EQAP
Educational Quality and Assessment Programme

Pacific Community
Communauté du Pacifique

# EQAP Business Plan 2019-2022

ACER

NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE
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## Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ACER | Australian Council for Educational Research |
| ADB | Asian Development Bank |
| APTC | Australia-Pacific Technical College |
| CRGA | Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations |
| DFAT | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia) |
| EMIS | Education Management Information Systems |
| EQAP | Educational Quality Assessment Programme |
| IT | Information Technology |
| MDG | Millenium Development Goal |
| MFAT | Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand) |
| MoE | PICT Ministry/ies of Education |
| NQAA | PICT National Quality Assurance Agency |
| PaBER | Pacific Benchmarking for Education Results |
| PacREF | Pacific Regional Education Framework |
| PBEQ | Pacific Board for Education Quality |
| PICT | Pacific Island Countries and Territories |
| PIFS | Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat |
| PILNA | Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SPC | Pacific Community |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund |
| USP | University of the South Pacific |

# Section A: Key messages

The opportunity

**The future successful development of the Pacific Islands and Territories (PICTs) depends on quality education.** Quality education opens doors for Pacific Islanders to better employment, income, health, more active citizenship and poverty reduction. This in turn benefits future generations. For example, individuals earn 10% more for each additional year of schooling and educated women have fewer, but healthier, children.

The challenge

**The challenge for the Pacific is to translate the success in improving education access into improvements in education quality**. Most PICTs provide good access to basic primary education, with many countries nearing the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target of 100% primary enrolments. Since 2000 most primary-aged students are enrolled in school – across the Pacific, net primary school enrolment rates average 83%.[1] More students are also participating in secondary education and other forms of further education.

**The factors holding back education quality in the Pacific are complex but are increasingly being understood.** Constraints include: lack of policy coordination; low capacity and accountability of teachers and education managers for delivering quality education; and weak or limited data to understand education status. Several studies[2] point toward the following factors as key: inconsistent teacher professional development, monitoring and support; learning assessments not used well to inform teacher practice; lack of teaching materials due to inefficient procurement and distribution systems; inconsistent curriculum implementation; limited capacity amongst school leaders; and weaknesses in education management information systems.

**Improving education quality requires leveraging potential positive drivers at country and regional levels**. A major positive driver is the high community and political support for quality education at the country level. To build on this there is an opportunity to better align country priorities with regional priorities. This creates economies of scale that will open learning pathways and opportunities for skills development that no one Pacific country can provide on its own but are essential to educate the workers that the Pacific Islands requires for future development.

EQAP's contribution

The Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) leads The Pacific Community's (SPC) efforts to **improve the quality of education in Pacific Island countries and territories** contributing to the achievement of SPC's vision, mission and development goals,[3] and PICT's education goals.

**EQAP fulfils a unique and important role as a regional public good, supporting the quality of regional and national education in the Pacific**. EQAP provides a dual role – supporting PICTs' efforts to strengthen their education systems while also providing services for regional and national education systems when individual countries do not, and in some cases may never, have the necessary systems, processes and capabilities.

**EQAP focuses on supporting the Pacific region and PICTs to achieve three key and inter-related education quality outcomes** related to education policy, planning and management; the assessments of students, teachers and schools; and secondary and post-secondary qualifications. To meet SPC's mission and needs of PICTs, EQAP also continuously strengthens its own knowledge and expertise, an essential ingredient to enable EQAP to fulfil its mandate and realise the three education quality outcomes.

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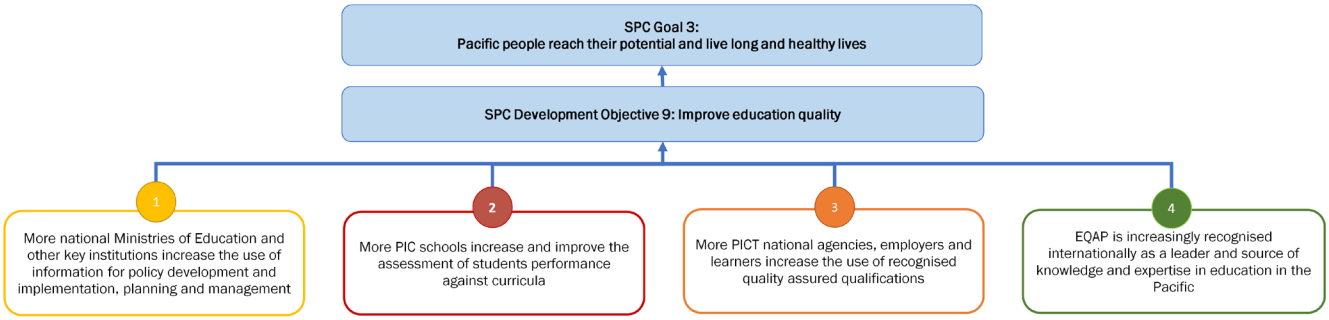
[1] EQAP (2018). Status of Education Report Infographic. SPC: Suva.

[2] EQAP (2016). Pacific Benchmarking for Education Results (PaBER) A Synthesis Report. Suva, SPC. Accessed: 2 November 2018

[3] SPC is planning to update its multi-year strategy in 2020. Once this work is completed, EQAP will review the alignment of its Business Plan to the new strategy.




**EQAP fosters improvements in education quality across the region while also supporting national interests and differences. It provides a wide array of education quality services to PICTs although may only work with a small number of countries on specific issues in any given year**. EQAP is unique in that it is both a provider of regional education quality services, particularly for the smaller PICTs, and a capacity developer of national individual and organisational education quality services.

**EQAP is a key organisation for delivering on the ambition of the Pacific Regional Education Framework** (PacREF). The PacREF was launched by Pacific Island's Forum of Education Ministers in 2018 and aims to bring strong alignment and a clearer focus for regional education policy, and deliver sustainable, affordable and high-quality education goods and services that are accessible to all Pacific Island countries. EQAP's role and contributions are integrated into the PacREF implementation to increase the sustainability of regional reforms.

**EQAP works with key strategic partners to achieve positive outcomes for Pacific Islanders.** At a national level, EQAP's key partners are the Ministries of Education. At a regional level, key partners are other SPC divisions, the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, the Australian Council for Educational Research which supports EQAP on technical issues, and PacREF implementation partners – Australia-Pacific Technical College (APTC), University of the South Pacific, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

# Section B: The importance of quality education

## B.1 Introduction and background

**The future successful development of the Pacific Islands depends on quality education.** Quality education opens doors for Pacific Islanders to better employment, income, health, more active citizenship and poverty reduction. This in turn benefits future generations. For example, individuals earn 10% more for each additional year of schooling and educated women have fewer, but healthier, children[4].

The importance of quality education is recognised in the **Pacific Community's Development Goal 9**: improve quality education and in **Sustainable Development Goal 4:** ensure inclusive equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

**This EQAP Business Plan recognises that quality education comprises three interrelated dimensions**:–teaching resources (human and material), teaching practices and learning outcomes for individuals and communities to prosper.[5] These dimensions are also reflected in the recently developed Pacific Regional Education Framework, Moving Towards Education 2030" (PacREF), which prioritises four policy areas; 1) quality and relevance, 2) learning pathways, 3) student outcomes and wellbeing, and 4) teacher professionalism.

**This Business Plan also reflects current international thinking on how to address what the World Bank has termed a global 'learning crisis'**. The World Bank's 2018 Development Report focus on learning signals the need for a renewed focus on addressing the challenges for quality education. The World Bank proposes three complementary strategies, all of which have relevance for EQAP:

1. Assess learning—to make it a serious goal. Measure and track learning better; use the results to guide action.
2. Act on evidence—to make schools work for all learners. Use evidence to guide innovation and practice.
3. Align actors—to make the whole system work for learning. Tackle the technical and political barriers to learning at scale.

## B.2 The status of education quality in the Pacific

**The Pacific faces significant physical as well as social, economic and political challenges**. The Pacific Community membership consists of 26 countries and territories,[6] many of which are small, micro-states[7], spread across a vast ocean territory equivalent in size to 15% of the world's surface area. EQAP supports 15 of these Island Pacific countries, with a combined population of 11 million (n.b. Papua New Guinea provides 8.4 million of this population)[8].

**Across the Pacific, economic opportunities and jobs, particularly for young people are limited**. The main sources of employment include traditional sectors of agriculture and fishing, and the growing services sector, particularly tourism, and mining. In Polynesian/Micronesian Islands, many youth also migrate to neighbouring developed countries to find employment. This opportunity is less available to youth in the Melanesian Islands, which have some of the fastest growing populations of young people in the world. Education in these countries is not currently providing young people with the skills and learning necessary for the future economic growth of the region.

