NEW ZEALAND

MFAT Management Response to E-learning for Science in the Pacific Programme (PeP)

Evaluation Report Recommendation	MFAT Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)
Evaluation Recommendations for PeP phase 1 extension period	
1. **Teachers engaging in Communities of Practice:** Maintain the focus on strengthening teacher Communities Of Practices (COPs) and reassess strategies for teacher engagement and support by end of PeP to inform Phase II design. Pacific e-learning Programme (PeP) is aware that teachers need and value support to develop their skills in Teacher Pedagogy And Content Knowledge (TPACK) and has provided a wide range of support to reach teachers, tailored to needs of schools in different contexts. However, attendance is low with possible barriers including teachers' limited time, connectivity issues and low awareness of the COP. Other areas to assess include incentives for participation in COPs and teacher support offered through PeP more broadly, such as formal recognition of participation and learning. Opportunities to engage teachers more actively in shaping e-learning may also generate more engagement, as demonstrated by other e-learning programmes such as PNG-Aus Partnership Secondary Schools Initiative (PASS). (See annex 1).	**Agree.** This recommendation is being addressed by the programme and will be assessed through regular monthly meetings with the programme team and through the next steering committee meeting in November 2023.
2. **Teachers confidently using e-learning resources for teaching and learning:** There is a perception among stakeholders that PeP materials may not fully align to national curricula, which undermines teacher confidence in relying on PeP materials despite PeP efforts from the outset, including consultation with Ministries and curriculum divisions to ensure alignment. PeP however does not cover every subject in the science curriculum, so teachers need to use both PeP and traditional resources to ensure full coverage for students. PeP is taking steps to clarify the alignment in each country via changes to the app and processes for ongoing engagement with relevant department staff. A public-facing event such as an official launch would also build visibility and awareness around the level of alignment.	**Agree.** This recommendation is being addressed by the programme and will be assessed through regular monthly meetings with the programme team and through the next steering committee meeting in November 2023.

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3. **Regional quality assurance mechanism (formerly Regional Repository):** Facilitate a reflection process between USP, Catalpa and MFAT by end 2023 to assess progress, results and future potential at end 2023 as this work has only recently started. In parallel, MFAT should review the strategic contribution of this component to PeP, to clarify its contribution to the theory of change and overall PeP outcomes.	**Partially Agree.** The e-learning for Science programme is responsible for undertaking a completion report of the Phase 1 programme by March 2024. MFAT will consider the strategic contribution of this component in the context of considering future options and based on our current investments in quality assurance through our support to the SPC-Education Quality and Assessment Programme by April 2024.
4. **Assess Cook Islands progress, outcomes and engagement by end 2023**, given long delays at start-up and lack of progress to date. Country engagement will be a criteria for taking PeP forward in countries in Phase II.	**Agree** – An initial assessment has been completed by the programme. Recommended options will be considered by MFAT and a decision made on which option to pursue by September 2023.
5. **Theory of change and PeP MERL framework:** Update outputs to reflect the changes to the Regional Repository output, and dependent outcomes, and clarify that COPs are for teachers, not Fellows. Track and report on device and equipment redundancy, if possible by using the systems introduced by PeP. **Strengthen metrics around use of Pacific Learn e-learning resources as this is a key metric for PeP success. Understanding and addressing reasons why teachers may not or may not use the app (or any platform) are essential for impact and outcomes.** **Disaggregate and compare data for remote and connected schools;** and define 'remote' for PeP to inform a better understanding of PeP's achievements in inclusion, by extending learning to under-served schools. Strengthen GEDSI analysis in reporting.	**Agree** – This recommendation is being addressed by the programme and will be assessed through regular monthly meetings with the programme team and through the next steering committee meeting in November 2023.
Evaluation Recommendations for MFAT: Phase II design and strategy	
PeP Phase II Design	

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6. **Undertake a consultative co-design process to identify the best option for transitioning and scaling PeP for Phase II:** The evaluation identified three broad options for PeP Phase II, which need to be explored and tested through a standalone co-design exercise. **As noted above, there are different risks, opportunities and costs associated with each option, in close consultation with relevant ICT, e-learning and pedagogy specialists from national education ministries, and across MFAT teams including ICT, inclusion and education.** *The evaluation identified additional information needed for decision-making, which should be available and used in the design process.*	**Partially Agree.** MFAT may choose to commission a co-design process after examining all its available options in the final quarter of 2023.
7. **ICT Systems Strengthening:** In consultation with national counterparts, articulate PeP's strategy for ICT systems strengthening for each country, clarifying scope and ambition for this outcome area. **Clarify the extent to which PeP will go beyond strengthening systems for implementation of PeP and Pacific Learn app and how this maps against broader national ICT policies and plans, and identify ways to strengthen coordination and learning across other ICT development projects underway in the different countries.** This will assist in clarifying assumptions, dependencies and expectations relevant for Phase II planning on ICT systems strengthening support. This is linked to the evaluation's assessment that the PeP theory of change does not reflect a clear definition of e-learning or the role of the Pacific Learn app as PeP's identified tool for e-learning. ICT strengthening approaches assisted in ensuring quality, effectiveness and sustainability of the PeP using Pacific Learn, and went further to provide complementary tailored support based on ICT self-assessments and at Ministry request. *To strengthen effectiveness, this strategy should be articulated more clearly so that successes can be captured, shared and replicated. End of programme outcomes should be adjusted to clarify the scope and targets, so that the PeP can fit with and align to Ministries' broader plans for ICT-enabled learning, including lobbying for or coordinating with complementary support where needed.*	**Partially Agree** – MFAT is developing a set of options to inform the scope and delivery approach it will take. To be completed by Quarter 3 of FY2023-2024 and will take this recommendation into account.

