S)O both in Wellington and at Posts; • to the total programme costs and funding relativities across the ASEAN, Indonesia, and Myanmar Programmes; and • to the proposed Knowledge and Skills Flagship compared with other proposed ODA Flagships. |
| 2 | There are enhancements that could be made to the Activities as described in the report. | <p>Consideration was given to the suggested enhancements during the creation of the new ELTO Activity Design Document (ADD).</p> <p>Selected enhancements have been adopted and are now in implementation.</p> |
| 3 | There are challenges in quantifying development objectives and results from these Activities. | The ADD process considered how to better capture data and align data to development objectives during implementation. |
| 4 | There are improvements that can be made to track and assess alumni | MFAT is currently developing a centralised alumni engagement strategy, which connects ELT(S)O alumni with other New Zealand Scholarship recipients globally. |

Recommendations for MFAT

| No. | Recommendation | Programme response |
|-----|---|--|
| 1 | That ELTO and ELTSO Activities continue in a form similar to ELTO Phase 3 i.e. two programmes, not merged into ELTO Africa or other Human Resource Development Activities, IELTS testing and entry level, selection criteria, gender criteria, length, two stages, themes, homestays, buddy system. | <p><u>We agree</u> that the broad format of ELTO is appropriate and this has formed the foundations of a new phase of ELTO.</p> <p><u>We agree</u> that ASEAN ELTO should not be merged with Africa ELTO.</p> <p><u>We disagree</u> that ELTSO should be continued in a similar form.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> Since this report, we have held a competitive open procurement for a new phase ELTO; In-Country English Language Training (I-C ELT; and Bespoke English Language Training (BELT) Activities. Based on Procurement and Contracts advice, these three separate Activities were combined into one tender package, to attract quality bids to deliver any or all parts of the English Language Training (ELT) services, including management of all in-country supplier contracts. This has resulted in less administrative duplication for MFAT and driven increased commercial innovation and value for money in our ELT services.</p> <p>Note: the inclusion of Indonesia in ELTO was not directly considered as part of the review, however approval was given to include Indonesia going forward, given English language needs there remain high.</p> <p>ELTSO has been disestablished and replaced with Public Sector Leadership Short Term Training Scholarships (PSL STTS - see further explanation below).</p> |

| No. | Recommendation | Programme response |
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| 2 | <p>That ELTO and ELTSO Activities be scaled up to increase the strategic value of the Activities through an additional (shorter) ELTO course and additional ELTSO course each year.</p> <p>(Note: the report considered but did not recommend adding an additional intake each year or increasing the numbers per intake).</p> | <p><u>We agree</u> that the ELTO Activity should be scaled up.</p> <p>Comment: An ambitious scale up of ELTO was decided, given the high profile of ELTO, the success of the Activity to date, and the good development outcomes achieved through ELTO.</p> <p>As a result ELTO has increased from 96 to 160 participants per year.</p> <p><u>We agree</u> that an additional shorter advanced ELTO course be offered, and this will be implemented from mid-2017.</p> <p>Comment: We consider shorter advanced ELTO courses (for officials who score 5.5 or higher on an IELTS examination) will deliver good development outcomes, by delivering more targeted English language training at a higher proficiency. Officials with higher English proficiency should realise greater English language gains, due to having a stronger base of English to work from.</p> <p>English language gains will be tested through an IELTS tests at the conclusion of the intake.</p> <p><u>We disagree</u> that an additional ELTSO course should be offered.</p> <p>Comment: We have disestablished ELTSO for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • senior officials are reluctant to undertake IELTS testing, which adds administrative burden for posts in establishing English language ability; • senior officials tend to have lower English language proficiency than ELTO's; • senior officials are nearing the end of their careers, and have more limited opportunity to use their increased English skills; • senior officials found it difficult to be away from their roles for the duration of ELTSO which also limited selection and availability; |