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[4] UNESCO (2010). Education counts: towards the Millennium Development Goals. Accessed: 20 November 2018

[5] UNESCO (2018). *Quality of Education*. Accessed: 20 November 2018; Appropriate infrastructure facilitates the use of these dimensions, although EQAP does not support infrastructure development or maintenance.

[6] Includes Australia, France, New Zealand and United States of America

[7] Six have populations with less than 20,000 people. UNESCO (2015). Pacific Education for All 2015 Review. Apia, UNESCO. Accessed: 19 November 2018

[8] SPC (2018) Pocket Statistical Summary. Accessed 27 November 2018.

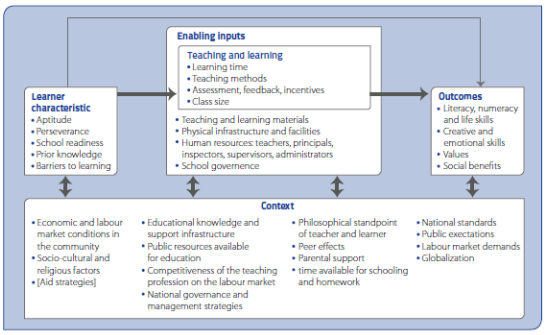
**The challenge for the Pacific is to translate the success in improving education access into improvements in education quality.** Most PICTs provide good access to basic primary education, with many countries nearing the 2015 MDG target of 100% primary enrolments. Since 2000 most primary-aged students are enrolled in school – across the Pacific, net primary school enrolment rates average 83%.[9] More students are also participating in secondary education and other forms of further education, although too few are completing their education.

**Improving education quality, as demonstrated by improved learning outcomes for students, has proved difficult.** For example, between 2012 and 2015, improvements in numeracy and literacy levels among students in Years 4 and 6 were highly variable across the Pacific. Only 6 of the 15 countries showed improvements in literacy, with girls achieving higher levels of proficiency in numeracy and literacy than boys[10]. It is important to note that these challenges in the Pacific reflects education challenges globally: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) estimates six out of ten children and adolescents are not achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics[11].

**The factors holding back education quality in the Pacific are complex but are increasingly being understood.** Constraints include: lack of policy coordination; low capacity and accountability of teachers and education managers for delivering quality education; and weak or limited data to understand education status. Several studies[12] point toward the following factors as key: inadequate pre-service teacher training, inconsistent teacher professional development, monitoring and support; learning assessments not used well to inform teacher practice; lack of teaching materials due to inefficient procurement and distribution systems; inconsistent curriculum implementation; limited capacity amongst school leaders; and weaknesses in education management information systems.

**Improving education quality requires leveraging potential positive drivers at country and regional levels.** A major positive driver is the high community and political support for quality education at the country level. To build on this there is an opportunity to better align country priorities with regional priorities and promote increased PICT cooperation. This creates economies of scale that will open learning pathways and opportunities for skills development that no one Pacific country can provide on their own but are essential to educate the workers that the Island Pacific requires for future development.

*Diagram 1: Education quality in the Pacific[13]*




[9] EQAP (2018). Status of Education Report Infographic. SPC: Suva.

[10] EQAP (2015). 2015 Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment. Suva, SPC. Accessed: 1 November 2018

[11] UIS (2017). More Than One-Half of Children and Adolescents Are Not Learning Worldwide (Fact Sheet No. 46 September 2017 UIS/FS/2017/ED/46). Montreal, UNESCO. Accessed: 2 November 2018

[12] EQAP (2016). Pacific Benchmarking for Education Results (PaBER) A Synthesis Report. Suva, SPC. Accessed: 2 November 2018

[13] UNESCO (2005). EFA Global Monitoring Report. Accessed: 1 November 2018

# Section C: EQAP – SPC's educational quality and assessment programme

## C.1 Objectives

The Educational Quality and Assessment Programme leads SPC's efforts to **improve the quality of education in Pacific Island countries and territories** contributing to the achievement of SPC's vision, mission and development goals.[14]

**SPC Mission**

We work for the well-being of Pacific people through the effective and innovative application of science and knowledge, guided by a deep understanding of Pacific Island contexts and cultures.

**SPC Vision**

Our Pacific vision is for a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy and productive lives. This is a shared vision for the Pacific under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

**EQAP is recognised by the Pacific Islands Forum**, an inter-governmental organisation that aims to enhance cooperation between countries and territories of the Pacific Ocean, and Pacific Heads of Education Systems and national Ministries of Education, as the Pacific-based, owned and run-agency for education quality. **EQAP fulfils a unique and important role as a regional public good, supporting the quality of regional and national education in the Pacific**. EQAP provides a dual role – supporting PICTs' efforts to strengthen their education systems while also providing services for regional and national education systems when individual countries do not, and may never, have the necessary systems, processes and capabilities. Accreditation and quality assurances services are an example – Only four out of 22 PICTs have national qualification and accreditation agencies. EQAP navigates the complex political economy of education reform across the Pacific, aiming to stimulate reform through evidence and policy influence and responding to Members' requests for support.

EQAP has traditionally supported eight countries – Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu while extending project-based support to additional countries through specific initiatives, the Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) and Pacific Benchmarking for Education Results (PaBER). In 2010, EQAP integrated into SPC from its previous stand-alone structure as SPBEA. The name 'EQAP' was adopted in 2015. In 2017, responsibility for managing Education Management Information System activities transferred from SPC's Statistics for Development Division to EQAP. Since mid-2018, DFAT and MFAT provided programmatic regional funding rather than project-based funding to EQAP. EQAP is a key implementing partner for the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) that includes all 16 PIFS member countries.

[14] SPC is planning to update its multi-year strategy in 2020. Once this work is completed, EQAP will review the alignment of its Business Plan to the new strategy.

**EQAP's work is highly valued by PICTs**

Eighty percent of the national respondents to SPC's 2018 Partnership Survey who worked most closely with SPC on education issues, reported EQAP had made a very important or extremely important contribution to progress in their countries. EQAP's most important contributions included the provision of information and knowledge such as reports, data or mapping; provision of capacity building through training and support for staff; and provision of technical advice. Where respondents reported successful EQAP activities, respondents found EQAP's collaborative and participatory approach helped to foster trust, and shared norms and values among participants, which in turn helped the effectiveness of the work.

EQAP is governed by the Pacific Board for Educational Quality, a specially mandated subcommittee of the SPC Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA). CRGA sets the strategic direction for SPC and EQAP. As a programme within SPC, EQAP also provides a clear and sustained focal point for Ministries of Education seeking policy and technical support. This distinguishes EQAP from many other avenues of support, such as short-term bilateral development programmes.

**EQAP focuses on three key inter-related education quality outcomes** related to education policy, planning and management; the assessments of students, teachers and schools; and currently secondary[15] and post-secondary qualifications. To meet SPC's mission and needs of PICTs, EQAP also continuously strengthens its own knowledge and expertise, an essential ingredient to enable EQAP to fulfil its mandate and realise the three education quality outcomes.

*Diagram 2: EQAP's contribution to SPC development objectives and goals*

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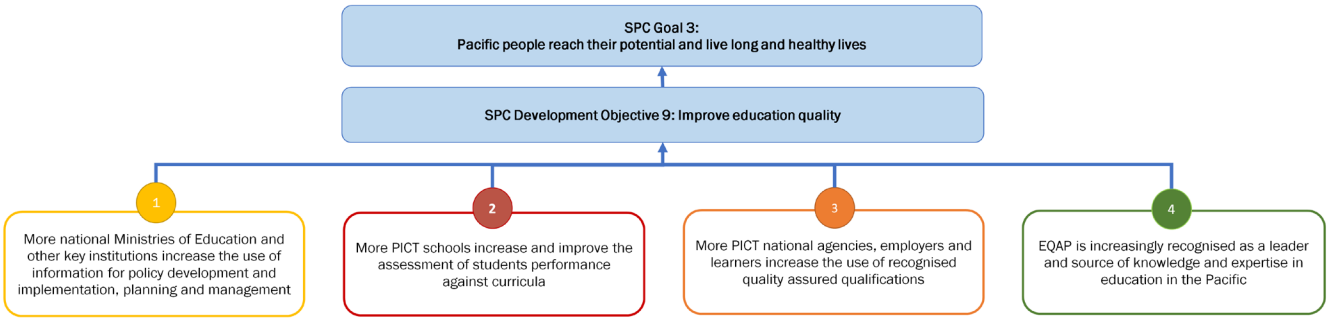



## C.2 EQAP's approach

### C.2.1 Supporting regional and national education quality

**EQAP fosters improvements in education quality across the region while also supporting national interests and differences**. EQAP is unique in that it is both a provider of regional education quality services and a capacity developer of national education quality services. This dual role was developed in response to the challenges of working with diverse and geographically dispersed PICTs. Some PICTs do not have the capacity to provide all education services for students and learners, such as curriculum development and review; while some PICTs value the evidence and analysis that a regional organisation provides, partly because it is seen by policy and decision makers as more impartial and independent. EQAP's support complements established national or regional institutions[16].

