

# **EVALUATION OF THE NEW ZEALAND:**

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR OFFICIALS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR SENIOR OFFICIALS PROGRAMMES**

### **2009-2013**

**Commissioned by:**

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# ABOUT THIS REPORT

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# ACRONYMS

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<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Description</u>
ELTO	English Language Training for Officials Programme
ELTSO	English Language Training for Senior Officials Programme
MFAT	The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ISPs	Internet Service Providers
TEIs	Tertiary Education Institutes
EL	English Language

# ABSTRACT

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This evaluation examines if and how the ELTO and ELTSO programmes (2009-2013) can be enhanced to increase their strategic results to New Zealand, and to participating countries. This included determining what strategic value the programmes have had, and are likely to have, what changes have occurred as a result of the programmes, and how the ELTO and ELTSO programming could be improved. A range of methods were used including interviews, focus groups, discussion groups, and a web-survey. The evaluation showed that the programmes had strong strategic value to both New Zealand and participating countries; that key English language skills were gained and used for work purposes; and that alumni thought favourably about New Zealand and were a ready contact point. Opportunities to improve the programmes included a modest scaling-up; establishing a pro-active alumni scheme; and contracting out of more administration and management functions to ensure processes are sufficiently and consistently resourced and MFAT is able to focus on providing representation.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## Background

The English Language Training for Officials (ELTO) Programme and the English Language Training for Senior Officials Programme support officials improve their English language communication in support of improved ASEAN integration, national development, and better relations between participating countries and with New Zealand. The specific objectives of ELTO are:

1. To improve the English language skills of government officials participating in ELTO.
2. To promote and strengthen regional integration among participating nations.
3. To promote intercultural learning with officials from other nations, within the context of New Zealand, while gaining knowledge and understanding of areas relevant to national development and effective government.
4. To support the programme focus of the New Zealand Aid Programme's country strategies and to address the priorities of partner governments as articulated in their national development plans. Country partners have grown over time and participant numbers benefiting from the programme vary (see Table 1).

Phase III of the ELTO Programme began in 2009 (until Jun 2014) trains 48 participants in New Zealand from six member countries in two intakes each year. The ELTO intakes are 22 weeks long and include eight weeks in a provincial centre and the remainder of the time in Wellington. Each course has a technical 'theme' and selection is targeted at officials working in positions relevant to the theme. The students participate in lectures, seminars, discussion, reading and other media related to the theme.

## Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was 'to identify if and how the ELTO and ELTSO programmes can be enhanced to increase their strategic results to New Zealand, and to participating countries'. This includes determining what strategic value the programmes have had, and are likely to have, what changes have occurred as a result of the programmes, and how the ELTO and ELTSO programming could be improved.

Key evaluation objectives (agreed in the Evaluation Plan) were to determine:

1. What strategic value the programmes have had, and are likely to have, to New Zealand, and to participating countries
2. What changes and effects have come about as a result of the programmes

3. How the programming could be improved to maximise strategic value, benefits for individuals and employers, and operational efficiency. This assessment will include whether and how the programmes could be scaled up or expanded and outcomes better monitoring in the next phase.

## Methodology

A results diagram was developed for both the ELTO and ELTSO programmes and used to inform the key information needs to meet the purpose of the evaluation. Field work in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, Timor-Leste and New Zealand included interviews with Posts and employers (Ministries sending participants); group and individual interviews with Wellington MFAT staff, a group interview with VicLink, Accent, NMIT, and EIT; focus groups with ELTO participant; and interviews with past ELTSO participants. A web-survey of previous ELTO participants was also undertaken in February 2014.

## Key findings

The ELTO and ELTSO programmes are seen by member countries as unique and a premium English language training due to the English language immersion, and theme-based learning model. ELTO and ELTSO have a very strong reputation and participants have had positive experiences, and this creates a good impression of New Zealand, and reinforces relationships with New Zealand by partner country officials (pages 21-22).

The rationale for ELTO and ELTSO is that improved English language skills and regional networking will lead to better political and economic engagement in the region, and with New Zealand, and this will lead to development benefits for member countries. The evaluation has found that the ELTO and ELTSO programmes are likely to contribute to member countries' development benefits (e.g. developing EL skills - 0.53 average improvement during ELTO III; using EL skills in their work - 70% (reading); alumni from different countries (7-8) working together at ASEAN events) and are aligned to enhancing New Zealand's strategic interests. Member countries are increasingly becoming outward-looking towards a strong and mutually supportive ASEAN region. Regional communication occurs in English and past ELTO and ELTSO participants are in positions or are being moved into positions that directly contribute to international and regional work including both ASEAN and engagement with New Zealand (e.g. 44% have been promoted since returning).

The ELTO and ELTSO programmes are designed to promote networking within the multi-country intakes and with New Zealand. These networks are in part designed to support English language development (which they do) and, importantly, to form strong networks that lead to officials working effectively together and with New Zealand counter-parts after the training (11-12% are in contact with their New



Zealand home-stay family or buddy at least once a month after returning). Strong intra-intake networks are forming that are both cross-country and within country for each intake. These networks are being maintained and refreshed through both passive (e.g. Facebook - 15% engage in social media contact at least once a month) and active engagements that include social contacts and bi-lateral working (7-8 alumni have met up in ASEAN working context). Many ELTO and most ELTSO participants attend inter-regional conferences, expand their knowledge of their particular fields and regional initiatives through reading the internet and documents, prepare briefings and speeches for high-ranking officials, translate memorandums of understanding, and interact with international consultants, donors, businesses and local Non-governmental organisations all in English.

Past ELTO and ELTSO participants think favourably about the opportunity they have had in New Zealand and often continue to engage with New Zealand in-country missions where they have the opportunity. However ongoing (active) engagement with professionals and officials back in New Zealand (except with past teachers) is rare and could be further enhanced so to support strong and on-going relationships with New Zealand and to build on their positive experience with New Zealand development and public policy ideas (see page 23-25).

Many participants pick-up (positive) workplace practices (e.g. time management skills) while undertaking ELTO. However, instances where development and public policy ideas are promoted and implemented on return are rare and could be further enhanced by tightening ELTO programme delivery around the themes and through ongoing engagement with people from New Zealand.

Current country membership to ELTO and ELTSO include Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao, Myanmar, Timor-Leste and Mongolia. The Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia were included previously but are not now due to the renewed focus of their New Zealand Country Programmes. Although the evaluators understand that there is a need for Mongolian officials to learn English, Mongolia is not a member of ASEAN and ASEAN member countries do not have a particularly high level of international engagement with Mongolia (participant interviews). Moreover, the higher the number of countries represented in each intake the more fractured the group becomes. Not including Mongolia in future intakes would lead to greater homogeneity and could lead to deeper networks and spaces for more participants for the countries that work more closely together.

Consideration was also given to whether Timor-Leste should remain part of programmes. However, Timor-Leste's involvement is important to their development and ASEAN membership aspirations and their continued involvement would be particularly valuable.

For the reasons of homogeneity and ASEAN relationships, it is not recommended that the programmes be integrated with ELTO Africa (e.g.) and incorporating ELTO and ELTSO under a regional Human Resource Development programmes would detract from the visibility (and brand recognition) of the programmes (interviews). Integration of the New Zealand Scholarship Programme and ELTO and ELTSO was not specifically considered (not within the scope the evaluation); however, the perceptions of the evaluators are that the separate branding and strong reputational standing of ELTO and ELTSO would out-weigh any potential efficiencies from 'whole-sale' integration of ELTO and ELTSO into New Zealand's Scholarship Programme. Never the less, synergies between ELTO and ELTSO management process and Scholarships may allow part-integration without diminishing the uniqueness of the ELTO and ELTSO branding (e.g. alumni management, pre-award management). This could be considered in the ELTO and ELTSO redesign.

Additional strategic value from the programmes would be gained through scaling-up both programmes. Given the strategic intent of the programmes to contribute to political and economic engagement in the region and with New Zealand through improved English language skills and networking, an increase in the number of ELTO and ELTSO officials participating in the programmes will lead to a proportionate increase in the achievement of these outcomes – almost all alumni are working in relevant roles, 44% have been promoted into more senior positions, key development/policy ideas from New Zealand have been brought adapted and implemented in partner countries; alumni remain in contact with New Zealanders. Many of the key Ministries are large and English language levels are low. More ELTO and ELTSO will enable better (English language-based) engagement in the ASEAN network (many are moved into ASEAN roles on return), other regional fora and with New Zealand (see page 30-32).

Currently past alumni return home with minimal ongoing contact with New Zealand (except for social media) and with little or no structured, regular contact with MFAT. The amount of contact with Posts vary by mission but is frequently limited to pre-departure briefings; official functions when members of the New Zealand Parliament visit; and Posts contacting alumni for information. These forms of contact involve few alumni and most have little or no contact. Moreover, there is no ongoing impetus or support for participants to develop in-country English language study practices. The redesign of ELTO included a greater emphasis on an alumni network under ELTO III. This, by and large, has not occurred. Vietnam Post is the most active with returning participants but other Posts, Wellington and Bangkok Post are not able to prioritise an effective alumni network, and the providers in-country are not funded for alumni functions. The development of a pro-active alumni network in-country, across member countries and with New Zealand would be welcomed by past participants and would provide a platform to maintain and further relationships established during ELTO and ELTSO. Introducing a well-structured and proactive alumni programme, led by the ELTO and ELTSO managing contractor and supported by in

country (contracted) providers, would provide ongoing tangible benefits by supporting the fledgling networks and linking alumni with ongoing English language training.

In some countries there are insufficient women with the required English language level to ensure that the gender balance of ELTO participants can be assured (e.g. Vietnam). In other countries there are fewer women working in government and at a middle official level and this makes it more difficult to obtain a gender balance. For ELTSO it is difficult to maintain a gender balance as there are fewer women at the senior levels (see page 19). Provision of in-country training has the potential to enable more women officials to reach the required standard.

Moreover, in a few situations, it is difficult to get enough middle-level officials with qualifying English language skills for ELTO (see page 19). Quality, in-country English language training (including under ELTO, refer Timor-Leste) is hindered by low attendance due to competing demands on officials and their on-going availability to their employer. Where reasonable attendance is achieved, English language gains are achieved (but not at the same level as ELTO) (in-country EL providers). Where English language levels are problematic (women officials, senior officials, provincial officials) to obtaining intake numbers (including at the right level), in-country programmes modelled on ELTO and a pre-requisite for attending ELTO in New Zealand should be offered (see page 28).