| No. | Recommendation | Programme response |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • senior officials require more pastoral care for the duration of their stay in New Zealand; and • lower levels of increased English language ability are realised by the conclusion of the officials study in New Zealand. <p>Our decision to disestablish ELTSO is balanced by the two supporting factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we have increased the annual number of ELTO participants from 96 to 160; and • we have introduced a new PSL STTS Activity. One of two intakes per year is dedicated to 15 senior officials from ASEAN. Although this Activity is different from ELTSO, we consider it will better meet the development needs of ASEAN senior officials by providing targeted leadership training through a shorter 2 week course without emphasis on English language training. |
| 3 | ELTSO places be offered to Timor-Leste | Given the discontinuation of ELTSO, we have diverted resources into scaling up ELTO. Up to two places will be available to Timor-Leste in the PSL intakes for senior officials, which will be funded out of the Short Term Training Scholarship country allocation. |
| 4 | That an effective and proactive alumni scheme be implemented by a managing contractor, and supported by in-country contracted providers (with MFAT branding and representation). | <p><u>We agree</u> a proactive and structured alumni scheme would be beneficial.</p> <p><u>We agree</u> this could be supported by a managing contractor and in-country contracted provider.</p> <p>Comments: Our relationship with alumni reaps significant benefits for MFAT and New Zealand.</p> <p>The Scholarships Unit has developed and introduced the Scholarships and Alumni Management (SAM) system, an online alumni tool created and administered by MFAT that is accessible to external suppliers to update. SAM's alumni functionality will be more fully implemented in 2017.</p> |

| No. | Recommendation | Programme response |
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| 5 | That the objective of 50-50 female-male participation should continue. | <p><u>We agree.</u></p> <p>Comment: We continue to promote gender balance.</p> |
| 6 | That in-country English Language Training (ELT) (in addition to IELTS preparation), linked to the overall curriculum be provided (and piloted) where English language skills are limiting the intake or the composition of the intake (women, provincial representatives). | <p><u>We disagree</u> that I-C ELT should be linked to ELTO.</p> <p>Comment: New Zealand based ELTO remains our premier ELT programme for officials, and this is supported by 100 IC-ELT training awards as part of the tertiary scholarship allocation.</p> <p>Although IC ELT is cheaper and could provide training to a greater number of officials, participants won't gain English language skills at the rate they would if they study in New Zealand.</p> <p>Officials can experience challenges with I-C ELT due to competing family commitments and pressure of continued workload that many officials must balance when studying. I-C ELT also limits connectedness to New Zealand, limits the ability to professionally network including across ASEAN, and removes the exposure to life in New Zealand.</p> <p>Bespoke English Language Training (BELT) is an alternative, short term study mechanism which has been created (in-country or in New Zealand) to support provincial officials and project partners. BELT can reach provincial officials who do not qualify to attend ELTO, and eases challenges for female officials who have childcare/family commitments they cannot leave for extended periods of time.</p> |

| No. | Recommendation | Programme response |
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| 7 | MFAT consider greater contracting out of New Zealand and in-country services with MFAT focusing on representation involvement. | <p><u>We agree.</u></p> <p>Comment: It was agreed (prior to going to tender for ELT Services) that administrative aspects of ELTO should be contracted out to reduce transaction costs for MFAT (including Posts).</p> <p>The supplier has now set up sub-contracts with in-country providers of IELTS testing and pre departure services. Our new supplier has needed a large amount of transitional support. However the administrative workload on posts and Wellington is reducing with each ELTO intake.</p> <p>MFAT keeps oversight of in-country providers through Posts monitoring and scheduled reporting milestones by our new supplier.</p> <p>MFAT will continue representation duties by hosting or attending ELTO and alumni functions, and organising special events to align with New Zealand ministerial visits to the region.</p> |
| 8 | A system is established whereby ELTO and ELTSO alumni meeting all other scholarship requirements are given preferential access (e.g. one place reserved each year) into the New Zealand Scholarships Scheme. | <p><u>We partially agree.</u></p> <p>Comment: We do not plan to change current scholarships policy to provide preferential access to ELT(S)O alumni.</p> <p>A complete assessment of each official's fit to the Scholarships Scheme against set criteria is still required for each application.</p> <p>In advertising our scholarship rounds, we are now actively promoting these to all ELT(S)O alumni registered on SAM.</p> |