**EQAP provides a wide array of education quality services to PICTs although may only work with a small number of countries on specific issues per year**. For instance, EQAP may only support three countries to develop or revise school leader and teacher performance standards over the next four years. The primary demand for EQAP's support comes from Ministries of Education and National Qualification Authorities in individual countries. EQAP receives most requests on an annual basis, though ad-hoc requests are also

[15] EQAP's focus is currently on secondary and post-secondary qualifications rather than ECCE and primary, vocational schools, special education which is supported by other actors, such as UNICEF.

[16] EQAP's support does not compete with, replace or substitute regional and national institutions.

received. EQAP receives more requests than can be responded to, and wherever possible aims to meet the needs of countries with similar requests at the same time, for example through bringing them together for a joint workshop.

**In 2018, EQAP commenced processes to increase consultations with countries around their requests for support.** These processes are aimed to help EQAP better understand country priorities and needs over the medium term (rather than the immediate year ahead) and strengthen relationships. The processes are also to help better manage countries' expectations regarding the level of support EQAP can provide given changes in its mandate and scope in recent years. Much of EQAP's work till 2022 will continue to focus on the eight original countries due to the long-established relationships. However, as a regional organisation, EQAP must remain open and reach out to, new countries with whom it has not worked with extensively before, which brings some challenges.

**EQAP is a key organisation for delivering on the ambition of the PacREF.** The PacREF was launched by Pacific Island's Forum of Education Ministers in 2018 and aims to bring strong alignment and a clearer focus for regional education policy, and deliver sustainable, affordable and high-quality education goods and services that are accessible to all Pacific Island countries. EQAP's role and contributions are integrated into the PacREF implementation to increase the sustainability of regional reforms. PacREF focuses on four policy areas:

1. ensuring the quality and relevance of what is taught
2. continuous development to support the teaching profession
3. prioritising student outcomes and wellbeing; and
4. learning pathways that empower all Pacific islanders to equally enjoy the benefits of education without barriers.

EQAP's work contributes to each of these policy areas[17]. EQAP will also coordinate the development and implementation of the PacREF monitoring and evaluation framework.

### C.2.2 Country support relevant to context and need

In supporting countries and territories, EQAP uses different approaches relevant to the needs and interests of regional and national stakeholders. These are:

1. **Developing national individual capacity** – EQAP conducts training (on a country, sub-regional or regional basis) to increase individuals' capabilities - knowledge, skills and confidence. EQAP provides training on a range of technical areas such as curriculum design and review, research design, curriculum and assessments. Individuals with improved capabilities contribute to greater organisational capacity to improve the design and implementation of education policy, planning and services.
2. **Supporting national individual capacity** - This approach usually involves supporting individuals who have attended training and have started to apply their new knowledge and skills to further enhance them and develop more confidence. For instance, EQAP provides support in the preparation and processing of national assessments to ensure implementation is smooth and reaches quality standards.
3. **Supplementing national organisational capacity** – EQAP may support PICTs to develop new initiatives when they do not have enough capacity. This support mostly involves EQAP leading processes to develop products and services with PICT stakeholders' participation, bringing their country knowledge and expertise. For example, EQAP facilitates processes to develop school leader and teacher standards. In a few cases, EQAP may provide greater levels of support in emergency situations when PICTs find they are not able to undertake key processes themselves within the timeframes required.
4. **Providing regional education services** – In some cases, PICTs do not have the specialised technical institutions, systems and skills needed to deliver quality education services. In such cases, EQAP can provide these services. For instance, EQAP can provide qualification accreditation and quality assurance services for countries that do not have a national agency that provides such services. Over the longer-term, EQAP can also facilitate peer-to-peer support where PICTs with NQFs wish to provide services and capacity development support to PICTs without their own accreditation and quality assurance agencies. EQAP provides Form 7 examination services, from providing the curriculum and learning materials

[17] The diagram in **Annex 1** illustrates how EQAP's work links to the PacREF. For the PacREF monitoring and evaluation coordination see Priority Action 4.3.3.

through to conducting the examinations. EQAP also periodically provides research and consultancy services for international organisations such as the World Bank, UNICEF and UNESCO. EQAP inputs include EQAP staff supplemented by external consultants (such as quality assurance and curriculum specialists).

EQAP also encourages PICTs to share their knowledge and work together to find solutions to common education quality challenges.

### C.2.3 Partnering to deliver quality services

EQAP establishes and maintains several key strategic relationships with other organisations to improve the impact of its work.

**The Governments of Australia and New Zealand** have historically provided significant funding for EQAP's work, enabling EQAP to establish and strengthen its regional expertise in areas such as literacy and numeracy assessments, policy reviews, and qualifications and quality assurance. Since 2018, Australia and New Zealand are providing long-term flexible and secure, rather than short-term project-based, funding, enabling EQAP to be more responsive and allocate resources to those areas where there are greater needs and demands.

Upon signing the agreement with DFAT and MFAT, Deputy Director-General of the Pacific Community, Dr Audrey Aumua[18], remarked 'This commitment sets a precedent for regional education collaboration. It provides stability and long-term sustainability in addressing the SPC's education goals and will make a major contribution to regional and national education priorities.'

Australia and New Zealand Governments' joint support to EQAP aims to;

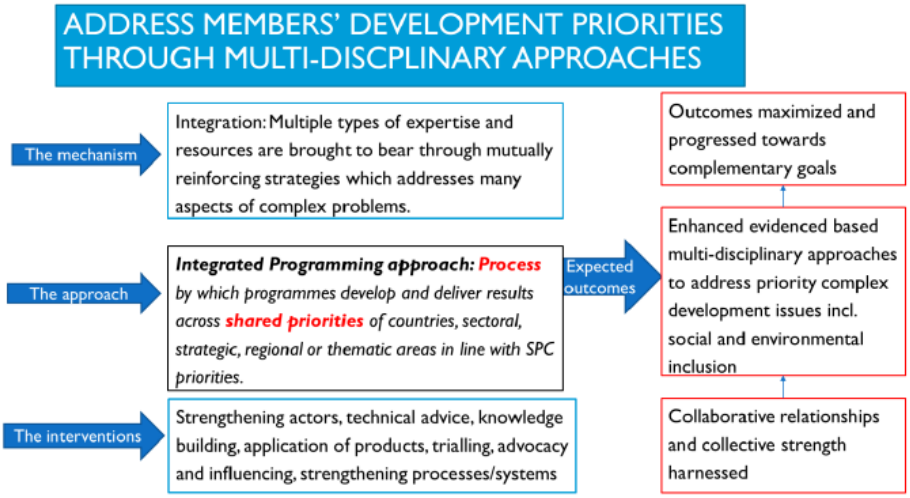
- To strengthen the organisational capacity of EQAP, working effectively with others to improve education quality as part of the regional education architecture;
- To promote and demonstrate effective regionalism, in line with Australia and New Zealand policy direction for deeper engagement in the Pacific and stronger alignment amongst Pacific island nations in international policy positions and commitments;
- To elevate Australia and New Zealand's engagement in policy dialogue in education sector in the Pacific, making education quality a higher policy and political priority, alongside bilateral investments, and reducing aid delivery transaction costs and activities.

**Working with other SPC divisions:** At times, SPC divisions integrate their support, drawing on SPC's collective knowledge and expertise to increase the relevance, quality and impact of SPC's support for PICTs benefit. This is to: 1) ensure there is a clear strategic fit between country and regional priorities and SPC priorities; 2) increase the relevance and quality of SPC's support through fewer more impactful activities within countries. SPC's approach to integrated programming encompasses four components: cross-division collaboration, mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues such as gender and environment; coherent country-programming; and cross-sectoral complementary expertise. For instance, EQAP works in close collaboration with SPC's Statistics Division to establish and enhance education management information systems in member states. In 2018, EQAP is providing technical advice to SPC's regional rights resource team as it develops school curriculum on citizenship. EQAP also worked with the Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems team to develop micro-qualifications for the regional fishing industry.

EQAP will continually seek opportunities to work with other SPC divisions on education issues, either drawing on their technical expertise or to contribute EQAP's education quality expertise to their work.

[18] EQAP (2018). A new partnership to support long term quality education in the Pacific. Accessed: 26 November 2018.