There is significant potential to contribute more to the intended purpose and intended objectives of ELTO and ELTSO Programmes through modest scaling up of the programmes. As is explained on page 30 of the 'Findings', country partners have a growing and unfilled need for EL skills for officials, they have either the absorption capacity to send more officials to ELTO and ELTSO or willingness to prioritise these programmes over other EL training, and modest increases in participants could be catered-for. However, any increase should be modest and carefully managed to ward-off any risk of damaging programme quality and reputational loss. Piloting a shorter-term ELTO training (see page 30 for the reasons for a shorter-training) would help to manage these risks.

Given the strategic value and importance of the ELTO and ELTSO programmes discussed above, it is suggested that the programmes do not change significantly. The reputation in member countries of the programmes is built on its achievement of key programme outcomes and these are being delivered (by and large) effectively and efficiently. The following recommendations are designed to capitalise on the positive programme outcomes through scaling up (for a general discussion see pages 30-32; and, more specifically, see 'key options' on page 32), minimising access barriers, and retaining (and further building) already established networks through an effective alumni scheme.

## Summary of recommendations

1. That the ELTO and ELTSO programmes should continue in a form very similar to that under ELTO III (two programmes, not merged into ELTO Africa or a HRD programme, IELTS testing and entry level, selection criteria, gender criteria, length, two stages, themes, home-stays, buddy system etc.).
2. That the ELTO and ELTSO programmes be scaled up to increase the strategic value of the programmes (without partner government financial contributions) through an additional (shorter) ELTO course and an additional ELTSO course each year.
3. That ELTSO places be offered to Timor-Leste.
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).
5. That the objective of 50-50 female-male participation should continue.
6. 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 (e.g. women, provincial representation).
7. That MFAT consider greater contracting of New Zealand and in-country services with MFAT focusing on representation involvement.
8. That a system 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 Scholarship Scheme.
9. That Mongolia not be included in the programmes going-forward and no other countries being added to ELTO and ELTSO membership.
10. That additional monitoring methods be used to track and assessed job level, educational achievements, and professional and social network analysis.
11. That a cloud-located database be used that for all data entry, extraction and reporting.

# REPORT

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## Background and context of the Activity

The English Language Training for Officials (ELTO) Programme has been running since 1991. The goal of the programme is to support sustainable development of ELTO participating nations in order to reduce poverty and contribute to a more secure equitable and prosperous world through human resource development targeting government officials.

In essence, ELTO aims to help participants and their countries achieve more effective English language communication in order to enhance understanding and relations between New Zealand and participating countries and to improve ASEAN integration, and national development of the member countries.

The specific objectives of ELTO are:

1. To improve the English language skills of government officials participating in ELTO.
2. To promote and strengthen regional integration among participating nations.
3. To promote intercultural learning with officials from other nations, within the context of New Zealand, while gaining knowledge and understanding of areas relevant to national development and effective government.
4. To support the programme focus of the New Zealand Aid Programme’s country strategies and to address the priorities of partner governments as articulated in their national development plans. Country partners have grown over time and participant numbers benefiting from the programme vary (see Table 1).

Table 1: Participating Countries and Involvement

Country	Participating since	# Participants	Fieldwork
Viet Nam	1991	389	Yes
Cambodia	1996	250	Yes
Lao PDR	1996	263	Yes
Mongolia	1996	55	No
Myanmar		64	Yes
Thailand	1997	13	No

Indonesia	1999	16	No
Timor-Leste	2000	31	Yes

A five year Phase III programme for ELTO was designed and began implementation in July 2009 with Victoria Link Ltd again awarded the implementation contract. Phase III has been implemented by Accent Learning, a division of Victoria Link Ltd.

Each intake of the ELTO programme in New Zealand is 22 weeks (5 months) long, with orientation in Wellington, eight weeks in either Hawkes Bay or Nelson and then the remainder of the time spent in Wellington. During the period in the regions the students are placed in home stays. Each course has a technical ‘theme’. ELTO student selection is based on this theme, and students participate in lectures, seminars, discussion, reading and other media related to the theme. There are 48 ELTO students from a range of member countries in each of the two ELTO intakes per year. In New Zealand, the ELTO Programme Manager (Accent Learning) oversees all aspects of the programme. The Academic Programme Coordinator, who is based at Victoria University of Wellington, is responsible for the coordination of the overall educational programme with the two Regional Institutes – the Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT) and the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT). Selection, preparation and in-country logistics for participants is responsibility of the relevant MFAT posts, together with in-country providers (in some countries), and member countries’ lead Ministries (usually the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or similar Ministry) which lead the selection process.

The English Language Training for Senior Officials (ELTSO) programme started in 2011. ELTSO enables senior government officials who are unable to spend the full five months (for ELTO) away from their jobs to participate in an English Language (EL) training programme in New Zealand. ELTSO has a similar goal and objectives to ELTO but the participants are more senior and the course is for eight weeks in Wellington and four days (in homestays accommodation) in the regions.

The current Phase III of the ELTO programme will conclude in June 2014 and this report describes an evaluation of ELTO, and the related programme (ELTSO) that has been conducted in line with requirements of the New Zealand Aid Programme. The Terms of Reference for the evaluation are in Appendix 1.

## Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation

The Evaluation Plan (Appendix 2), agreed on 24 December 2013 clarified the purpose of the evaluation as being ‘to identify if and how the ELTO and ELTSO programmes can be enhanced to increase their

strategic results<sup>1</sup> to New Zealand, and to participating countries'. This includes determining what strategic value the programmes have had, and are likely to have, what changes have occurred as a result of the programmes, and how the ELTO and ELTSO programming could be improved to maximise strategic value, benefits for individuals and employers, and operational efficiency. This report will thus include details on (for example) whether and how the programmes could be scaled up or expanded, and outcomes better monitored, in the next phase.

Key evaluation objectives (agreed in the Evaluation Plan) were to determine:

1. What strategic value the programmes have had, and are likely to have, to New Zealand, and to participating countries
2. What changes and effects have come about as a result of the programmes
3. How the programming could be improved to maximise strategic value, benefits for individuals and employers, and operational efficiency. This assessment will include whether and how the programmes could be scaled up or expanded and outcomes better monitoring in the next phase.

The Terms of Reference (Appendix 1) for the evaluation asked for an assessment of the criteria 'impact' (achievement of the programmes' goal). While a comprehensive assessment of impact was not possible given time and resources, an assessment was undertaken of the extent to which ELTSO and ELTO are likely to contribute to the strategic value that MFAT seeks. Sustainability requires an assessment of the extent to which benefits are likely to be sustained after an intervention ends. In this evaluation assessment of sustainability included an assessment of the extent to which ELTO alumni are using the skills and knowledge gained through ELTO (intermediate (medium-term) outcomes for ELTO) and the extent of skill and knowledge gained by ELTSO students.

An Aide Memoire (20 January 2014) provided preliminary evaluation conclusions and tentative recommendations (ahead of the evaluation report).

## Methodology

The methodology (method and process) for this evaluation was implemented as described in the Evaluation Plan (Appendix 2) that was approved by MFAT December 24 2013. The Plan notes that the evaluation (originally just for ELTO) was expanded to include ELTSO during the contracting phase of the evaluation. To assess the design and delivery of ELTSO, it was agreed that the evaluation would concurrently collect both ELTO and ELTSO information, using data sources and methods already planned for ELTO.

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<sup>1</sup> Goal, and medium-term and end of programme outcomes

A theory-based evaluation design approach was used, with the program logics (Results Diagrams) for the two interventions being initially developed, and evaluation methods being selected that would enable change (outcomes) to be determined within the parameters set down for the evaluation. The evaluation methods included documentary analysis, discussion groups, focus groups, individual interviews and a web-survey. The initial phase of fieldwork for the evaluation was completed on 19 January 2014. The period for the web-survey (initially to be completed by 11 February 2014) was extended to 19 February 2014 in order to increase the response rate.

The selection of participants for a focus group for intakes 35 and 36, and for intake 37 was managed by Posts due to diplomatic protocols and proximity. The evaluators requested a good cross-section of participants for the focus groups including one focus group comprising women in Myanmar due to the high representation in intake 37. It is likely that selection was driven by availability. However, given the size of the country groups from each intake (7-9) compared with the size of the focus groups (4-5), the groups can be considered reasonably representative although more upwardly mobile (re, career) ELTO participants may have been over-represented. However, this is unlikely to have affected the findings.

The web-survey had been planned on advice that participant contact details were up-to-date. This was not case. Some email addresses were not valid due to ELTO alumni services not operating and contact details not being regularly updated, a reliance on personal emails addresses, Ministry staff being posted overseas, and changing Internet Service Providers (ISP) and email addresses, and ISPs closing down (e.g. Myanmar, Timor-Leste). The survey period unavoidably coincided with the Chinese and Vietnamese New Year meaning many participants were on holiday. In-country ELTO and ELTSO service providers (alternatively Posts) were requested to contact past participants by telephone to seek alternative/updated email addresses which were used in follow-up emails.

The response rates for each of the research methods were very good, and higher than normal evaluation expectations. The extension to the survey period increased the response rate from 25-54 percent. All scheduled interviews were completed, with a few being rescheduled due to unexpected commitments or technical difficulties (e.g. SKYPE connectivity). When participants were asked why they were so willing/keen to participate, they cited the positive experience they and their colleagues had had with the ELTO and ELTSO Programmes. Responses were as follows:



*Table 2: Response by Method*

<b>Method</b>	<b>Population or Planned</b>	<b>Completed</b>
Interviews	MFAT: 3	4
	VicLink / ACCENT / TEIs: 5	5
	Posts: 7	8
	Providers: 5	5
Focus groups	10 (min of 4 participants)	10 (min. exceeded in many cases)
Documents	20	25
Wed-survey	312	169 (54%)

There was considerable uniformity in findings between intakes and countries, and ELTO and ELTSO students and other evaluation participants. The evaluators are confident that the evaluation findings are thus a true reflection of changes as a result of ELTO and ELTSO, and the current situation. For example, a common approach to focus group and semi-structured interview sampling is to stop sampling once new information is no longer forthcoming. Both evaluators considered that after 2-3 focus groups and 5-6 interviews in each country, little new information was being uncovered. Confidence in the findings is also supported by the high response rate for the web-survey and the strong evidence from participants regarding the current design and performance of the Programmes.

The evaluators received full data on the pre and post IELTS testing of ELTO participants. This information proved very useful for examining the estimates of the entry and exist English Language standard of ELTO participants, including how breakdowns across composite skills. Please see limitations for a brief discussion of IELTS reliability.