| No. | Recommendation | Programme response |
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| 9 | Do not include Mongolia in ELTO and ELTSO. | <p><u>We disagree</u> with regard to ELTO and have kept Mongolia as an eligible participant country.</p> <p><u>We agree</u> with regard to ELTSO which has now been disestablished.</p> <p>Comment: MFAT is currently increasing bilateral engagement with Mongolia having recently celebrated 40 years of diplomatic relations. Mongolia regularly raises its appreciation of its participation in ELTO. We do not plan to increase Mongolia's ELTO allocation. Priority has been given to increasing participation from ASEAN.</p> |
| 10 | Additional monitoring methods be used to track and assess job level, educational achievements, and professional and social network analysis | <p><u>We agree.</u></p> <p>Comment: We need to improve data collection and tracking of participants to better assess programme outcomes. This will be considered in the rollout of MFAT's SAM platform.</p> <p>MFAT is currently developing an alumni engagement strategy, which will include ELT(S)O alumni. This strategy will guide MFAT and contractor alumni engagement activities in the region, and connect ELT(S)O alumni with other New Zealand Scholarship recipients globally.</p> <p>This will be further addressed through our tracer study workplan in 2017/2018.</p> |

| No. | Recommendation | Programme response |
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| 12 | A cloud-located database be used for all data entry, extraction and reporting | <p><u>We agree.</u></p> <p>Comment:</p> <p>From mid-2017 all new and existing ELTO applications and historical data will be migrated to SAM. This online platform will allow real time data to be managed and accessed anytime, anywhere there is an internet connection.</p> <p>Data will be available for contractors (and subcontractors) as well as MFAT and its Posts for the purposes of data reporting and alumni engagement. Alumni will also be able to interact directly with the system.</p> |

Further programme response

1. The evaluation has not made recommendations in relation to the ELTO themes. We have chosen to align themes to those in the ASEAN New Zealand Plan of Action e.g. Renewable Energy, Agriculture, Disaster Risk Management, Education, Leadership etc., but keep these broadly defined to ensure we are able to get sufficient candidates (and relax them if it becomes evident this is a barrier to getting sufficient candidates). This will help ensure we develop knowledge and skills excellence in thematic areas of interest to ASEAN and respond to changing needs from ASEAN. Themes have been agreed for this current phase of ELTO including to provide surety for planning and promotion purposes. There is flexibility for change if required.
2. ELTO needs to be considered within the ongoing development of the Knowledge and Skills package for the ASEAN Plan of Action 2016-20. Pathways for further study could enhance the impact for scholars and their countries. For example:
 - a. Officials will have the opportunity to apply for further in-country ELT of one year's duration (as a potential feeder into the Scholarships Programme).
 - b. Officials are also able to apply for postgraduate scholarships in New Zealand providing their IELTS score meets the minimum standard necessary.
 - c. Officials can apply to participate in an ASEAN Short Term Training Scholarships in Agriculture; Disaster Risk Management; Public Sector Leadership; and Renewable Energy.

MFAT follow up actions

This table lists actions that MFAT undertook in response to the findings, lessons and recommendations of the evaluation.

| Lesson learned / Recommendation | Action | Who will action | When | Resource Implications |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| <p>That ELTO continue in a form similar to ELTO Phase 3 i.e. not merged into ELTO Africa or other HRD programme, IELTS testing and entry level, selection criteria, gender criteria, length, two stages, themes, homestays, buddy system.</p> | <p>Submission to Minister of Foreign Affairs seeking approval for a new phase of the programme/s (Phase 4).</p> <p>An open tender was conducted to select a new provider for ELTO/I-C ELT/BELT. Accent Learning was the successful tenderer, and MFAT progressed to negotiate a Master Services Agreement with Accent Learning to deliver ELTO/IC-LET /BELT.</p> | <p>ASEAN Development Manager / Development Officer</p> | <p>Submission to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Phase 4 approved in August 2014.</p> <p>An open tender was then conducted from December 2014 to January 2015.</p> | <p>The cost of a new 3.5 year ELTO programme comprising 160 officials / annum is \$4.5m / annum - \$18.5m over 3.5 years.</p> |

| Lesson learned / Recommendation | Action | Who will action | When | Resource Implications |
|---|---|--|---|-----------------------|
| <p>That ELTO and ELTSO programmes be scaled up to increase the strategic value of the programmes through an additional (shorter) ELTO course and additional ELTSO course each year.</p> | <p>ELTO scale up and ELTSO discontinuation recommendations were included in the submission to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in August 2014.</p> <p>It has been agreed to scale up ELTO from 96 to 160 participants per year.</p> <p>An additional shorter ELTO course has been agreed for higher proficiency officials. This middle intake will be up to 17 weeks, instead of 22 weeks for the longer ELTO course.</p> <p>An additional ELTSO course will not be pursued.</p> | <p>ASEAN Development Manager / ASEAN Development Officer</p> | <p>The submission to the Minister of Foreign Affairs was approved in August 2014.</p> | <p>See above.</p> |
| <p>ELTSO places be offered to Timor-Leste</p> | <p>Disagreed. No action.</p> | <p>NA</p> | <p>NA</p> | <p>NA</p> |