*Diagram 3: SPC's integrated programming*




**The Australian Council for Educational Research**: ACER provides technical support to EQAP's work. Since 2012, ACER has provided high quality short-term technical and capacity support for EQAP, principally relating to the regional literacy and numeracy assessment. A longer-term partnership between EQAP and ACER aims to help provide EQAP with improved access to quality and responsive services, and international recognition and linkages, which in turn contributes to improving EQAP's capability and the services it provides to PICTs. A more established partnership will also see ACER providing support beyond literacy and numeracy assessments.

**PacREF implementation partners – APTC, USP, UNICEF and UNESCO:** The Pacific Regional Education Framework is founded on a partnership of regional organisations - EQAP and the University of the South Pacific, and multilateral educational institutions – UNICEF and UNESCO. While each organisation has its own mandate and role to improve Pacific Islanders' learning, all are committed to regionalism and supporting cooperation among national education systems and regional institutions. Through PacREF, APTC, EQAP, USP, UNICEF and UNESCO coordinate and collaborate to achieve sustainable regional reforms.

### C.2.3 Addressing social inclusion (including gender) and environmental responsibility

Most PICT's are signatories to international and regional commitments related to social inclusion and environmental responsibility. For instance, the Convention on the Rights of the Child requires States to fulfil the progressive right to education for all children, and emphasises equality and equity between male and females at all education levels. The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women prohibits all forms of discrimination against women and girls, which includes access/right to education.

SPC, including EQAP's efforts. supports PICTs to meet their commitments.

In accordance with SPC policy, EQAP undertakes 'Social and Environmental Risks and Impacts Assessments' (SER) for new projects to determine if further assessment of the identified risks/impacts is necessary and if prevention or mitigation measures can be integrated within project activities.

Where data is collected for education statistics (such as through EMIS – student enrolments) or assessments (such as the PILNA), sex disaggregated data is collected, analysed and reported to increase education stakeholders' understanding of differences between girls and boys, women and men.

EQAP also carries out a range of assessment activities, including on policy and practices. EQAP adapted policy analysis processes and tools developed by the World Bank's SABER[19] initiative. These processes and tools include questions and tools to analyse issues related to gender. For instance, 1) equitable access opportunities for all, especially access for groups subject to discrimination or exclusion (on the basis of gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, poverty, etc.); 2) whether

[19] The Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) is a World Bank initiative to produce comparative data and knowledge on education policies and institutions, with the aim of helping countries systematically strengthen their education systems and the ultimate goal of promoting Learning for All.

schools have adequate complementary infrastructure such as water and sanitation facilities to support the attendance of female students; and 3) level of female teachers' involvement in decision-making at school level.

## Section D: EQAP's theory of change

Section D summarises each of EQAP's desired outcomes and EQAP's reasons for focusing on these outcomes. Under each outcome, key areas of work are described.

**Background to EQAP's theory of change**

The business plan presents a summarised version of the theory of change. Reaching this point, involved deeper more detailed discussions and debates across the EQAP team, that were informed by stakeholder consultations.

The outcomes and results are inter-related but not necessarily dependent on others. Achievements under Outcome 1 may enhance the achievement of key result areas under Outcome 2 and 3, but results are expected under Outcome 2 and 3, regardless of achievements under Outcome 1. Similarly, Outcome 4 represents EQAP's current and future capacity. Continuous improvement in EQAP's capacity aims to increase successes under Outcomes 1-3.

The TOC outcomes focus at changes in the regional and national institutions. The positioning of the outcome statements reflects EQAP's sphere of influence, even though EQAP is, ultimately, interested in improvements in learners' outcomes. Learners' outcomes are within the Ministry of Education and other institutions' sphere of influence.

EQAP recognises that its work is necessary, but not enough, to achieve each of the outcomes. The achievement of the outcomes and key results highlighted below is the accumulation of EQAP's efforts along with those of national education agencies such as Ministries of Education. There are few situations where EQAP is in complete control of progress and achievement since its approach is consultative and participatory in response to country requests; and regional initiatives involve multiple stakeholders. As much as possible, EQAP will seek to understand its role and contribution in achieving success and recognise the efforts of others.

The key result areas marked with a * or ** reflect PacREF actions, where EQAP is often collaborating with others. ** reflects unfunded actions.

## Outcome 1

**1** More national Ministries of Education and other key institutions increase the use of information for policy development and implementation, planning and management.

### Key results

**1.1** More MoEs implement and maintain education management information systems

**1.2** More MoEs conduct good quality education research using existing and new data

**1.3** More MoEs revise policies and interventions to address gaps

**1.4** More MoEs use regional literacy and numeracy comparative assessment data

### EQAP's priority actions (outputs)

1.1.1 EQAP supports coordination and development of country IT and EMIS policies

1.1.2 EQAP provides IT systems, data auditing and software advice and training (incl. EMIS)

1.1.3 EQAP conducts data quality assessments (using the Data Quality Assessment Framework and other assessment frameworks)

1.1.4 EQAP provides advice and technical support on the enhancement of national education databases

1.1.5 EQAP implements enhancements to PacSIMS (incl. update to include all country generic data)

1.1.6 EQAP designs and/or tests education IT data collection and analysis solutions (e.g. e-learning, apps)

1.2.1 EQAP provides advice and trains MoE research units and other staff to design and implement research

1.2.2 EQAP provides advice and training on quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis (incl. auditing and quality assurance)

1.2.3 EQAP coordinates the Regional Education Research Network

1.3.1 EQAP assesses and reports policy intent, policy implementation and policy development

1.3.2 EQAP provides advice and training in policy development and review, policy monitoring and policy evaluation

1.3.3 EQAP conducts institutional capacity analysis and skills audits

1.3.4 EQAP facilitates the sharing of policy documents to support the development of policies

1.4.1 EQAP develops valid and reliable instruments and metrics to assess Year 4 and 6 literacy and numeracy levels

1.4.2 EQAP provides advice and training to national curriculum specialists on item writing

1.4.3 EQAP conducts regional literacy and numeracy assessments and other early grade reading assessments (incl. PILNA)

1.4.4 EQAP conducts analysis and disseminates assessment findings to MoE Curriculum and Assessment Sections and schools

1.4.5 EQAP develops and tests tools that extend regional literacy and numeracy assessments to lower

**Assumptions**

- MoEs and other education stakeholders have the knowledge, skills and willingness to use education statistics and research to improve education policies, planning and practices.
- MoE staff turnover is managed appropriately to ensure knowledge and skills are maintained across ICT, policy and research areas.
- MoEs have sufficient budget to purchase and/or maintain appropriate hardware and software for management information systems.
- MoEs ensure that when using external ICT consultants, they provide enough relevant documentation for future users; and develop MoE staff knowledge and skills to better manage ICT systems and processes.
- Key stakeholders (Minister, Permanent Secretary, MoE Curriculum and Assessment officers, principals and teachers) are able to easily understand the national literacy and numeracy assessment reports; and identify appropriate interventions to improve literacy and numeracy.

## Outcome 2

**2** More PICT schools increase and improve the assessment of students' performance against curricula.

### Key results

**2.1** More MoEs improve the clarity of the curricula

**2.2** More PICT teachers improve teaching of curriculum (incl. literacy and numeracy)

**2.3** More MoEs improve the quality of student assessments

**2.4** More PICT education systems increase the frequency and quality of teacher and school head performance assessments

**2.5** More MoEs and primary schools regularly conduct school quality assessments *

**2.6** More MoEs and schools assess school readiness**

### EQAP's priority actions (outputs)

2.1.1 EQAP facilitates PICT curriculum review and development processes

2.2.1 EQAP provides ongoing advice to MoEs on delivery of the curriculum (incl. outcomes based teaching, SPFSC)

2.2.2 EQAP provides advice and training to MOEs on classroom based assessments (incl. SPFSC)

2.3.1 EQAP provides advice and training to MoEs and/or facilitates the development and review of national literacy and numeracy assessments

2.3.2 EQAP develops valid and reliable instruments and metrics to assess literacy and numeracy levels * and non-cognitive skills **

2.3.3 EQAP provides advice and training to MoEs to develop and maintain examination databases

2.3.4 EQAP facilitates selected PICT curriculum assessment development processes (incl. class-room basedand external examinations)

2.4.1 EQAP provides advice on and develops and revises regional and national teacher and school head competency frameworks and performance assessment tools, software and instruments (incl. self-assessment) *

2.4.2 EQAP provides training to MoE officers on teacher and school head performance standards and assessments *

2.5.1 EQAP develops standardised school quality assessment tools (incl. self-assessment)*

2.5.2 EQAP provides advice on national school quality assessment programs*

2.6.1 EQAP supports teacher to assess, respond to and report school readiness **

**Assumptions**

- MoE Divisions (curriculum, assessment, pre-service and in-service) adequately communicate and coordinate with each other and external teacher training colleges on the new curriculum to ensure alignment of assessment processes, teacher training and professional development.
- MoE staff turnover is managed appropriately to ensure knowledge and skills to manage assessments, use data, design and implement policies and interventions. (link to Outcome 1)
- MoEs provide appropriate oversight and guidance that create positive incentives for teachers to use the guidance and tools developed with EQAP support.