### **Limitations of the evaluation (and the effect of these on the evaluation)**

This evaluation was designed within the constraints established by budget and timeframes, as identified in the Evaluation Plan (Appendix 1). However, due to the high response/completion rate for each method and the uniformity of the findings the impact of the constraints was lower than expected. Nevertheless, the following limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings and conclusions:

1. It was not possible to interview ELTO participants in earlier intakes (e.g. 2009), and they were less likely to respond to the web-survey – the findings and conclusions would therefore not identify performance and delivery issues and learnings that were addressed, before 2010.

2. The findings relied on ELTO and ELTSO students' perceptions of such aspects as their English language skills in relation to their work, their continued contact with New Zealand, and the extent to which their language skills have been sustained. It was not possible to verify or follow up these findings.
3. There was insufficient time for the evaluators to seek potentially opposing views and experiences e.g. non-selected candidates, participants whose English Language skills did not improve, women participants who were isolated through minority selection, employers who were not able to access the Programmes etc. This limited the opportunity for the evaluation to identify un-intended consequences in particular.
4. It was not possible (timing) to observe participants in New Zealand including within a training situation – this would have helped to triangulate findings.
5. Recently returned alumni and countries with better internet services are likely to be over-represented in the survey.

## Key findings

### Strategic value of ELTO and ELTSO to New Zealand and participating countries

The ELTO and ELTSO programmes are very highly regarded and considered premium training by member countries, employers and participants. This reputation is built on the consistent achievement of the broad objectives of the programmes.

During the ELTO and ELTSO programmes English language skills are developed and the participants' enhanced language skills are highly relevant for progressing key areas of national development. Some participants return with development ideas to take forward, and they have formed valuable networks with other ASEAN members and (occasionally) professionals from New Zealand to support these ideas.

In addition ELTO and ELTSO participants have enjoyed their New Zealand experience, and learning about New Zealand and its culture and lifestyle. They have ongoing (mostly passive) social contacts in New Zealand. Participants' have a very high appreciation and affinity with New Zealand (and the New Zealand Government) which comes from the quality of their ELTO and ELTSO experience. This appreciation and affinity enables New Zealand officials to contact past participants (and vice-a-versa) to short-circuit protocols and to problem-solve informally (focus groups, Posts, interviews). It is difficult to verify or quantify these benefits. However, the selected comments from participants noted below reflect the value and benefits of the ELTO and ELTSO programmes:

*On my return home, I have promoted the cooperation between Lao PDR and New Zealand in terms of technical, economic and investment. Laos, 2013.*

*By studying in NZ as the ELTO candidate, I got a lot of knowledge in education, social, lifestyle, culture and so on. Myanmar, 2012.*

*ELTO provides development knowledge not only [English] language improvements, also the social contacts and experiences. ELTO is my first training abroad and I have had good memories that I will never forget about New Zealand. Cambodia, 2010.*

*In terms of sharing this experiences and ideas it has always been my reference when I have the opportunity to talk and share with workmates in the office. Timor-Leste may learn a lot from New Zealand's experiences. Timor-Leste, 2011.*

Never the less, there is the potential to further capitalise or deepen these benefits by on-going contact with New Zealand/ers after participants return home through an active alumni scheme and clearer pathways to New Zealand tertiary studies. The field work (focus groups) showed that the contacts between ELTO and ELTSO students and their ASEAN colleagues were, at times, useful to their work, but there were fewer instances where ELTO and ELTSO participants retained contact with New Zealand professionals (other than their teachers) which supported their and/or a New Zealand professional's, work.

#### Changes and effects of the ELTO and ELTSO Programmes

##### *English Language Attainment*

The participants from the member countries were selected by lead Country-Partner Ministries and confirmed by MFAT Posts in consultation with MFAT Wellington and, where relevant, in-country providers. MFAT Posts communicated requirements (themes and base English language requirements) via letter, telephone and, on occasions, in-person. These requirements seemed (according to employer interviews) to be generally understood by lead Ministries and other Ministries who had sent participants.

The English language requirements for ELTO III entry were lifted from IELTS 4.0 (ELTO II) to 4.5 (ELTO III) to ensure that participants had a language base that would enable them to make the most of the English language (EL) training in New Zealand, to acclimatise successfully to New Zealand living, and to operate more independently. After intake 29, nine ELTO participants were accepted with scores of 4.0. The average number of participants with an entry score below 5.0 has staying at about 40 percent, and the overall average IELTS entry score has remained the same between 4.9 and 5.0 (medium 5.0) during the period; indicating that there is still a significant proportions of participants with low IELTS scores (rather than 5.0 or 5.5) doing ELTO. Accent notes that entry standards remain a problem, with struggling participants taking up resources. Never the less, Accent consider participants have been better prepared overall in the last few years. Given this, and that satisfactory EL results are being achieved across the all EL ability at entry, no changes to the programmes are seen as necessary. A

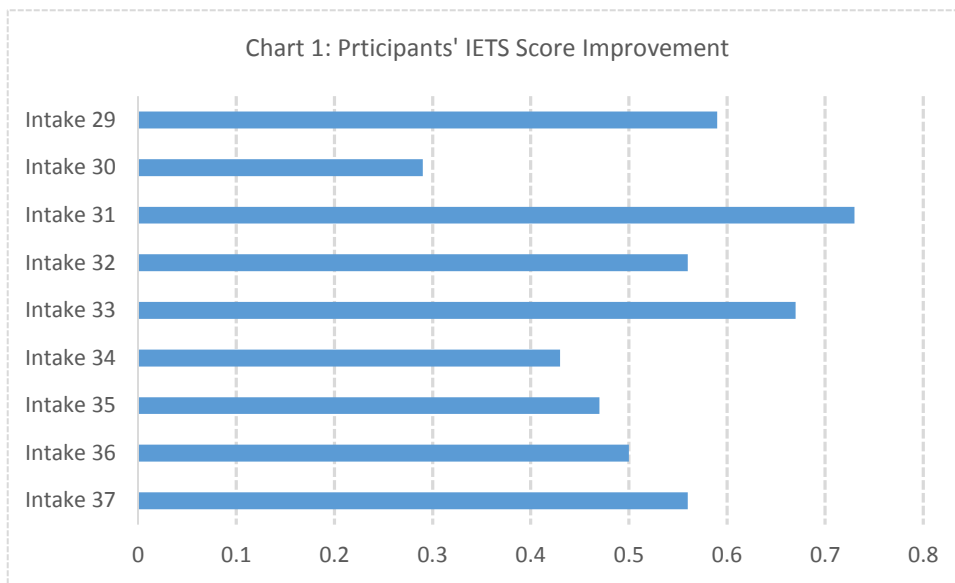
common mistake (Accent and in-country provider interviews) with EL training is to think more training resources, including tutoring will help, whereas, the biggest benefits are likely to be from all students using their EL skills more in social and work contexts.

To gauge the robustness of the selection process, the evaluators asked a range of questions of lead Ministries, other Ministries (employers) and Service Providers, and/or Post. Selection processes vary slightly between member countries. Time pressure, and the messaging between Ministries and Posts (particularly where Post is outside the member country i.e. Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar), contributes to some difficulties. However, overall the selection processes should be considered sufficiently robust. All countries seemed clear about the entry criteria and ran application processes that assigned priority to candidates working in areas of ASEAN co-operation and international negotiations, and meeting the EL requirements. Some governments also targeted those staff who had identified an interest in progressing their EL in their personal profiles. The main barrier to lifting the EL ability at entry seems to be based on the availability of candidates meeting both the thematic and the EL ability criteria. In some countries there was difficulty in reaching the gender target, due to there not being enough female staff with the entry requirement (e.g. Cambodia and Laos), or because of particular difficulties around family arrangements meaning that women chose not to apply<sup>2</sup>. There were no provincial government staff included in the ELTO programmes in most countries (a few in Viet Nam). This is addressed later in the report.

The level of EL improvement sought through ELTO III is a 0.5 IELTS band increase. This level of improvement is generally aligned with what would be expected through 10-12 weeks of intensive training (IELTS website). As such, the half band ambition for EL improvement under ELTO is about right when the change of context and other objectives of ELTO are considered. A half band increase was achieved for six and not three of the ELTO III intakes (Accent training data, see chart 1). The lowest average improvement was for intake 30 (0.29) and the highest was for intake the intake that followed with 0.73. It is unclear why intake 30 performed so badly as the participants' EL level at intake was equivalent to other intakes and all participants from countries under performed with the exception of Vietnam.

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<sup>2</sup> Interviews with women ELTO and ELTSO participants revealed however that women are very often willing to make considerable family sacrifices (such as leaving very young children) in order to improve their (and their family's) overall situation by attending the programmes.



Overall, the level of EL attainment for ELTO should be considered satisfactory as long as improvement of the training programme is ongoing. The ELTO Participants have experienced pressure to reach their EL ambition (focus groups and survey open-ended question). Further external pressure to achieve greater EL gains could be counter-productive and detract from the experience and non-EL learning objectives of ELTO. It is also not clear whether greater compliance to the increase by 0.5 IELTS band, to a minimum IELTS level of 5.0, would improve the EL language results overall. There is a small negative correlation (0.21) in entry level scores and EL improvement, meaning that participants with lower IELTS scores at the start improve slightly more than those with higher scores. For example, those entering with a score of 4.0 increased on average 0.9, while participants entering with an IELTS level above 5.5 did not achieve the same level of improvement as other participants. Moreover, some countries are currently, and will continue to struggle to get enough participants with the IELTS minimum level (especially women in some countries Because those with higher IELTS entry score (over 5.5) do not improve their EL as those with lower IELTS entry scores, and due to donors offering EL training to those elected for higher education, the criteria of excluding these two groups of candidates should be continued.

The ELTO programme has been designed to meet EL gains of 0.5 band IELTS increase for ELTO. The current time period and the number of English language training contact hours would generally be considered (slightly) generous to achieve the intended IELTS improvement (between 0.5-1 band increase within three months training at 25 hours per week, IELTS website). Given the multi-faceted outcomes of the programmes (incl. networking, development and public policy ideas, workplace

practices, cultural understanding), and the fact that strong networks form better through repeated reciprocity, the length of the ELTO programme is considered about right.

Expectations for senior officials (ELTSO programme) is more modest with an improvement in their IELTS score being sought. This softer emphasis placed on skill gain under ELTSO should be seen as appropriate given the shorter programme length, seniority of the officials, and taking into account the multi-faceted nature of the programme including thematic work. It is also important to note that the length of training is a key attendance barrier for busy and important senior officials and a longer training would not be well supported by partner countries with the most relevant officials (potentially) not being able to attend.