| Lesson learned / Recommendation | Action | Who will action | When | Resource Implications |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| <p>MFAT is currently developing a centralised alumni engagement strategy, which will include ELT(S)O alumni. This strategy will guide MFAT Post and contractor alumni engagement activities in the region, and connect ELT(S)O alumni with other New Zealand Scholarship recipients globally.</p> | <p>The Scholarships Unit has developed and introduced the Scholarships and Alumni Management (SAM) system, an online alumni tool created and administered by MFAT that is accessible to external suppliers to update.</p> <p>MFAT is currently developing a alumni engagement strategy, which will include ELT(S)O alumni.</p> | <p>Scholarships Development Manager / Development Officer</p> | <p>Ongoing throughout implementation</p> | <p>Resourcing for alumni engagement will be by posts.</p> |
| <p>That the objective of 50-50 female-male participation should continue.</p> | <p>Has been addressed in the design and implementation of ELTO.</p> | <p>ASEAN Development Manager / ASEAN Development Officer</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Nil</p> |

| Lesson learned / Recommendation | Action | Who will action | When | Resource Implications |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <p>That in-country English language training (in addition to IELTS preparation), linked to the overall curriculum be provided (and piloted) where English language skills are limiting the intake or the composition of the intake (women, provincial representatives).</p> | <p>Disagree. No further action.</p> <p>IC-ELT which is not linked to the New Zealand Scholarship package may be considered where resources permit.</p> <p>BELT provides a mechanism for IC-ELT.</p> | | NA | NA |
| <p>MFAT consider greater contracting out of New Zealand and in-country services with MFAT focusing on representation involvement.</p> | <p>This was agreed and implemented through ELTO Phase 4.</p> | <p>ASEAN Development Manager / ASEAN Development Officer</p> | <p>During procurement and design of ELTO</p> | <p>Accent Learning has now established sub-contracts with MFAT's in-country providers and manages these relationships.</p> |
| <p>A system to be established whereby ELTO and ELTSO alumni meeting all other scholarship requirements are given preferential access (e.g. one place reserved each year) into the New Zealand Scholarships Scheme.</p> | <p>Post and scholarships teams to promote / encourage applications from ELTO/ELTSO officials as appropriate.</p> <p>No separate places will be held for ex-ELT(S)O alumni as per current Scholarships policy.</p> | <p>Posts / Scholarships team</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Scholarships Scheme promoted to ELT(S)O alumni through current channels.</p> |

| Lesson learned / Recommendation | Action | Who will action | When | Resource Implications |
|---|--|--|------------------------------|--|
| Do not include Mongolia in ELTO IV and ELTSO II. | Disagree re: ELTO. Continue to include Mongolia at current levels in Phase 4. Agree re: ELTSO – due to the ELTSO discontinuation. | NA | NA | NA |
| Additional monitoring methods be used to track and assess job level, educational achievements, and professional and social network analysis | To work into implementation of Phase 4. | Scholarships Development Manager / Development Officer | During 2017/2018 and ongoing | This will be addressed through our tracer study workplan in 2017/2018. |
| A cloud-located database be used for all data entry, extraction and reporting | To work into ELTO implementation. | Scholarships Development Manager / Development Officer | During 2017/2018 | ELTO will be included into the online SAM system from January 2017. |

Dissemination plan

The evaluation will be shared with MFAT staff and other stakeholders in the following ways:

| No. | Method of dissemination | Responsibility of | When |
|-----|---|--|--|
| 1 | Evaluation report placed on MFAT Website | The Development Support Officer of the Evaluation Team (DSE) | Now the new phase of ELTO has been procured. |
| 2 | Evaluation report shared with following stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MFAT Divisions (PDG GLO, SEA, APD, NAD) • MFAT Posts (BKK, JAK, HA NOI, DIL, BEI, YAN) • Accent Learning / Vic Link | Activity Manager | Once this Management Response has been approved by the Divisional Manager. |