**Outcome**

**3**

More PICT national agencies, employers and learners increase the use of recognised quality assured qualifications.

**Key results**

**3.1** More accredited institutions deliver quality and relevant qualifications and micro-qualifications

**3.2** More NQAAs improve the systems and protocols on development of qualifications and accreditation of providers

**3.3** Employers and institutions use the PRQS information on accredited qualifications and qualified persons

**3.4** More learners' foreign qualifications are recognised by employers, schools and universities

**3.5** More MoEs design and implement interventions based on the school head / teacher competency and professional development frameworks **

**3.6** More secondary school students in more PICT have access to accredited secondary school skills qualifications **

**EQAP's priority actions (outputs)**

3.1.1 EQAP conducts accreditation assessments of higher education and training providers, qualifications and micro-qualifications

3.1.2 EQAP validates providers' delivery of regional qualifications and micro-qualifications; and provides recommendations

3.1.3 EQAP facilitates the development of micro-qualifications and qualifications

3.2.1 EQAP provides advice to PICT on establishing NQAA (incl. the development of systems and protocols)

3.2.2 EQAP facilitates quality audits on request of national qualifications agencies

3.2.3 EQAP provides training and advice to NQAAs on quality assurance of higher education and training

3.3.1 EQAP promotes PRQS information to employers and institutions

3.3.2 EQAP maintains and enhances the PRQS database

3.4.1 EQAP assesses foreign qualifications to determine their local equivalence

3.5.1 EQAP collaborates to design and deliver school head and teacher professional development and pre-service training * (incl. teachers' skills in assessing school readiness**)

3.5.2 EQAP facilitates the development of regional school head and teacher quality assurance frameworks **

3.5.3 EQAP facilitates the development and implementation of regionally recognised qualifications for school heads and teachers**

3.5.4 EQAP facilitates regional accreditation and registration of school head and teacher education programs **

3.6.1 EQAP accredits SPFSC qualification

3.6.2 EQAP accredits schools to deliver SPFSC

3.6.3 EQAP provides SPFSC curriculum, internal assessment documents and learning outcomes

3.6.4 EQAP conducts SPFSC examinations and communicates results in a timely manner

3.6.5 EQAP maintains and enhances SPFSC Module in PacSIMS database

3.6.6 EQAP maintains and enhances the SPFSC section on the EQAP website

**Assumptions**

- EQAP Qualifications Team has sufficient capacity to respond to submissions or requests for support; and/or has sufficient suitable trainers to provide training to NQAs; and/or has sufficient validators to validate the delivery of training.
- Institutions have sufficient knowledge and skills to complete accreditation submissions to the level of quality expected.
- The PBEQ provides feedback and endorses submissions in a timely manner, leading to increased confidence in EQAP's ability to complete accreditation processes efficiently.
- Teachers have sufficient knowledge and skills to deliver outcomes-based learning and complete internal assessments for SPFSC. (link to Outcome 2)

**Outcome**

**4**

EQAP is increasingly recognised internationally as a leader and source of knowledge and expertise in education in the Pacific.

**Key results**

**4.1** EQAP strengthens its engagement and collaboration with PICT education stakeholders

**4.2** EQAP enhances the capabilities of its people, systems and processes

**4.3** EQAP strengthens its regional and international leadership in education quality in the Pacific

**4.4** EQAP improves its planning, prioritisation, evaluation, learning and innovation

**EQAP's priority actions (outputs)**

4.1.1 EQAP communicates its role and activities to regional and international audiences

4.1.2 EQAP rolls out and refines its approach to receiving and assessing country requests

4.1.3 EQAP provides technical advice and support to other SPC divisions on education quality initiatives they are leading on

4.1.4 EQAP liaises with and seeks technical input from relevant SPC divisions on specific programming needs

4.1.5 EQAP develops and maintains relationships with countries, donors and development organisations / programs and technical partners

4.2.1 EQAP recruits, trains and retains staff with the relevant knowledge, skills and experience

4.2.2 EQAP maintains accurate financial processes and records

4.2.3 EQAP maintains and enhances internal IT software systems and processes

4.2.4 EQAP implements knowledge management systems and processes

4.2.5 EQAP maintains efficient coordination of administration work systems

4.3.1 EQAP prepares and presents high quality regionally significant research on education quality in the Pacific

4.3.2 EQAP develops and maintains networks with international education organisations and specialists

4.3.3 EQAP coordinates the development and implementation of the PacREF monitoring and evaluation framework

4.4.1. EQAP produces annual work plans and budgets, half-yearly and annual reports of progress and achievements

4.4.2 EQAP holds half-yearly reflection discussions to identify improvement actions

4.4.3 EQAP prepares and publishes mid-Business Plan progress report

4.4.4 EQAP completes an end-of-term review of the Business Plan 2019 to 2022 implementation

**Assumptions**

- EQAP is able to manage fluctuations in country requests, PICT changing requests and timing of requests.
- EQAP receives additional funding via the Pacific Regional Education Framework resource mobilisation efforts.
- EQAP's varied stakeholders endorse and support EQAP's focus and priorities for the next four years, and understand that EQAP is not able to meet all demands.
- EQAP can retain adequate capacity (breadth and/or depth of knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence and organisational resources) to meet most PICT requests.

## D.1 Outcome 1: More national Ministries of Education and other key institutions increase the use of information for policy development and implementation, planning and management

**EQAP would like to see:**

**1.1 More MoEs implement and maintain education management information systems**

**1.2 More MoEs conduct good quality education research using existing and new data**

**1.3 More MoEs revise policies and interventions to address gaps**

**1.4 More MoEs use regional literacy and numeracy comparative assessment data**

### D.1.1 Why focus on this area?

**Sound education policies are a foundation for improving education quality.** Education policies outline the principles, laws and rules that govern the operation of national education systems. Increased pressure on education policies and systems to show greater accountability and effectiveness is a global trend. Policies shape education practices from the ways teachers teach students, to how schools are managed and the way in which assessment is undertaken. For instance, the quality of teaching is influenced by the "quality" of the teachers and by teachers' working environment. Teachers' with high levels of pedagogical knowledge and skills who are provided with appropriate support and professional development, or enough challenge and reward will perform better than those operating in less supportive environments.

**In the Pacific, Ministries of Education continue to build their capacity and resources to develop and deliver the policies required to achieve significant improvements in education quality**. Political incentives to achieving education reforms are sometimes mixed and technical challenges further undermine incentives. For instance, a lack of data and evidence, and the ability to analyse it, to support policies and practices is one of the fundamental constraints to good policy and decision making at national and regional levels; while the capacity of education officials to review existing policies or develop new policies is also limited in some countries.

**Improving the use of data and evidence is central to the challenge of improving education policy**. EQAP's support to education policy, planning and management focuses on this challenge, drawing on tools such as policy and institutional assessments. Critically, EQAP seeks to ensure education data they and others produce is used, as otherwise the efforts to produce this data are a waste of resources.

*'Act on evidence—to make schools work for all learners. Use evidence to guide innovation and practice'*[20]

**To make data more actionable requires understanding of the information needs of different stakeholders, presenting information in a way that is accessible and providing support to use it.** Educational policy makers, researchers, and stakeholders – teachers, media, parents – often find it difficult to access information and then use it effectively. Where information is available it may not be relevant. For example, quality research needed for policy analysis is lacking or available research does not address the needs of decision-makers. Research may have contradictory findings or multiple recommendations, calling on policy-makers' to make judgements on what they will use. In addition, information may not be presented in plain language that is widely accessible to non-specialists.

### D.1.2 EQAP's contribution to achieving Outcome 1

*Section E contains EQAP's indicative 4-year work plan.*

**Supporting PICTs to develop and maintain functional education management information systems (EMIS)[21] is the necessary building block for evidence-based policy development**. Designing and implementing management information systems in Pacific Island countries is complex. Support to develop national EMIS

[20] World Bank (2018). World Development Report. Washington DC, World Bank. Accessed: 17 September 2018.

[21] EMIS refers to the general concept of management information systems, and not any specific product and software.

has, in many cases for the first time, enabled collection and analysis of basic data on the number and performance of students, teachers, and schools across national education systems. Building on the data quality audits conducted with UIS[22], EQAP will continue to support selected Ministries of Education to implement and manage EMIS over this next year. EQAP will provide advice and training on IT systems and software; conduct data quality assessments and design and test data collection and analysis systems (e.g. e-learning applications). EQAP will also implement enhancements to the regional Pacific Examinations database – PacSIMS, that will then be rolled out at a national level. These enhancements also contribute to the development of national EMIS.