New Zealand provides EL training opportunities through ELTO and ELTSO so member countries can improve the EL ability of government officials for engagement in ASEAN and in international fora where English is primarily used. The interviews with employers and focus groups with participants showed that in most cases ELTO and ELTSO participants, were already in roles with these responsibilities when selected for the programmes, were moved into these roles on their return after the programmes, or their employer intended to move them into these roles. This implies that the EL training will support effective engagement in ASEAN and other international fora. The web-survey confirmed that most common frequency (once a week) of English use for returnees was readings (70%) and translating documents (36%) and discussions with representatives from other countries (36%). Where participants were in roles that didn't involve international work travel or they were in junior roles, almost all were using English in their work, again for reading and translating documents including funding agreements for internationally funded projects related to their work. The least common use of English was in advising or briefing staff on English language materials and documents and writing speeches in English for senior officials, although this was mentioned by several participants as tasks performed as a result of ELTO in interviews. It is also notable that 44 percent of participants (web-survey) had been promoted since returning to their Ministries suggesting that they were at selection or subsequently became as a result of ELTO more upwardly mobile. This figure is likely to be understated due to more recently returned participants completing the survey compared to those who completed ELTO 3-4 years ago.

The extensive use of English by participants in a work context is likely to have helped sustain the EL ability of participants (focus groups). Many of the key Ministries, particularly Foreign Ministries, are committed to the ongoing EL learning of their staff and offer weekly EL courses, some via international volunteers (interviews and focus group). An example of this commitment is how a Minister of Foreign Affairs attends every EL training offered in his Ministry (when in-country) and is always one of the first to arrive. Interestingly, his English is quite good but he is motivated to set an example for his staff. Employers also seek out other EL training for their staff including training funded by other donors in-

country (e.g. Australia in Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Timor-Leste) and in other countries e.g. the Philippines and Malaysia. Interestingly, both employers (interviews) and participants (focus groups) were adamant that (as identified above) ELTO and ELTSO were premium programmes and the EL training (incl. in the Philippines) did not offer the same EL opportunities, let-alone benefits associated with the broader objectives of the Programmes, in particular the 'immersion' in EL experienced in ELTO and ELTSO, opportunities to engage intensively with English speaking homestays, and 'theme-based' learning.

The following comments by ELTO and ELTSO participants illustrate these points:

*Since I have been participate in ELTO programme, my work has changed dramatically due to my new position. For example as Focal point for ASEAN, I have to attend Bi-lateral meetings and I have to communicate in English as well as understanding agreements. Timor-Leste, 2013*

*[I have] Started negotiating international investment agreements after coming back from ELTO. Vietnam, 2010*

*After studying as one of the ELTO candidates, I have to participate to welcome the delegations especially from ASEAN countries and manage according to their program. Myanmar, 2012*

*I do the same task that I have worked before but my boss assign me to work with international consultant who's come to assist us within the Department. Laos, 2010*

#### *Development ideas*

A key part of the ELTO and ELTSO Programmes is the relevance of the EL training vocabulary to participants work. The EL training is integrated with learning about New Zealand society, culture, work practices, and development and public policy ideas. The intakes are aligned to particular development theme, and participants undertake research, study tours, seminars, presentations, and have meetings with New Zealand experts on tailored topics. Thirty three percent of ELTO III participants identified (in the web-survey) development or public policy ideas that they learnt about while in New Zealand that were relevant to their work. During interviews and focus groups in-country ELTO and ELTSO participants also mentioned that the theme learning was a very important aspect of the programmes. Moreover, there was feedback from web-survey participants that they had promoted and adapted development/policy ideas to their own development context and implementation was likely or occurring. For example, modelling of the New Zealand Superannuation Fund for Mongolia, adopting a similar company registration process in Timor-Leste, progressing rice production in Dong Thap Province based on fairer linkage between farmers and export companies, improving Laos custom services based knowledge from on New Zealand, and the development of consultancy services in Cambodia to support

business entrepreneurs. The most prevalent aspect mentioned during interviews and focus groups of ELTO participants was the observation (in New Zealand) and increased understanding around government transparency and communication of policy.

The following comments illustrate the 'themed learning' and its use by ELTO participants.

*I learned more about how to improve the gap between people and policy to show more transparency and accountability. Laos, 2012*

*I have learned more about how to show transparency and accountability such as salary of government officials as a whole by circulating their beneficial information. Moreover, in line with HR development, we have made government officials' evaluation in every month, six months and one year. Laos, 2012*

*My workplace visit was \*\*\* , they work for Energy and Mines research that involves with my job directly. They had Dam safety guide line which is very precious information to share with my colleague. Laos, 2013*

*New Zealand advocates freer and fairer trade. I think that this idea is also what my country has to do now. Vietnam, 2013*

*I work for the Division of Sovereign Wealth Fund in the Ministry of Finance. I made research about NZ Superannuation fund which is one of the Sovereign Wealth funds during the course. I knew about the fund's management and especially assets management, governance as well. Now we're designing to elaborate our legal environment of the SWF. Mongolia, 2013*

*[I] giving examples from New Zealand when I attended meeting relating to that topic. Laos, 2013*

### *The Thematic and Professional Networks*

The thematic component of the ELTO and the tailored nature of the ELTSO programmes seeks to expose participants to senior New Zealand subject experts (including MFAT) working in areas relevant to the participants. Generally, participants (focus groups) found the thematic component useful and, as highlighted above, this matching of interests and expertise has led to transfer of ideas and, on occasions, ongoing engagement. On the whole, this has worked well and is a very important part of the Programmes<sup>3</sup>. The 'good governance', trade policy (esp. negotiation) and agriculture themes have been popular with alumni (focus groups) due to their broad appeal and the relevance of New Zealand's experience in these areas.

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<sup>3</sup> While participants seemed generally happy with the range of themes, we did not interview (resources) potential ELTO who were excluded because their position was not related to any of the themes. There were comments from some participants that wider consultation (i.e. further than Post and lead Ministry) would be valuable.



Alumni expressed an interest in more skill-based work components (e.g. human resource management, project management, computer skills); however, there is a risk that too much of this sought of skills training will take time and focus away from EL improvement. As such, it would be better to continue with subject-based themes as before where participants are building on their subject expertise and not learning completely new skills. The suggested future themes of education and health would be worthwhile. While narrower than some past themes (e.g. good governance), they represent large sectors with many functions are government officials, and would still strike the right balance between breath and alignment with personal expertise. Overall, breath of the themes and the theme being sufficiently relevant to all participants, will be an on-going process of trial and error.

The current model for the make-up of each intake where a quota from each country is included in the intake, works well to balance cultural learning and build on-going relationships between countries (focus groups). While the evaluation was not able to establish whether these contacts lead to bi-lateral advantages, some (7-8) participants (web-survey, focus groups) did identify that they had met up with ELTO colleagues at international events and were in touch via social media and were active in orchestrating face-to-face time. The collegiality of each intake seemed strong and alumni were very active in keeping in contact via social media, and less frequently via email (web-survey (15% at least once a month), focus groups), and on a rare occasion had visited colleagues in their country (focus groups).

Focus groups were asked about the appropriateness of the human rights, and equality and gender empowerment special guest seminar. A range of views emerged with some men and women finding these topics interesting and valuable, and others not find them sufficiently practical. The topics were not seen by participants as sensitive.

#### *Social networks*

The backbone of ELTO participants' social experience New Zealanders is through the homestays in the provinces of Hawkes Bay (EIT) and Nelson-Marlborough (NMIT), and the buddy system while in Wellington. These social contacts are designed to support continuous use of English and to support social and cultural understanding. Overall, these arrangements work well and Accent and the TEIs appear very responsive to making alternative arrangements (focus groups and interviews). Many participants commented that they had learnt a lot about New Zealand and New Zealand culture through these arrangements (web-survey, focus groups).

Given the varying expectations, age, life experience and family situation of participants this will remain an area where participants have varying experiences. Some participants establish very close friendships where the host family members or the buddy visit the member country, and other keep in contact every month through email or SKYPE (11-12%, web-survey). While participants generally valued the homestay

approach, and most spoke very favourably of their experiences, some focus groups (4-5) had a member who had bad experiences with the homestays. However, Accent and the TEI seem acute at gauging if a problem exists and moving participants to better homestay arrangements, and, where appropriate, reminding participants of the value of experience and encouraging them to continue. A significant number of male and female (more) participants commented (focus groups, web-survey comments) about roles and responsibilities in the New Zealand household including those of men and women. Some men and women (more) commented on how they valued this, with women suggesting that they would like to enact this learning on return. The focus group of Myanmar women were particularly animated in their discussion.

#### Conclusions, Lessons, and Improvements for ELTO and ELTSO

Both the ELTO and ELTSO programmes are highly regarded and have culminated in significant strategic value for Country partners and New Zealand. As stated earlier in the report, this strategic value is a result of well-designed content and quality delivery in New Zealand. However, in some instances opportunities to capitalise on the strategic results of ELTO and ELTSO have been lost. The changes and enhancements recommended in this section are designed to maximise, and increase sustainability of the strategic effect of the New Zealand experience, and to further capitalise on the strategic outcomes of ELTO and ELTSO.

The delivery in New Zealand is working well - participants are improving their English, their EL skills and the knowledge they bring back to their countries is being used by the partner government, their positive experience is enabling freer and compatible dialogue between the participants and New Zealand. Preserving what is working well is important. Key concerns mentioned by MFAT during the evaluation, and/or identified in the evaluators' findings/conclusions are as follows:

#### **1. Not getting enough senior officials in either programme**

Some ELTO and ELTSO participants are at a lower professional level than MFAT expects. Lower level officials are not engaged in international fora to the extent of higher level officials and their EL training does not provide the same strategic opportunity to the country partner/New Zealand as would EL training for more senior officials. However, the selection processes are generally criteria and merit-based and the evaluation showed that almost all participants are working in relevant roles. Two key barriers are that many senior officials are not able to commit to the length of the programmes (especially ELTO) and some senior officials are not able to reach the required IELTS level. EL has improved in the member countries over the years, and older officials are likely to be less proficient in English than younger (less senior) officials. The shorter ELTSO programme was established to mitigate both these barriers and the design has

enabled better access to senior officials. Creating more ELTSO places (including for Timor-Leste) would further increase access for more other senior officials (see *Scaling-up* section, below).