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8. **Teaching science more effectively:** Materials developed by PeP are open-source and suitable for use with different platforms that countries are using or starting to use. **MFAT should commission an independent cost-benefit assessment engaging an economist and ICT education specialist to work with Ministries and Catalpa to compare a range of e-learning platforms and options, to develop an options paper to assist Ministries and PeP Phase II to select the best option for their context.** *Usability, appropriateness for local context, data and server costs, maintenance, technical expertise, opportunity cost of changing away from the current model, local capabilities, and popularity of the app are all factors to consider.*	**Partially Agree** – The programme is expected to evaluate the public value and utility of tools in context under the current phase. MFAT may commission a comparative cost-benefit assessment if deemed necessary as part of its next phase of support tentatively due to commence in FY2024-25.
9. **Teachers have enhanced TPACK for science:** Assess the feasibility of aligning PeP TPACK activities with national teacher training processes and certifications to incentivise teachers to use and engage with materials. Strengthen the quality of the micro-courses for teachers.	**Partially Agree** – MFAT will ensure that future teacher capability investments consider early integration and alignment with national teacher processes, including consideration for appropriate incentives and recognition on non-formal learning. The programme currently focuses on facilitating & embedding greater integration of Teacher Pedagogy and Content Knowledge (TPACK) activities and certification into national systems.
10. **Gender equality, disability and social inclusion:** Strengthen visibility for PeP's approach to and commitment to GEDSI, noting that there are strong foundations in the design and support for gender equality and disability inclusion in the partner countries. Explore the opportunities to use PeP more actively to strengthen inclusion, including reaching children with a disability, remote schools, and children of all genders. Undertake a PeP GEDSI analysis, consulting with affected groups, to identify inclusive strategies and targets that will strengthen GEDSI in PeP for Phase II.	**Agree** – Any e-learning option for consideration by MFAT will ensure an inclusive development approach is taken throughout the project cycle, including mainstreaming GEDSI during the design to strengthen inclusion of education investments. This applies to initiatives that utilise technology as a tool for advancing teaching and learning outcomes.

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11. **Theory of change and PeP MERL framework:** Review the theory of change and MERL framework to clarify PeP's scope in terms of e-learning and ICT systems strengthening, explicitly reflecting the PeP's specific model for e-learning and role of the Pacific Learn app in outputs, outcomes and indicators. **In Phase II strengthen assessment and reporting on teacher learning outcomes through the app to inform improvements to quality of materials and strategic decisions about the future of the TPACK component of PeP.** **Revisit the feasibility of tracking changes in student performance in national science assessments.**	**Agree –** This will be considered when considering options for future investment.
Strategy and policy direction	
Internal facing – moving ahead	
12. **MFAT should work to build on its position as an early supporter of e-learning innovation and develop a clear policy position related to the distinct but related fields of digital inclusion in education and e-learning in Pacific Island Countries, which captures the significance of digital inclusion and e-learning for education now and in the coming years.** This research should be used to strengthen awareness and support planning in consultations across involved departments, including but not limited to the education, inclusion and DEVECO teams and Posts. **MFAT should use this to clarify objective, definitions and overarching goals related to e-learning and digital inclusion.**	**Partially Agree –** MFAT may commission research as proposed in this recommendation to further inform its position on digital exclusion and e-learning in Pacific Island Countries and what it means for its future investments in technology as a tool for accelerating learning outcomes by FY2024-2025.
13. **MFAT should use the experience of PeP to start discussions within the department to promote awareness of e-learning as an essential tool for 21st century education** across sectors within MFAT.	**Partially Agree –** This work is evolving and is well recognised as an essential tool for the 21st century.

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14. **The Education team should consult with Posts to identify a roadmap and support needed to transition e-learning into national programming**. This will look different in each country but is likely to require ongoing technical support through expertise embedded within education ministries.	**Agree** - This may be considered as part of a planned internal review of MFAT's education investments to inform future direction. Transitioning e-learning into national programming will only be one element under consideration.
15. **Undertake internal discussions to explore how best to separate regional and national aspects of PeP for Phase II:** to embed applied elements within countries (national/bilateral programming); and maximise the contribution of regional support for coordination and cross-learning between countries (regional support). This could include leading efforts to improve coordination of support from donor partners across different ICT projects.	**Agree –** This will be considered as part of a planned internal discussions to inform the future direction of education investments for the next triennium. As above
External facing – enabling environment for sustainability and impact	
16. **MFAT Education team should tailor and use the above position paper to research and promote e-learning, digital inclusion and PeP outcomes at high levels within Education Ministries and MFAT to build understanding** and support dialogue on the potential for ICT for different country contexts, and to strengthen commitment to progressing PeP and digital learning initiatives	**Agree** - This will be considered as part of a planned internal discussions to inform the future direction of education investments for the next triennium. (As above)
17. Where countries are **undertaking strategic education planning, actively engage to integrate e-learning for digital inclusion within national education strategies**, noting both that e-learning is a tool to strengthen basic education and the risks posed by digital exclusion in the 21st Century in terms of both human and economic development.	**Agree** - This will be considered as part of a planned internal discussions to inform the future direction of education investments for the next triennium. (As above)

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