EQAP will continue to support PICTs to increase the **quantity and quality of education research**, encouraging Ministries of Education, research organisations and researchers to use existing data and information. For example, many countries currently underutilise national assessment and regional comparative assessment information, such as that produced by PILNA (a regional literacy and numeracy assessment conducted every three years). This information is useful for PICTs to benchmark themselves against the region and can inform policy analysis and stimulate reform. To incentivise better use, EQAP aims to show-case the benefits that have been realised from those Pacific countries that have taken advantage of this information at the same time as providing **training and advice on research designs and quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis**.

In 2018, EQAP also commenced coordination of the **Regional Education Research Network** that aims to connect researchers, research organisations and Ministries of Education to share research, develop education research capacity and strengthen relationships.

To strengthen education policy development and implementation, EQAP **conducts assessments of policy intent and implementation capacity at national, institutional and individual levels.** EQAP can then provide support to assist PICTs to implement assessment recommendations like strengthening policy development and review, policy monitoring and evaluation capacities. EQAP will also facilitate the sharing of policy documents to support the development of policies.

**EQAP fill an important gap in the provision of regional policy analysis and technical support.** This includes: receipt and analysis of data on literacy and numeracy with a focus on early-grade reading levels and the development of tools for assessing regional literacy and numeracy at local secondary level. A core feature of EQAPs work is the **three-yearly regional literacy and numeracy assessments** – PILNA. Commencing in 2012, EQAP has nearly completed three cycles of assessments – 2012, 2015 and 2018. In 2018, 15 countries participated. PILNA provides a rich source of information on the status of and trends in literacy and numeracy amongst Year 4 and 6 students. If additional funding becomes available under PacREF, EQAP will work with member countries to expand PILNA to lower secondary schools.

### D.1.3 Outcome 1's links other outcomes

**Good policy development is no guarantee of effective policy delivery**. EQAP's work also needs to consider challenges for policy implementation. These considerations are integrated into EQAP's work in other technical areas, such as the development of curriculum; assessment of schools, teachers, and students; and qualification and assurance services.

EQAP's own capability as a relevant, efficient and effective organisation are critical to delivering on all activities under Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

### D.1.4 Expected results

The table, below, provides a summary of key indicators of success for each key result area under Outcome 1. The indicators capture key outputs that are required to be produced to achieve the change described in the key result area; as well as key indicators relevant to the key result.

A detailed results framework is contained in Annex 3 (separate document), which contains baseline information, annual targets (where relevant) and means of verification.

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[22] SPC and UNESCO have had a cooperation agreement since 1999, that includes cooperation in the field of education and may include joint activities for the benefit of respective Member Countries. In 2018, SPC (through EQAP) and UIS commenced activities to assess the institutional environment, statistical processes and outputs according to the UIS principles of data quality in the Education Data Quality Assessment Framework (Ed-DQAF).

*Table 1: Outcome 1: Indicators of success*

| No. | Description | Indicator/s of success |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | More national Ministries of Education and other key institutions increase the use of information for policy development and implementation, planning and management | Examples of EQAP-contributions to MoE and other key institutions increasing their use of information for policy development and implementation, planning and management |
| 1.1 | More MoEs implement and maintain education management information systems | # of PICTs supported by EQAP that implement and sustain improvements to their education management systems (practice - key result) |
| | | # of PICTs EQAP has provided advice and/or training to (output) |
| | | # of data quality assessments completed (output) |
| | | # of countries with updated generic information, indicators added and updated in PacSIMS (output) |
| 1.2 | More MoEs conduct good quality education research using existing and new data | # of examples of MoEs using the network to share their research regionally and internationally (practice - key result) |
| | | # / % of research network members who report their interactions with the network have been 1) useful for their work; 2) provide a detailed example of where they have used what they have learned through the network in their work (practice - key result) |
| | | # of PICTs EQAP has provided advice and/or training to (output) |
| 1.3 | More MoEs revise policies and interventions to address gaps | # of PICTs supported by EQAP that use existing and new data and research to revise education policies and/or develop interventions (practice - key result) |
| | | # of EQAP recommendations that are addressed in MoE outputs (e.g. policies) (practice - key result) |
| | | # of assessments of policy intent, policy implementation and institutional capacity and skills audits completed (output) |
| | | # of PICTs EQAP has provided advice and/or training to (output) |
| 1.4 | More MoEs use regional literacy and numeracy comparative assessment data | Examples of MoEs using literacy and numeracy comparative assessment data (practice - key result) |
| | | # surveyed stakeholders who report they find the PILNA reports 1) easy to understand and 2) useful (disaggregated by gender) (output) |
| | | Regional and country PILNA reports published according to schedule (output) |
| | | Tools for expanding PILNA to lower secondary tested (process) |

## D.2 Outcome 2: More PICT schools increase and improve the assessment of students' performance against curricula

**EQAP would like to see:**

**2.1 More MoEs improve the clarity of national curricula**

**2.2 More MoEs teachers improve teaching of curriculum including literacy and numeracy**

**2.3 More MoEs improve the quality of student assessments**

**2.4 More PICT education systems increase the frequency and quality of teacher and school head and school head performance assessments**

**2.5 More MoEs and primary schools regularly conduct school quality assessments ***

**2.6 More MoEs and schools assess school readiness ****

### D.2.1 Why focus on this area?

**Teachers' subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical skills and practice is central to quality education**[23]. Teachers who are well trained, resourced and supported have a significant impact on raising learning achievements. [24] There are many and diverse, often inter-related, issues affecting the quality of teaching across the Pacific. The broader social-economic situations in individual countries and territories as well as policies and practices in schools and education systems influence the quality of teaching. UNESCO has highlighted a range of common issues across the Asia-Pacific that include the 'quality versus quantity' of teachers debate regarding resource allocation; fragmented teacher training and development systems; weak school leadership; poor working conditions, limited professional autonomy and performance assessment; and the inequitable distribution of effective teachers'.[25]

*'Teachers are the ultimate link that can turn ordinary resources into effective teaching and learning processes'*[26]

**Globally, education systems are developing school head and teacher professional standards to attract, develop, recognise and retain quality teachers**. School head and teacher performance standards establish the fundamental actions to be carried out by all school heads and teachers. The standards define the elements of high-quality, effective teaching, including the knowledge, practices and professional engagement required across teachers' careers. Teachers can use these standards to judge the success of their learning and assess their current and developing capabilities, while Ministries of Education and school leaders can use standards to develop professional development plans for teachers or for accountability processes. Professional standards also contribute positively to the public perceptions of teachers.

In recent years, **PICTs have increasingly shifted traditional objective-based to outcomes-based curriculum** as PICTs have found outcomes-based curriculum clearer and more relevant to assessing learning and informing teaching practices. This shift requires teachers with knowledge and skills in teaching outcome-based curriculum.

**There has been a growing consciousness around ensuring formal education supports keeping Pacific Island culture as an integral part of children's lives**. Language policies across the Pacific are shifting to adopt vernacular and local languages in the primary grades and then to adopt official languages of French and English at around Year 4. Changes in language underscore the importance of providing students with

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[23] OECD (2005). Teachers matter: Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers, 6th edn, Paris, OECD Publishing. Accessed: 1 November 2018

[24] UNESCO and UNICEF (2012) Asia-Pacific: Quality Education – End of decade notes on education for all. EFA Goal 6. Bangkok, UNESCO and UNICEF. Accessed: 2 November 2018

[25] ibid, page 32

[26] ibid; page 27

literacy skills that will allow them to succeed through the education system from primary to tertiary and vocational education and in the world of work.

**Student assessment for learning is an ongoing process of importance for the learning of students and teachers.** The primary purpose of assessment is to improve students' learning and teachers' teaching. Student assessments assist teachers to diagnose and identify students' learning needs. Parents can also use assessment to play an active role in their children's learning. School leaders can use assessment data for school planning as well as teacher professional development needs.

**Student assessment information is also important for Ministries of Education and regional education systems to identify system-level issues and design cycles of continuous improvement to address them.** The recent World Bank (2018) report argues: 'well-designed student assessments to gauge the health of education systems and using the resulting learning measures to spotlight hidden exclusions, make choices, and evaluate progress'.