**Recommendation: ELTSO places be offered to Timor-Leste**

It is important not to over-look the extent to which lower-level officials are contributing to the intended benefits of the programmes. Selection is generally criteria and merit-based (on the recommendation of participants' employers/managers), and less senior participants are recognised by their employer as capable. Most of the employers interviewed for the evaluation indicated that they would be moving (promoting) ELTO trained staff into areas more relevant to their capability. As such, it seems that many officials are being recommended to ELTO as part of their path into more senior positions (focus groups/interviews). This evidence is backed up by the web-survey which showed that 30 percent of the last intake were promoted within two months, and 50 percent of the previous intake had been promoted at the time of the survey. Lower-level staff also tend to be younger meaning they will be in significant positions for longer, providing benefits to their country and New Zealand for longer.

Women are under-represented in the civil service and in civil service leadership roles in (most) member countries and in ELTO. Efforts to target closely matched candidates should continue, with special efforts to attract senior officials (see *Administration and workload* section, below). It will be important to ensure that efforts to increase the seniority (level) of officials undertaking the programmes doesn't further jeopardise the goal of 50 percent female-male participation.

## **2. ELTO participants from the provinces**

The intention for ELTO III was to increase the number of participants from provincial areas to help promote provincial development where donors, including New Zealand are working. Information on the origins of candidates and participants is irregular but there is consensus (lead Ministries, Posts, participants) that very few participants have been from outside (working and living) the capital cities - Viet Nam Post has made a concerted effort to include provincial participants. There are several reasons for the lack of provincial participants (interviews with lead Ministries): a) some ELTO themes are not relevant to provincial development b) out-reach to the provincial may be irregular, and c) provincial candidates struggle to reach the minimum IELTS score d) often there is not enough time between announcing ELTO and the deadline for nominations to include provinces where communications are slow (letters are often required).

Moreover, the few provincial candidates selected have struggled with reaching half a band improvement in their IELTS score 0.5, and some of the provincial participants appear to have taken up positions in the capital cities suggesting that they may not be contributing to provincial development (at least in the way expected).

There are two opposing viewpoints regarding the extent to which MFAT should continue to target provincial officials for ELTO (as well as central government participants). One view is that the development relevance of ELTO to the provinces is strong and MFAT should improve the selection process and provide composite (in-country) EL training to enable better access to ELTO for provincial officials who do not currently have the required level of EL. This view is held by employers in Cambodia and Laos, and Posts in Bangkok and Viet Nam (interviews). On the other hand MFAT could continue to strengthen or maintain the strategic value of ELTO by continuing the focus on central government officials (density of interests and contact). The evaluation was not able to provide evidence that the greater inclusion of provincial officials (and in-country training to improve their EL) would be value for money for MFAT. In addition, some provincial officials may not stay in the provinces, obtaining better positions in central through their increased EL skills and thematic knowledge. While provincial officials do work on donors projects, it could be more efficient for donors to develop tailored programmes (e.g. study tours) under their interventions to provide EL and work-based knowledge opportunities for staff and partnering officials.

If MFAT wish to peruse provincial involvement in ELTO, the selection process would need to be fine-tuned to enable this and remedial EL training funded for provincial officials to meet the EL requirements. No recommendations are therefore offered; however, the evaluators suggest MFAT confirm their reasons and commitment to provincial involvement in ELTO prior to ELTO IV.

### **3. Under-represented female participants**

As one of the significant improvements from ELTO II to ELTO III, MFAT targeted improving the proportion of women participating in ELTO. During the nine ELTO III intakes, 43 percent of participants have been female. Only Mongolia (57%) and Myanmar (73%) achieved over the target of 50 percent (see Table 3).

The under-representation of women appears to be a gender bias that has led to an under-representation of women in both the civil service and leadership positions in most countries (focus groups and interviews). The exception being Myanmar where over 70 percent of the civil

service are women - it is not clear what percentage are in leadership positions. The under-representation of women may be compounded by the family difficulties that attending ELTO would cause for some women. While this was mentioned by several women during interviews and focus groups, without interviewing those women who did not apply for ELTO and ELTSO it is difficult to gauge the level of this issue.

*Table 3: Proportion of female and men participants (intakes 29-37)*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Females (pct)</b>	<b>Male (pct)</b>
Cambodia	36%	64%
Lao	40%	60%
Mongolia	57%	43%
Myanmar	73%	27%
Timor-Leste	36%	64%
Vietnam	43%	57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>57%</b>

The ELTO programme should continue to seek an even proportion of female and male participants. This should occur at the expense of other ELTO objectives, if necessary, as the trade-off would be worthwhile, including lower-level officials, and assigning more places to miniseries with more women meeting the requirements. Where the quota can't be met, consideration should also be given to funding contracted-out (through the MSC) remedial in-country EL training places (see 'Alumni scheme', below). The evaluators assessed other pre-existing options for in-country and regional EL remedial training, include considering the cost of training as estimated by in-country providers. Regional training would not be significantly cheaper, would set an expectation of entry into ELTO, and would mean more time away from work and family, and would therefore not be a good option. In-country providers are currently operating to a reasonable standard and often provide services to donors for University Scholarship preparation. Moreover, the in-country costs would appear to be significantly cheaper than providing training in New Zealand. Given the availability of these in-country services and the opportunity to tailor them to the ELTO course so acculturation is reduced and participants 'hit the ground running', means that in-country training is likely to be more effective than generic training and would build motivation and attendance.

**Recommendation: the objective of 50-50 female-male participation should continue**

**Recommendation: composite EL training (in-country) be offered where female participation is restricted by insufficient candidates' reaching the minimum EL standard**

#### *Country membership and participation in the different programmes*

Current country membership to ELTO and ELTSO include Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao, Myanmar, Timor-Leste and Mongolia. The Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia were included previously but are not now due to the renewed focus of their New Zealand Country Programmes. Eighty three percent of past ELTO participants have come from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Lao. The non-inclusions of the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia seem reasonable and is supported going-forward. Although the evaluators understand that there is a need for Mongolian officials to learn English, Mongolia is not a member of ASEAN and ASEAN member countries do not have a particularly high level of international engagement with Mongolia. Moreover, the higher the number of countries represented in each intake the more fractured the group becomes. Not including Mongolia in future intakes would lead to greater homogeneity and could lead to deeper networks and spaces for more participants for the countries that work more closely together.

Consideration was also given to whether Timor-Leste would remain part of programmes. However, Timor-Leste's involvement is important to their development and ASEAN membership aspirations and their continued involvement would be particularly valuable. Timor-Leste is an emerging nation that is progressively building its public service and forming a modern state. Out-ward looking political and economic engagement, including engagement in ASEAN, will be important to their progress. EL skills in the public sector are required to enable this progress and Timor-Leste is starting from a low base of EL skills (country partner, lead ministry, and participant and MFAT interviews). As such, Timor-Leste's continued involvement in ELTO makes sense. As with some other member countries, some busy Timorese officials struggle to reach the ELTO IELTS intake requirements, and furthermore, cannot take an extended time out from their duties. One way to mitigate these constraints is to extend the ELTSO programme and to include participants from Timor-Leste.

For the reasons of homogeneity and ASEAN relationships, it is not recommended that the programmes be integrated with ELTO Africa (e.g.) and incorporating ELTO and ELTSO under a regional Human Resource Development programmes would detract from the visibility (and brand recognition) of the programmes.

Integration of the New Zealand Scholarship Programme and ELTO and ELTSO was not considered (not within the scope and focus of the evaluation). However, in the view of the evaluators (purely based on

perceptions), the separate branding and strong reputational standing of ELTO and ELTSO would be likely to out-weigh any potential efficiencies (these were not assessed and can't be assumed) from 'whole-sale' integration of ELTO and ELTSO into New Zealand's Scholarship Programme. Never the less, there would be value in investigating during the design of the next ELTO and ELTSO phase, synergies that exist between the ELTO and ELTSO management process and Scholarships. Part-integration may be possible without diminishing the uniqueness of the ELTO and ELTSO branding (e.g. alumni management, pre-award management).

**Recommendation: do not include Mongolia in ELTO IV and ELTSO II**

**Recommendation: leave ELTO and ELTSO as stand-alone programmes**

### *Scaling up*

Additional strategic value from the programmes would be gained through scaling-up both programmes. Given the strategic intent of the programmes to contribute to political and economic engagement in the region and with New Zealand through improved English language skills and networking, an increase in the number of ELTO and ELTSO officials participating in the programmes will lead to a proportionate increase in the achievement of the ELTO and ELTSO objective.

Many of the key Ministries are large and English language levels are low. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some Ministries get about ten times the number of applicants each intake and a significant number meet the specified intake criteria (some other Ministries struggle to get qualifying officials especially in the provinces). More ELTO and ELTSO will enable better (English language-based) engagement in the ASEAN network, other regional fora and with New Zealand. More participants would be exposed to New Zealand development and public policy ideas, New Zealand culture, and New Zealand would have more contacts in relevant positions in partner Governments.

The extent to which Ministries (as employers) will be hindered by the loss of staff through scaling up ELTO and ELTSO was considered during the evaluation. Most key Ministries said they could absorb unavailability of staff to enable more to attend ELTO. Where Ministries considered the loss of staff a minor issue, it appeared that they were willing to accept the inconvenience due to the value they placed on English language skills and, in particular, the ELTO and ELTSO programmes. Some Ministries organised their own English language programmes and many Ministries had access to programmes in Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia, and other in-country training. The Ministries place a higher value on New Zealand training, considering it unique and a premium product that they would give preference to over sending officials on other English language programmes.

A key question is, to what extent ELTO could increase before the benefits started to out-weigh the costs (e.g. diminishing returns for both parties, capacity loss, management overload). This evaluation considered whether scaling up would be worthwhile, and was not required or resourced to undertake a cost-benefit analysis of increased size. As such, it is outside the scope of the evaluation to determine the optimal size of the programmes. However, the evaluator's assessment shows that a modest increase in the size of ELTO and ELTSO in future is likely to be worthwhile and any future increases could be informed by the experience of the modest scaling-up of the programme.

The capacity of VicLink and MFAT to accommodate modest scaling-up was also considered. VicLink considers that it does not have the capacity to manage more intakes. This is understandable with the current management structure but this can be re-shaped and others providers used as necessary. A joint venture with another WN-based institution could even be considered too easy the management workload should this be necessary. As is discussed under the 'Programme Management' sub-section below, consideration should be given to contracting out the management and administrative functions currently undertaken by MFAT. This would be important to the success of any scaling-up of the programmes.

