

# MFAT Management Response to Mid-term Review of the Education Sector Support Program in Solomon Islands

Evaluation Report Recommendation	MFAT Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)
<b>Recommendations that can, where possible, commence in the current phase</b>	
<p><b>Recommendation 1</b></p> <p>In preparation for passage of the Solomon Islands Education Bill and implementation of its Education Legislative Framework (ELF):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the Programme should support Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) to undertake a sector and organisational review of current versus future accountabilities.</li> <li>2. This can commence in the final six months of the Programme but will likely need to continue into any new Programme.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Agree.</b> The Programme is currently supporting MEHRD to undertake sector and organisational reviews of current versus future accountabilities, as well as supporting the development of an ELF Implementation Plan from 2024 onwards. These reviews will help the Programme identify areas of focus to consider for future support.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p>The Programme should increase its focus on GEDSI and safeguarding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In the final months of the Programme, this could include providing specialist technical assistance (TA) to support MEHRD to progress implementation of the GEDSI tool and prepare for ELF implementation.</li> <li>2. In any future iterations of the Programme, this could include support to MEHRD to strengthen engagement with other SIG agencies in this space (e.g. Ministry for Women, Youth, Children, and Family Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology).</li> </ol>	<p><b>Agree.</b> The Programme agrees to provide a specialist TA to support MEHRD to increase focus on GEDSI and safeguarding and to strengthen engagement with SIG agencies in this space. This includes continuing work on the GEDSI toolkit and supporting an inclusive approach to ELF implementation. This work commenced in late 2023 and is ongoing in 2024.</p>

<b>Evaluation Report Recommendation</b>	<b>MFAT Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)</b>
<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p> <p>The Programme should support MEHRD to develop more strategic approaches to school infrastructure data management and prioritisation that aligns with long-term Solomon Islands Education Management Information System (SIEMIS) plans. While this is likely to be long-term work, it should be prioritised so that better data can inform planning and decision-making.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b> The Programme agrees to support MEHRD to develop more strategic approaches to school infrastructure and data management that align with MEHRD’s Annual Workplans and long term data and infrastructure resilience approaches. This work will commence in Q2 2024.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4</b></p> <p>As MEHRD's role in policy formulation and system monitoring under the ELF requires increased sector co-ordination, including co-ordination within Solomon Islands education entities and with development partners, the Programme should continue to support MEHRD and MFAT's role as Education Donor Partner Coordination Group (EDPCG) co-chairs. Provision of local TA to MEHRD's Strategic Services Division can help bolster the capacity of MEHRD in executing its development partner co-ordination functions.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b> The Programme agrees to continue to support MEHRD to strengthen its internal coordination capacity and increase sector coordination with development partners. This work will commence in Q2 2024.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5</b></p> <p>The Programme should support MEHRD to develop a transparent and equitable process for selecting school-based infrastructure projects and examine environmental risks (related to geographic location) prior to authorising building. This should also include developing a process for confirming commitments to asset maintenance and local buy-in with schools and setting explicit expectations (e.g. through a Memorandum of Understanding).</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b> The Programme agrees with the importance of supporting MEHRD to develop an equitable process for school infrastructure projects considering environmental risks, geographical location and adhering to approved building standards. Given the current Programme will not be selecting any new schools for infrastructure upgrades, this will be considered in any new design process.</p>

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<i>Consideration for the design of any future Programme</i>	
<p><b>Consideration 1</b></p> <p>The design of any future Programme should be aligned to the future accountabilities in the ELF. While MEHRD should remain the main Programme partner, the design should consider how to support Education Authorities (EAs) and schools to meet their new accountabilities.</p>	<p><b>Agreed.</b> This consideration will be taken into account through the design process for MFAT’s new education programme.</p>
<p><b>Consideration 2</b></p> <p>The design of any future Programme should work with MEHRD and other development partners to confirm what other sector support is planned. If, through the design process, it is confirmed that UNICEF will continue to support Early Childhood Education (ECE), the Programme should maintain its primary focus on basic education.</p>	<p><b>Agreed.</b> This consideration will be taken in to account through the design process for MFAT’s new education programme. It is important that MFAT is well coordinated internally on education systems support in Solomon Islands, ensuring that early childhood and basic education interventions are closely aligned.</p>
<p><b>Consideration 3</b></p> <p>The End of Programme Outcomes (EOPOs) of any future design should be calibrated to the length of the Programme so their achievement is realistic within the timeframe of the Programme. The changes in education system management that are embedded in the ELF are likely to lead to a period of transition for Solomon Islands education system. Careful identification of EOPOs is therefore important to recognise the context and the opportunity to align the EOPOs with the ELF.</p>	<p><b>Agreed.</b> This consideration will be taken in to account through the design process for MFAT’s new education programme.</p>

<b>Evaluation Report Recommendation</b>	<b>MFAT Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)</b>
<p><b>Consideration 4</b></p> <p>The Programme should support MEHRD to develop its sector performance monitoring function under the ELF. This includes setting performance indicators, measures and targets to assess the effectiveness of the ELF and any interventions that are delivered.</p>	<p><b>Agreed.</b> This consideration will be taken in to account through the design process for MFAT’s new education programme.</p>
<p><b>Consideration 5</b></p> <p>If a future design of the Programme continues to include delivery of large projects (e.g. infrastructure), it should consider the best modalities for these investments. If the selected modality continues to be delivered through education sector budget support (ESBS), the Programme should consider funding specialist capacity in MEHRD or back-filling existing roles to ensure that core business as usual activity is not compromised. Increased support for coordination with the Ministry of Finance and Trade (MOFT) and the Ministry of Public Services should also be considered to ensure there are no delays in accessing funds through MOFT systems and SIG recruitment processes.</p>	<p><b>Agreed.</b> This consideration will be taken in to account through the design process for MFAT’s new education programme.</p>
<p><b>Consideration 6</b></p> <p>DFAT and MFAT should consider how they can streamline funding modalities to minimise the administrative burden on MEHRD's administration of funding. This could include a Delegated Funding Agreement to channel the funding through a single mechanism. A longer-term funding plan would also help to provide SIG and other Programme partners with visibility for longer-term planning.</p>	<p><b>Agreed.</b> This consideration will be taken in to account through the design process for MFAT’s new education programme.</p>

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<p><b>Consideration 7</b></p> <p>If NGO grant funding continues to be a modality for delivery of the Programme, consideration should be given to the selection requirements to increase accessibility for local NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs). Directing the funding through SIG systems (e.g. through the ESBS), with appropriate TA support and programme management team (PMT) oversight, would increase ownership of the NGO grant by MEHRD and enable use of SIG due diligence requirements.</p>	<p><b>Agreed.</b> This consideration will be taken in to account through the design process for MFAT's new education programme.</p>