*Improvements in student learning are dependent on how well assessment information is used by teachers, parents, school leaders and Ministries of Education*

### D.2.2 EQAP's contribution to achieving Outcome 2

***Section E** contains EQAP's indicative 4-year work plan.*

EQAP contributes to improving teacher quality by **developing, advising and training Ministries of Education on national teacher and school leader competency frameworks and performance assessment processes and tools.** Over the last four years, EQAP has worked with four countries to develop school leader and teacher standards, and professional development frameworks aligned to the standards. EQAP's work with PICTs to develop school leader and teacher standards ensures the Standards consider the objectives of the local education system, the countries broader socio-economic context and the specific context in which learning occurs. Under PACREF, EQAP and USP will work together on regional teacher competency standards and competency evaluation tools[27].

EQAP **facilitates national processes to review and update curriculum as well as assessment processes.** During 2016-18, there has been a move towards PICTs developing and using national, rather than regional, assessments that are tailored to nationally-mandated curriculum. Five PICTs have used national assessments over the last six years. This move reflects PICTs desire for greater control autonomy over their national education systems. However, this makes more work for EQAP's to support region-wide practices of several national assessments, rather than a regional assessment that are used across multiple countries following a consistent, robust and straightforward quality assurance process. National assessments require enough human resources and local expertise to administer a high-quality examination system. Yet some countries which pursue such national assessment do not have the necessary resources and at times EQAP has been required to provide emergency support to ensure examinations processes are completed.

Through past work, EQAP has built a regional body of expertise and capacity in outcomes-based education and assessment for learning that is culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate to the Pacific. Five PICTs have adopted outcomes-based curriculum and assessment since 2012. EQAP supports **provides training, advice and ongoing support to Ministries of Education and teachers on outcomes-based education and assessment** to increase Ministry staff and teachers' knowledge and skills and help them to put new concepts into practice.

Children's readiness for school assessments examines pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills, physical readiness, social and emotional adjustment, approach to learning, level of language and cognition. These assessments recognise the importance of early childhood care and education in setting a foundation for future learning and life skills. To ensure the transition to school is as smooth as possible, assessments also seek to ensure that parents and teachers use the information to prepare children for school. EQAP has not previously contributed to improving school readiness assessments. From 2019, however, **EQAP will support**

[27] Under Outcome 3, EQAP will also develop and implement of regionally recognised qualifications for teachers against an agreed regional quality assurance framework, and accredit and register teacher education programs to quality assure the calibre of the teaching population across the region.

**teachers to assess, respond to and report school readiness,** subject to additional funding through the Pacific Regional Education Framework.

EQAP will also use its assessment experience to contribute to improving the quality of schools by developing standardised school quality assessment tools; and **providing advice to Ministries of Education on developing and implementing national school quality assessment programmes** after they have conducted assessments. These activities aim to improve the working and learning environment for teachers and students, so they can be as effective as possible.

As a key contributor to quality assessments in the Pacific, EQAP will work with UIS to collect data for the UIS catalogue of learning assessments for several PICTs.

### D.2.3 Outcome 2's links to other outcomes

Good policy development is no guarantee of effective policy delivery. Outcome 1 focusses on Ministry policy and planning, EQAP's work under Outcome 2 concerns supporting Ministries of Education to translate that policy into action on the ground with a focus on the development of curriculum; assessment of schools, teachers, and students at the primary and secondary school levels.

Improving quality education in primary and secondary schools seeks to enhance students' opportunities to access tertiary learning pathways that are supported by EQAP under Outcome 3.

Regional teacher competency standards also relate to Outcome 3, where EQAP will: also develop and implement of regionally recognised qualifications for teachers against an agreed regional quality assurance framework, and accredit and register teacher education programs to quality assure the calibre of the teaching population across the region.

EQAP's own capability as a relevant, efficient and effective organisation are critical to delivering on all activities under Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

### D.2.4 Expected results

The table, below, provides a summary of key indicators of success for each key result area under Outcome 2. The indicators capture key outputs that are required to be produced to achieve the change described in the key result area; as well as key indicators relevant to the key result.

*Table 2: Outcome 2 indicators of success*

| No. | Description | Indicator/s of success |
|---|---|---|
| **2** | **More PICT schools increase and improve the assessment of students' performance against curricula** | **% of schools assessed in EQAP supported countries that have improved the assessment of students' performance against curricula** |
| 2.1 | More MoEs improve the clarity of national curricula | # of PICTs supported by EQAP that achieve agreed curricula revision and implementation yearly improvement targets (practice - key result) |
| | | # of PICTs EQAP has provided advice and/or training to (output) |
| 2.2 | More PICT teachers improve teaching of curriculum including literacy and numeracy | % teachers and MoE trained by EQAP who implement and sustain improvements to teaching curriculum (disaggregated by gender) (practice - key result) |
| | | % of teachers and MoE staff trained who improve their knowledge and skills in trained topics (disaggregated by gender) (output) |
| | | # of people trained in topics related to curriculum implementation (disaggregated by gender) (output) |
| | | # of PICTs supported in developing literacy material including modules (output) |
| | | # of schools using Phonics by Phone (output) |
| 2.3 | More MoEs improve the quality of student assessments | # of PICTs supported by EQAP that achieve agreed yearly quality curriculum assessments improvement targets (practice - key result) |
| | | # of PICTs EQAP has provided advice and/or training to (output) |
| 2.4 | More PICT education system increase the frequency and quality of teacher and school head performance assessments | # of PICTs supported by EQAP that regularly assess school leaders and teachers using quality processes and tools |
| | | # of PICTs EQAP has provided advice and/or training to (output) |
| | | # of PICTs supported by EQAP with school leader and teacher standards that reflect current education policies, and strategies (output) |
| | | Regional competency framework and performance assessment revised and endorsed by PICTs (output) |
| 2.5 | More MoEs and primary schools regularly conduct school quality assessments * | # of PICTs (and primary schools) supported by EQAP using quality assessments according to processes (practice - key result) |
| | | Regional school quality assessment guide and tools endorsed by PICTs (output) |
| 2.6 | More MoEs and schools assess school readiness** | # of PICTs (and schools) supported by EQAP that undertake school readiness assessments (practice - key result) |
| | | Regional school readiness assessment tools endorsed by PICTs (output) |

## D.3 Outcome 3: More PICT national agencies, employers and learners increase use of recognised quality assured qualifications.

**EQAP would like to see:**

**3.1 More accredited institutions deliver quality and relevant qualifications and micro-qualifications**

**3.2 More NQAAs improve the systems and protocols on development of qualifications and accreditation of providers**

**3.3 Employers and institutions use the PRQS information on accredited qualifications and qualified persons**

**3.4 More learners' foreign qualifications are recognised by employers, schools and universities ****

**3.5 More MoEs design and implement interventions based on the school head/teacher competency and professional development frameworks ****

**3.6 More secondary school students in PICT have access to accredited secondary school skills qualifications ****

### D.3.1 Why focus on this area?

Pacific island countries face significant challenge generating jobs for their citizens, with employment rates estimated to be almost 50 percent of the working age population in most PICTs.[28] International temporary and permanent migration provides citizens (in some countries) with an avenue to employment and opportunities to increase incomes, which is strongly correlated with health and education development outcomes.[29] However, **PICTS have varying access to external labour markets** (principally, Australia, New Zealand and the United States), with poorer countries having fewer opportunities. Most Pacific-born migrants living in OECD countries come from Fiji, Samoa and Tonga while very few come from Kiribati and Tuvalu.[30] A key constraint however to greater labour mobility is the quantity and quality of skills to meet the demand.

Improving educational quality at all levels is important to increase the quantity and quality of supply of young people with the required post-school qualifications to meet both domestic and international labour needs. While post-secondary education is important for both employment across the Pacific as well as further afield, **relatively few Pacific Islanders have post-school qualifications**. In part, this situation is due to limited secondary education access and poor-quality Pacific education systems, which EQAP is helping to address under Outcomes 1 and 2.

Where Pacific Island citizens have post-secondary qualifications, there can be **insufficient mutual recognition of these qualifications**. Migrants often earn less than locals with the same skills and qualifications, with lack of recognition of previous experience and qualifications being a contributing factor[31]. The OECD defines quality assurance as "a planned and systematic pattern of all the actions necessary to provide adequate confidence that a product will conform to established requirements" (OECD, 2004; OECD, 2008).

Quality assured qualifications from certified providers are valuable and can enhance opportunities for PICT citizens. **Accreditation enables employers, institutions, and others to trust organisations and individuals' knowledge and skills without having to test themselves.** Accreditation creates standards that allow students to transfer between secondary schools and tertiary institutions such as universities, and to employment by

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[28] Dornan, M et al (2016). Labour mobility: Delivering better outcomes for Pacific islanders. Accessed: 19 November 2018

[29] ibid

[30] Curtain, R., Dornan, M., Doyle, J., and Stephen Howes (2016). *Pacific Possible. Labour mobility: the ten billion dollar prize.* Washington DC, World Bank. Accessed: 19 November 2018.