Currently New Zealand covers the financial cost of the programmes and this supports the prestigious reputation of the programmes, and good relationships between New Zealand and the partner country. Part-partner government funding (for example, to cover the cost of scaling up) would detract from this and is not considered to be an option (interviews with Post).

Key options for scaling up include:

1. Increasing the number of participants in each intake: not recommended – the current intake size enables lectures and tutors to keep track of participant progress and to tailor content to their individual needs. The current intake size also better supports social cohesion and enables better pastoral care management.
2. Piloting another shorter ELTO intake: **recommended** – this option retains the most of the design and (most of the) programme benefits while increasing the size of the ELTO. Length of the training could be cut to eight weeks therefore making the training more appealing to more senior officials (but not targeted as high as ELTSO). The training could still include half the training in Wellington and half at a provincial TEI. This additional intake would also make it easier to target the training to a particular need, for example, women only (clustering often generates better outcomes), remedial training, refresher training or provincial government etc. The addition of an additional intake creates sequencing and logistical challenges as the current annual programme of two ELTO intakes and an ELTSO intake does not have an eight week window. Other challenges include the availability of New Zealand experts to support the



thematic content and finding additional buddies. However, the evaluators believe it would be possible though a MSC may need to work with additional TEIs.

3. Adding another ELTO intake each year: not recommended – the evaluators suggest piloting the shorter ELTO intake instead to first establish if the ELTO objectives can be achieved under this model.
4. Adding another ELTSO intake – **recommended**: while time and resources did not make it possible for the evaluation to establish the quantifiable benefits of the ELTSO programme, the evaluators were able to interview several past ELTSO participants, a number of employers, and all the lead Ministries. The ELTSO Programme is valued and participants, despite their low IELTS entry scores, are achieving reasonable EL results. In particular ELTSO (and Also ELTO) participants appreciated that they are taught how to continue learning English after the ELTSO programme is complete (interviews). Country partners indicate that there is a clear need for the training and the shorter period of ELTSO is appealing to these senior and influential officials. Adding another ELTSO intake would add additional strategic value for both New Zealand and member countries.

**Recommendation: pilot an additional, but shorter, annual ELTO intake**

**Recommendation: add an additional annual ELTSO intake**

#### *Alumni scheme*

Currently past participants return home with minimal ongoing contact with New Zealand (particularly professional contacts other than their teachers) and with little or no structured, regular contact with MFAT (the amount varies between countries). Moreover, there is no ongoing impetus or support for participants to develop in-country English language study practices (web-survey). The redesign of ELTO included a greater emphasis on an alumni network under ELTO III. This, by and large, has not occurred. Vietnam Post is the most active with returning participants but other Posts, Wellington and Bangkok Post are not able to prioritise an effective alumni network, and the providers in-country are not funded for alumni functions. Current contact with past participants is mostly limited to welcome home events, invitation to official visit events and attending briefings for the next tranche of ELTO and ELTSO participants. The development of a pro-active alumni network in-country, across member countries and with New Zealand would be welcomed by past participants and would provide a platform to maintain and further relationships established during ELTO and ELTSO. Introducing a well-structured and proactive alumni programme, led by the ELTO and ELTSO managing contractor and supported by in-

country (contracted) providers, would provide ongoing tangible benefits by supporting the fledgling networks and linking alumni with ongoing English language training.

Continued engagement with New Zealand is important to maximise relationships developed during ELTO. A key way to extend and deepen relationships between ELTO alumni and New Zealand would be for them to return to New Zealand for further study. Preferential access to New Zealand Development Scholarships would create a pathway for such prolonged and deeper engagement. The scholarships programme would also benefit as the ELTO course will have prepared the student for New Zealand University (EL and culture). While many of the ELTO alumni interviewed intended to study overseas in the future, very few intended to apply to New Zealand. One reason given were that the EL requirement is higher than for other countries. However preferential treatment would be an incentive for alumni to stay actively engaged in the alumni scheme and to apply to New Zealand for further study.

Suggested design features could include:

- Contracted and defined role (could be the MSC)
- Devolved to in-country providers with responsibilities for selection and preparation of awardees
- Both the lead and in-country provider regularly update contact details
- Face-to-face events at least monthly – including knowledge events (most likely via electronic media) about New Zealand, its public policies, international policies, development programme, or presentations by ELTO alumni
- Use electronic media to host topical events with New Zealand subject experts
- Allocation of weekly one-on-one (or small group) English language training for the first six months after returning to help sustain EL skills
- Weekly EL discussion group
- Membership to social and professional media networks – ELTO, intake and Country specific Facebook pages and Linked membership
- Regular electronic media posts of interesting snippets (ELTO, New Zealand, alumni)
- Preferential access to New Zealand Development Scholarships so a pathway for prolonged and deeper engagement with New Zealand is created.
- MFAT provide key representational involvement to maximise esteem and relevance, and is not involved in administration.

**Recommendation: that effective and proactive alumni scheme be implemented by a managing contractor, and supported by in-country contracted providers (with MFAT branding and representation)**

**Recommendation: that a system 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 Scholarship Scheme.**

#### *Programme Management*

The evaluators were struck by the extent that time-poor MFAT staff were involved in administrative tasks which ‘crowded out’ more strategic engagement with participants and alumni (MFAT staff interviews, country partner interviews, participant interviews, Accent interviews, focus groups). This includes the section process, arranging visas, managing participant databases, writing letters of invitation, managing alumni and associated events. As much of the programme administration and management as possible should be contracted out to ensure quality and consistent delivery across the entire ELTO and ELTSO programmes (). This should include any functions performed by MFAT in New Zealand being transferred to an MSC (where possible). MSC tasks may include: candidate selection support, day-to-day liaison with government, awardee communication, departure preparation and briefing, supporting recent returning participants and managing the local content of the alumni scheme. MFAT’s role would be dipping-in to provide key (and valuable) representation at the right time. The enhanced services and consistency in services likely to be achieved from professionalising programme management and administration through contracting out would enable the programmes to grow (see ‘Scaling up’) and would ensure added services important for the programme objectives occur. For example, MFAT staff have time for strategic engagement, alumni events are regular and well run, regular and relevant information is provided through social, contact details are up to date, and better monitoring.

**Recommendation: MFAT consider greater contracting of New Zealand and in-country services with MFAT focusing on representation involvement**

#### *Monitoring and evaluation*

Monitoring of ELTO and ELTSO since 2009 has focused on training evaluations, satisfaction surveys and case studies to help inform ongoing improvement of the programmes. This has been supported by informal (no framework) monitoring visits and additional narrative to supplement reporting against a rough results diagram developed part-way through the period. These monitoring activities have been valuable but they have not allowed for monitoring and evaluating the higher-level outcomes that are critical for determining if ELTO and ELTSO are making a development and strategic difference. Future monitoring of the programmes should include, in addition to the information collected during ELTO III,

accurate tracking of alumni bio-graphical data, changes to job level (based on a standardised scale), higher educational achievements, and professional and social network analysis identifying the frequency and density of contacts made during ELTO and ELTSO.

A key facet to effective monitoring and evaluation is to have good, up-to-date unit level data. The evaluators found that past and current participant detail was being managed through eight different and conflicting databases. Moreover, none of these databases were up-to-date. A key principle of information management is that there be one version of data that is managed as the key information source. Should ELTO and ELTSO continue, it is important that this principle be applied along with profile restrictions and protocols for information updating. It is recommended that a cloud-located (public but restricted server) database be used for all data entry, extraction and reporting. This would cost very little or nothing for the MSC to develop and maintain as these facilities are often free and designed for novice user development and use. This would enable providers, MFAT and VicLink (Accent) to all have access to the same data which can be updated in-line with agreed protocols.

**Recommendation: that additional monitoring methods be used to track and assessed job level, educational achievements, and professional and social network analysis**

**Recommendation: that a cloud-located database be used that for all data entry, extraction and reporting**

## Recommendations

1. That the ELTO and ELTSO programmes should continue in a form very similar to that under ELTO III (two programmes, not merged into ELTO Africa or a HRD programme, IELTS testing and entry level, selection criteria, gender criteria, length, two stages, themes, home-stays, buddy system).
2. That the ELTO and ELTSO programmes be scaled up to increase the strategic value of the programmes (without partner government financial contributions) through an additional (shorter) ELTO course and an additional ELTSO course each year.
3. That ELTSO places be offered to Timor-Leste.
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).
5. That the objective of 50-50 female-male participation should continue.

6. 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 (e.g. women, provincial representation).
7. That MFAT consider greater contracting of New Zealand and in-country services with DFAT focusing on representation involvement.
8. That a system 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 Scholarship Scheme.
9. That Mongolia not be included in the programmes going-forward and no other countries being added to ELTO and ELTSO membership.
10. That additional monitoring methods be used to track and assessed job level, educational achievements, and professional and social network analysis.
11. That a cloud-located database be used that for all data entry, extraction and reporting.

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# APPENDICES

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# APPENDIX ONE: TERMS OF REFERENCE

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## Background information

The English Language Training for Officials (ELTO) Programme has been running since 1991 starting with training for government officials from Viet Nam. By 1996, Cambodia, Mongolia and Lao PDR officials had joined the programme, with Thailand joining in 1997, Indonesia in 1999 and Timor-Leste in 2000.

The objectives of the programme are to help participants and their countries achieve more effective English language communication, to enhance understanding and relations between New Zealand and participating countries and to improve ASEAN integration. The programme indirectly supports the Initiative for ASEAN Integration's focus on Human Resource Development.

To date more than 1000 officials from Cambodia (250), Indonesia (16), Lao PDR (263), Mongolia (55), Myanmar (64), Timor-Leste (31), Thailand (13) and Viet Nam (389), have graduated from the programme<sup>4</sup>.

In 2002, New Zealand commissioned an independent review of the ELTO programme. The review recommended the programme continue and in 2004 **Phase II** of the programme commenced. Victoria Link, a commercial arm of Victoria University of Wellington was awarded the contract to implement Phase II.

In 2008, the New Zealand Aid Programme reviewed its support to human resource development in the Mekong region. The ELTO programme was included in the scope of this review. The review found the ELTO programme remained relevant to the region and meeting partner government needs and again recommended it continue.

A five year **Phase III** programme was designed and began implementation in July 2009 with Victoria Link again awarded the implementation contract. The programme will conclude in June 2014 and as required by the New Zealand Aid Programme evaluation guidelines, now needs to be reviewed.

## Purpose of the evaluation

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness and impact of Phase III of the ELTO programme and to make recommendations that could improve or enhance the provision of English Language Training to officials from participating countries.

MFAT may use the evaluation to inform the concept and design of Phase IV of ELTO which is anticipated to commence in July 2014.

The results of the evaluation will be reported/disseminated to key stakeholders and will also be made available during the procurement for a Phase IV of the ELTO programme should this go ahead.

## Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will cover all aspects of ELTO Phase III since funding commenced in 2009.

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<sup>4</sup> Indonesia and Thailand no longer participate in the programme. We no longer have a development assistance programme with Thailand. For Indonesia, participation in ELTO was put on hold while a New Zealand Aid Programme country strategy was developed (and ELTO was not included as a priority in this strategy).

While the evaluation should address the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluative criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability), it should particularly focus on the intervention strategies of the current programme including:

- Course content (including themed approaches)
- Country participation
- Entry requirements
- Gender balance
- Selection processes and numbers of students
- In-country preparation and testing
- Programme size and length
- Location of courses

The evaluation team should consult with ELTO alumni, their employers, current ELTO participants, and other relevant government in-country agencies, in-country providers (including IDP in Cambodia, Vientiane College in Lao PDR, British Council in Myanmar LELI in Timor-Leste and ACET in Viet Nam), MFAT staff at Post and New Zealand-based key partners including ELTO providers, other key stakeholders who have a view about ELTO's relevance and impact (including academics, NZ government officials and the diplomatic community) and MFAT staff responsible for ELTO countries.

## Evaluation criteria

### Objectives and evaluation questions

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

**Objective 1:** Assess the relevance of the ELTO programme to participating countries and to participants, in particular:

- To what extent has the activity remained relevant to New Zealand?
- To what extent has the activity been beneficial to ELTO participants and their employers?
- How have these benefits contributed to country and regional development priorities?
- Does ELTO remain relevant to the development needs of participating countries?
- How relevant is the ELTO programme to countries which are moving from developing/low income to developed/middle income countries status (e.g. Viet Nam)?
- What changes could be made to ensure the programme remains *relevant*?
- To what extent is there scope to expand the programme to improve its relevance and to emphasise development outcomes (e.g. numbers and types of students, numbers of participating countries, course content/themes, inclusion of short-term on-the-job training)?

**Objective 2:** Assess the effectiveness of the programme in particular:



- Has the programme met its key objectives to achieve more effective English language communication, enhance understanding and relations between New Zealand and participating countries, and to improve ASEAN integration?
- To what extent have cross-cutting issues been effectively addressed?
- To what extent has the development of the workplace experience component helped the programme to meet its key objectives?
- What unintended outcomes (positive and negative) have occurred as a result of the Activity and what has constrained or enhanced the achievement of outcomes?
- What changes could be made to ensure the programme remains *effective* and contributes to country and regional development results?
- Make recommendations on how programme outcomes can be better defined and monitored.

**Objective 3:** Assess the efficiency of the programme, in particular:

- Assess the management and administration of the programme including selection processes, logistical arrangements, accommodation, pastoral care, recreation opportunities and any other relevant matters;
- How effective has the management of the programme been by MFAT, Victoria Link and in-country providers?
- Identify issues that may have impacted on the efficiency and value for money of the programme and make recommendations for improvements.

**Objective 4:** Assess the impact of the programme, in particular:

- What impact has the programme had on individual participants?
- What impact has the programme had on country and regional development?
- What impact has the programme had on regional integration with ASEAN?
- What impact has the programme had on New Zealand's relationships with participating countries?

**Objective 5:** Assess the extent to which the results obtained have proven to be sustainable:

- To what extent have the skills acquired from the programme been sustained?
- To what extent are participating governments willing to make a contribution to the ongoing provision of ELTO?

**Objective 6:** Identify lessons learned from Phase III of ELTO and make recommendations for possible enhancements to Phase IV of the ELTO programme.

## Methodology for the evaluation

### Principles/approach

The principles underpinning the evaluation are independence and transparency.

The evaluator(s) should review relevant key documents including those provided by MFAT at the beginning of the assignment. It is expected that the evaluator(s) will also consult with key stakeholders and beneficiaries in New Zealand and overseas.

### Evaluation Plan

The evaluator(s) will develop an evaluation plan after the initial desk review (see IDG Evaluation <http://www.aid.govt.nz/about-aid-programme/measuring-results/evaluation> for guidance). The plan must be approved by Deputy Director Asia prior to the commencement of any field work or other substantive work. The evaluation plan is to be appended to the main written report.

The evaluation plan will describe how cross-cutting issues will be considered throughout the evaluation.

Although the ELTO programme currently covers six countries, field visits are proposed for only Timor-Leste, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Myanmar and Viet Nam (i.e. not Mongolia).

## **Team composition**

The evaluation is expected to be undertaken by a team of one or two international consultants.

The attributes (knowledge, skills, experience) required of the evaluation team are:

- Knowledge of human development and English language training;
- Good facilitation and report writing skills;
- Familiarity with the development context and needs of the ELTO participating countries;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including a proven ability to liaise and communicate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds;
- Strong background and experience in evaluation methods and processes, including participatory evaluation, previous proven skills and experience in conducting review and performance evaluation, and demonstrated ability to draw on international best practice to inform the evaluation;
- Demonstrated analytical skills, an ability to gather and interpret data and information and write constructive, informative and timely reports;
- Experience working across a range of sectors;
- Working knowledge and familiarity of cross-cutting issues such as disability, gender equity and human rights;
- Pragmatic and forward-looking perspective in terms of looking for lessons and implications to inform future policy and programming;
- Experience working in the ASEAN region;
- Sound knowledge of MFAT policies and processes.

## **Governance and management**

The evaluation is commissioned by MFAT and the evaluator(s) will be accountable to IDG, MFAT.

Oversight of the evaluation process will be the responsibility of a Steering Group chaired by Deputy Director, Asia.

The Activity Manager (Development Officer, Mekong Programme) is responsible for day-to-day management and administration of the evaluation including:

- contracting and general evaluation administration;
- briefing the evaluation team;
- managing feedback from reviews of the draft report;
- liaising with the evaluation team throughout to ensure the evaluation is being undertaken as agreed; and
- supporting the Evaluation Steering Group.

## Outputs and milestones

No.	Output/milestone	Description	Inputs	Due date
1	Evaluation Plan	Literature review Attend briefing with MFAT Finalise evaluation plan	Up to 3 days	3rd week October 2013
2	Field Work Complete	Field work including travel: Up to 3 days visit to each of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam	Up to 16 days	1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> weeks of November 2013
3	Draft Report	Prepare draft evaluation report	4 days	4 <sup>th</sup> week of November 2013
4	Final Report	Address and incorporate feedback Submission of final report to MFAT	3 days	2 <sup>nd</sup> week of December 2013

## Reporting requirements

The draft evaluation report will be reviewed by MFAT staff, relevant stakeholders and/or external experts. Further work or revisions of the report may be required if it is considered that the report does not meet the requirements of this TOR, if there are factual errors, if the report is incomplete, or if it is not of an acceptable standard.

Copies of the final report are to be delivered by mail to MFAT Wellington.

The evaluation report must meet quality standards as described in New Zealand Aid Programme Activity Evaluation Operational Policy. These quality standards are based on 2010 DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation and New Zealand Aid Programme Activity evaluation operational policy, guideline and templates. The written report is expected to be around 15 pages long and be guided by the New Zealand Aid Programme Evaluation Report template

The report must contain an abstract suitable for publishing on the New Zealand Aid Programme website. Instructions for the abstract can be found in the Evaluation Report template. It must also include as an annex, a concept note for the next phase of the programme.

It is MFAT policy to make evaluation reports publicly available (e.g. on the New Zealand Aid Programme website) unless there is prior agreement not to do so. Any information that could prevent the release of an evaluation report under the Official Information or Privacy Acts, or would breach evaluation ethical standards should not be included in the report. The final report will be approved for public release by the Deputy Director responsible for the commissioning of the evaluation.

## Relevant reports and documents

Relevant documents will be provided to the evaluation team prior to the evaluation. These key documents include:

- ELTO Phase I Review 2002;
- Greater Mekong Sub-region Human Resource Development Review 2008;
- ELTO Phase III Design Document;
- Report on Phase III Mid-term Monitoring Visit to Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam
- ELTO end-of-course reports, in particular those for Phase III;
- New Zealand ASEAN Inc Strategy;
- International Development Policy Statement: Supporting Sustainable Economic Development;
- New Zealand Aid Programme Strategic Plan 2012 -2015;
- New Zealand Aid Programme Sector Priorities 2012 -2015;
- Mekong and ASEAN Results Frameworks;
- Initiative for ASEAN Integration Strategic Framework
- Other relevant documents

## Approval

**Approved by:**

19 September 2013

*(signature)*

Tiffany Babington  
Deputy Director, Asia

## APPENDIX TWO: EVALUATION PLAN

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Please see the New Zealand Aid Website:

[www.AID.Govt.NZ](http://www.AID.Govt.NZ)

# APPENDIX THREE: ACCENT/VICLINK SUBMISSION

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## **Suggestions regarding Phase IV of the ELTO Programme 17.2.2014**

**To: Andrew Kibblewhite**

**From: Accent Learning, VUW, NMIT and EIT**

- A. Retain existing model with a cohort of 48 (five ASEAN countries with even numbers of each)
- B. Strengthen selection criteria
- C. Retain IELTS test for selection but use internal tests for the final assessment
- D. Ideas for growth
- E. Suggestions regarding ELTSO
- F. Build on the strategic value of ELTO and ELTSO

A. Retain existing model with a cohort of 48 (five ASEAN<sup>5</sup> countries with close to even numbers of each)

The existing model works:

- previous themes and the resulting mix of ministries have worked well
- 48 is a workable number - a larger overall cohort would not be a manageable community.
- 9-10 from each country gives a good level of interaction within each country group.
- The workplace component of workshops and small group visits to relevant ministries that was introduced in Phase III works well – very highly rated – and should continue.

With a rotation of themes, the existing model appears sustainable both in terms of the participating countries and the stakeholders here.

B. Strengthen selection criteria and pre-arrival briefing and support

The minimum proficiency requirement of an overall IELTS band 4.5 should be strengthened, possibly by specifying that participants have no skill band lower than 4 (this would be more stringent than the current entry criteria – for example, on Intake 37, eleven students had at least one band score below 4, most commonly for listening, even though they had an overall score of 4.5).

However, such a change would help to ensure that candidates receive the optimum benefit from the programme, and do not inadvertently slow down the progress of others. This is also very important to enable trainees to settle more easily into New Zealand and avoid extreme stress and culture shock. The experience of the regional institute which teaches the lower proficiency students is that they frequently

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<sup>5</sup> The inclusion of Mongolia should still be considered, given the contribution the Mongolian participants have consistently made to the programme.

have difficulty with basic communication, which can lead to problems for their homestay families. Their view is that such students ideally need longer than the current seven weeks to prepare them for the Part Two programme in Wellington. It should be considered what further preparation these participants can do before coming to New Zealand in order to help them adapt more quickly to life and study when they arrive.

It may need to be emphasised to participating countries that only candidates with a solid prior foundation in English and a proven record of successfully completed tertiary study can expect to participate successfully in an intensive, immersion-based programme like ELTO.

Age is also an important factor to consider in selection. Younger participants may be more open to adopting strategies learned from the course, and are able to apply and build on their learning over a longer period. Junior officials (under 26 years) could be targeted for some intakes.

Pre-arrival briefings in all participating countries need to incorporate the best features of those currently delivered to ensure that participants know before they depart what kind of programme ELTO is (the content, expectations and goals), where they are coming to, and how best to prepare themselves. Intensive contact with recent alumni plays a critical role in this. A specific pre-arrival page on the website might also help to support the pre-arrival process.

Pre-arrival academic preparation could be improved by greater coordination between the staff providing it in-country and the ELTO academic coordinators in New Zealand.

### C. Retain IELTS test for selection but use internal tests for the final assessment

- The final IELTS test narrows the focus of the course, and displaces some activities which would be more relevant and useful to the participants. This applies to assessment in general – ELTO is a heavily assessed programme.
- Internal measures of progress exist as an alternative basis for reporting progress, and are used for ELTSO and ELTO Africa, as well as the English Proficiency Programme (EPP) at Victoria University.
- The cost of the IELTS test is now \$385 per candidate.
- The test typically understates student progress because of high initial speaking and writing scores for some candidates.
- Assessment of reading is not reliable in relation to our cohort (due partly to variations in test difficulty, and partly to the threshold of vocabulary required to understand even the easiest texts). This is different from the listening test, which is more graduated in terms of difficulty.

On the other hand:

- IELTS provides an external and internationally recognised measure of achievement and progress.

- It is valued by some, if not all, participants as a summative test, particularly those who want to go on to further study. It could be desirable to retain it as an option for these students. Alternatively, these students could be encouraged or enabled to do the test on their return home.

The removal of IELTS would allow the writing component of the programme to focus more on professional purposes, for example, on interpreting data and not just describing it (as required by IELTS), and using some of the time spent on the wide range of different IELTS essay types for a greater range of professional correspondence tasks instead.

More time would be available for activities relating to the topic of development, which is currently constrained by the competing focus on IELTS. There would also be time for additional interactions, trips and visits relating to the course theme and workplace components.

#### D. Ideas for growth

The current programme with the cohort of 48 is largely a stand-alone programme. Numerous participants go on to do further study in a wide range of countries, but those returning to New Zealand for postgraduate studies are a relatively small group. In addition, although higher proficiency candidates have always benefited greatly from the opportunities offered by the ELTO programme, the current entry range virtually excludes them. There are several additions which might address these issues. In considering additions and alternatives to the current model, it is important to recognise what will be needed to make them sustainable, i.e. sufficient candidates who meet the course requirements and sufficient demand for the type of course being offered.

- Deliver niche ELTO language training courses for particular specialty groups which run concurrently but separate from the cohort of 48 and cater for higher proficiency candidates.

Possible themes to include:

- education e.g. early childhood, special education or vocational and adult education
- agriculture – e.g. horticulture, water management, veterinary, biosecurity, fisheries, forestry
- transport, communication, tourism
- minority groups (preserving culture, language rights, positive discrimination)
- community-based development, social services (including aged care)
- health
- legal/diplomatic, security, customs

These additional training courses would adapt the current ELTO programme model:



- Candidates would need to have higher language ability, already be in positions of authority (though not as high as ELTSO) and ideally drawn from only one or two relevant ministries to ensure the specialist focus.
- Intake size of 16
- Three months' duration with first part at Regional Institutes (EIT and NMIT) and in homestays
- (NB: This suggested duration represents a trade-off between what might be ideal from a language learning point of view, and what employers would accept.)
- Strong emphasis on observing practice, possibly beyond Napier, Nelson and Wellington, depending on theme and needs
- IELTS used for selection but internal assessment used to measure progress.

Other ways of building on the success of the existing model could include:

- Providing a preparatory course for strong candidates for New Zealand development scholarships who have a minimum of IELTS band 6. This could potentially be provided by a New Zealand teacher working in-country.
- Providing English language training for key personnel involved in New Zealand development projects in Southeast Asia, at an early point in the project cycle.
- Building on existing government to government links with New Zealand ministries.  
(For example, we have just learnt that NZQA is currently assisting and supporting Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam to develop an ASEAN qualifications reference framework).

#### E. Suggestions regarding ELTSO

- Retain the 16 – 17 officials per intake (mainly because increased numbers would make matching with counterparts much more difficult and may put too many demands on NZ government officials).
- Balance numbers of officials from each country as much as possible.
- Aim for 50/50 gender balance.
- Make adequate English essential in the selection process.
- Select officials from similar ministries across country groups. (This would create more opportunities to share expertise and focus themes and visits, such as Finance, Tax, Education, Foreign Affairs or Primary Industries). This not exactly a 'theme' but a clustering of ministries.

#### F. Build on the strategic value of ELTO and ELTSO

- Provide post-course follow-up to measure the effectiveness of the programmes

Apart from informal contact after courses finish, and the two monitoring trips conducted to date, there is no structured way of measuring the long term effectiveness of the programmes. This could be addressed in a number of ways:

- Regular questionnaires on the use of English at work and usefulness of the programme (this could be included as a final evaluation requirement of each intake). Systematic research into long-term benefits would be valuable for all stakeholders, and strengthen alumni links in the process.
- Monitoring visits (one per phase) to be continued.
  
- Provide post-course language support
  - English language refresher courses in ASEAN region tailored to specific events and needs. Duration of about 2 weeks (could be combined with monitoring trips).
  
- Maintain and build alumni links to New Zealand through events and activities
  - more in-country events e.g. around trade visits, diplomatic events
  - regional alumni events (making contact with peers from the same intake but also other intakes)
  - regional alumni seminars on particular themes, to strengthen ties among similar ministries across countries
  - coordinated visits to ELTO countries by NZ officials from relevant departments (e.g. MPI, Education) to facilitate exchange of knowledge
  
- Build awareness of New Zealand activity in the region
  - Link alumni to New Zealand Aid Programme work in the region, e.g. by organising a meeting of New Zealand Aid Programme providers with each intake while in New Zealand
  - With NZTE, introduce alumni to NZ companies interested in business in the relevant country.

## APPENDIX FOUR: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<u>New Zealand</u>	
Development Programme Manager Mekong	MFAT
Development Programme Manager SEA	MFAT
Deputy Director, Asia	MFAT
Development Programme Officer	MFAT
ELTO Manager	Accent Learning
Finance Manager	VicLink
Academic Coordinator ELTO, ELI	Victoria University
Teacher ELTO	Eastern Institute of Technology
Teacher ELTO	Nelson-Melbourne Institute of Technology
<u>Thailand</u>	
First Secretary, Development	NZ Embassy (MFAT)
Development Administrator (ELTO)	NZ Embassy (MFAT)
Development Co-ordinator (ELTO)	NZ Embassy (MFAT)
<u>Vietnam</u>	
First Secretary, Development	NZ Embassy (MFAT)
Development Programme Coordinator	NZ Embassy (MFAT)
NZ Ambassador	NZ Embassy (MFAT)
Director General (ELTSO)	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Deputy Director General	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Deputy Director General	International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Justice
	Ministry of Industry and Trade
Expert, Foreign Economic Relations Department	Ministry of Planning and Investment
ELT(S)O 17 Participants	Various
<u>Cambodia</u>	
Personnel Department??	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
Director General for Technical Affairs	Ministry of Rural Development
Deputy Director of	Department of Personnel and HRD Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
Chief of Human Resource Department	Department of Personnel and HRD Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
Officer of Human Resource Development (also ELTO)	Department of Personnel and HRD Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
Country Director	IDP Education (Cambodia)
Deputy Director General of Cultural Heritage (ELTSO)	Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts
ELT(S)O 13 Participants	Various
<u>Lao PDR</u>	
Director of Division	Southeast Asia Division Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Deputy Director	Southeast Asia Division Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Deputy Director, HRD Department,	Ministry of Lao Women's Union
Vice Minister	Ministry of Industry and Commerce
NZAS/ELTO Program Co-ordinator	Vientiane College
Director	Vientiane College
ELT(S)O 10 Participants	Various
<u>Myanmar</u>	
Director of Foreign Economic Relations Department	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development
Director General of Foreign Economic Relations Department	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development
Deputy Director of Foreign Economic Relations Department	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development
Deputy Director of Foreign Economic Relations Department	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development
General Manager	Ministry of Hotel and Tourism
New Zealand Attache'	MFAT
Director	British Council
Contracts Manager	British Council
ELT(S)O 20 Participants	Various
<u>Timor-Leste</u>	
National Director Training and Development	Civil Service Commission
Secretary General	MFAC
General Director	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
Director General	Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources
Ambassador	NZ Embassy (MFAT)
First Secretary – Development	NZ Embassy (MFAT)
Development Co-ordinator	NZ Embassy (MFAT)
Principal	LELI
ELT(S)O 14 Participants	Various

# APPENDIX FIVE: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ELTO Phase 1 Review 2002

Report on the Review of New Zealand Aid Programme Engagements in Human Resource Development in the Greater Mekong Sub-region of South East Asia 2007

ELTO Phase III Design Document

Report on Phase III Mid-term Monitoring Visit to Cambodia, Lao and Viet Nam

ELTO Phase III Curriculum Overview

ELTSO Results Diagram

ELTO end-of-course reports, especially for Phase III

New Zealand's ASEAN Partnership: One Pathway to Ten Nations, including the NZ Inc ASEAN Strategy Public 2013 on p.5

International Development Policy Statement: Supporting Sustainable Economic Development

New Zealand Aid Programme Strategic Plan 2012-2015

New Zealand Aid Programme Sector Priorities 2012-2015

ASEAN Regional Results Framework 2013

Mekong Programme Strategic and Results Framework 2013-2015

2009 Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Strategic Framework and IAI Work Plan 2 (2009-2015)

Alumni Contacts List Phase III