[31] ESCAP (2014). Regional integration and labour mobility - Linking Trade, Migration and Development. Studies in Trade and Investment 81. Bangkok, ESCAP. Accessed 2 November 2018.

businesses, government agencies and other employers. The Pacific region has already made progress in addressing some barriers. For instance, in 2011, the Pacific Qualification Framework (PQF) was established in response to a call by the Forum Ministers of Education in 2001. The PQF provides a common reference linking national qualifications frameworks; recognising learners' achievements from school, higher education, technical and vocational education and training and non-formal learning; and facilitating the comparability and recognition of Pacific qualifications against other regional and international qualifications systems. The PQF does not duplicate or replace national qualifications frameworks, except for PICTs that adopt the PQF in the absence of having their own national framework.[32]

**Benefits of the Pacific Qualification Framework include:**
- Provides an integrated and comprehensive framework encompassing all sectors (school, TVET and higher education);
- Supports reforms in national education and training systems;
- Provides an external reference point for Pacific qualifications to establish comparability and equivalence;
- Provides clarification of learning pathways and progression to sustain lifelong learning;
- Facilitates mutual recognition and credit transfer;
- Increases the portability of qualifications;
- Provides a platform for stakeholders for strengthening cooperation and commitment.

While post-secondary qualifications are critical, **some small PICTs do not have the capacity to provide their students with access to recognised quality assured secondary qualifications that are required to provide pathways to further education opportunities and post-secondary qualifications**. This therefore limits the choices students have regarding their economic and social well-being. The need for a regional senior secondary level qualification was recognised by SPC in 1980 and led to the establishment of SPBEA (EQAP's forerunner) being established. Since 1980 PICTs have increased their capacity to fully operate their own national qualifications for Forms 5 and 6 (or Year 11 and 12). SPFSC (Form 7 / Year 13) is administered in five countries. SPFSC is a regional good, providing students in these PICTs with a high quality, internationally recognised qualification, which in turn increases their access to post-secondary education and employment opportunities that they would not otherwise have.

### D.3.2 EQAP's contribution to achieving Outcome 3

*Section E contains EQAP's indicative 4-year work plan.*

EQAP **provides capacity development support to PICTs National Quality Assurance Agencies (NQAAs)**. The aim is to improve the overall quality of qualifications as well as students' ability to transition through education systems at national and regional levels and to transition from one employer to the next. Only four PICTs have their own agency and this number is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future (despite the wishes of some countries to develop their own NQAAs). When requested by national agencies, EQAP **facilitates audits of national assurance agencies** against regionally recognised standards and provides recommendations. By addressing these recommendations, NQAAs can better undertake quality accreditation assessments of providers, qualifications and micro-qualifications.

EQAP is also the Pacific's regional accreditation agency that quality assures qualifications, micro-qualifications and providers against standards outlined in the PQF. **EQAP completes initial assessments of new providers and qualifications and provides ongoing validation** to ensure quality standards are maintained over time. **It also provides recommendations for improvements**, which are then acted on by the providers. EQAP will also continue to work with industry groups and sectors to develop micro-qualifications (and other SPC divisions where relevant[33]). As a foundation, EQAP will undertake research to better understand industry skill needs to ensure the relevance of qualifications developed. This research will include consultations with key industry informants (individuals and organisations) as well as workers.

[32] Currently, only four PICTs have their own national qualifications framework and authority.

[33] EQAP worked with the SPC Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems team in 2018 to develop micro-qualifications for the fishing industry.

EQAP **manages, maintains and enhances the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards allowing benchmarking against international standards** (PRQS - http://prqs.spc.int/). The PRQS facilitates this by providing a record for national and regional accredited qualifications and providers referenced against the PQF. EQAP has worked with institutions and accrediting bodies to establish processes for qualifications to be directly registered into the PRQS and as such, recognised regionally, thereby supporting labour and learner mobility across the Pacific and internationally. Currently, there are nearly 350 qualifications and over 100 providers recorded in the Register.

To increase PRQS's value, EQAP will undertake a **more systematic outreach programme to governments, employers and institutes to ensure they are aware of PRQS, know what information it contains, and how to access and use this information**. EQAP will more frequently monitor the use of PRQS by various stakeholders and seek their feedback on the database. To extend usefulness, EQAP plans to strengthen the database, which currently only records information on accredited qualifications and providers, so that it will also capture the names / details of individuals awarded accredited qualifications. Employers and institutions can then search the database to verify information on prospective employees.

**Maintain the SPFSC and conduct examinations:** The South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC) provides PICT students with the opportunity to achieve a regionally and internationally recognised and accepted end-of-secondary school certificate that is an entry qualification to university and other further education and tertiary institutions and used by employers for employee selection. First available in 2004, the SPFSC has now been offered for nearly 15 years. EQAP provides curriculum, internal assessment documents and learning outcomes for the South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC) to Ministries of Education and schools. EQAP accredits schools to deliver qualification, provides ongoing advice to teachers on the SPFSC curriculum and conducts the examination process.

Quality assurance is vital to ensure the continuous improvement of the content, delivery and development of initial teacher preparation in the Pacific. Linked to Outcome 2 and teacher quality, EQAP will contribute to the demand for high-quality teachers and school leaders by supporting high-quality teacher and school leader education. Specifically, **EQAP will facilitate the development of Pacific regional teacher and school leader quality assurance framework, and regionally recognised qualifications for teachers and school leaders**. EQAP will also accredit regional teacher and school leader education programmes. This activity requires additional funding under the PacREF.

### D.3.3 Outcome 3's links to other outcomes

Outcome 1 focusses on national and regional education policy and planning, which provides a foundation for EQAP's support to policy delivery activities under Outcomes 2 and 3. Outcome 2 and 3 focus on different aspects of a student's education, with Outcome 2 focusing on primary and secondary education and 3 principally on post-secondary education. Quality primary and secondary education that results in positive student learning outcomes strengthen students' choices in the post-secondary period, be it choices related to further learning or employment.

Under Outcome 2, and the auspices of the PacREF, EQAP will work with USP on developing and implementing regional teacher competency standards. EQAP will then incorporate the accreditation and registration of teacher education programs into its quality assurance work.

EQAP's own capability as a relevant, efficient and effective organisation are critical to delivering on all activities under Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

## D.3.4 Expected results

*Table 3: Outcome 3 indicators of success*

| No. | Description | Indicator/s of success |
|---|---|---|
| **3** | **More PICT national agencies, employers and learners increase the use of recognised quality assured qualifications** | # of school leaders and teachers enrolled in accredited regional qualifications (disaggregated by gender) (outcome) |
| | | # of secondary school students sitting SPFSC exams (disaggregated by gender) (practice - key result) |
| | | # of learners completing NQAA and EQAP - accredited qualifications from EQAP - accredited providers (outcome) |
| 3.1 | More accredited institutions deliver quality and relevant qualifications and micro-qualifications | # EQAP-accredited institutions delivering accredited qualifications and micro-qualifications (practice - key result) |
| | | # / % of institutions who address EQAP's recommendations (practice - key result) |
| | | # of assessments completed (output) |
| | | # of micro-qualifications developed (output) |
| 3.2 | More NQAAs improve the systems and protocols on development of qualifications and accreditation of providers | # of NQAAs supported by EQAP that improve the development of qualifications and accreditation of providers |
| | | # of qualifications and providers accredited by NQAAs (practice - key result) |
| | | # of PICTs EQAP has provided advice and/or training to (output) |
| 3.3 | Employers and institutions use the PRQS information on accredited qualifications and qualified persons | # PRQS registered users (practice - key result) |
| | | # of registered user log-ons to PRQS (per month / quarter / year) (practice - key result) |
| | | % of registered users report that PRQS is useful (practice - key result) |
| 3.4 | More learners' foreign qualifications are recognised by employers, schools and universities | # of foreign qualifications assessed (output) |
| 3.5 | More MoEs design and implement interventions based on the school head/teacher competency and professional development frameworks ** | # of school leaders and teachers attending pre-service and in-service training based on regional quality assurance framework (disaggregated by gender) (practice - key result) |
| | | % of regional qualifications developed for school leaders and teachers accredited (output) |
| | | Regional school leader and teacher quality assurance framework endorsed by PICTs (output) |
| 3.6 | More secondary school students in the PICT have access to accredited secondary school skills qualifications ** | # of schools delivering SPFSC (disaggregated by country) (practice - key result) |

## D.4 Outcome 4: EQAP is increasingly recognised internationally as a leader and source of knowledge and expertise in education in the Pacific

**EQAP would like to see:**

**4.1 EQAP strengthens its engagement and collaboration with PICT education stakeholders**

**4.2 EQAP enhances the capabilities of its people, systems and processes**

**4.3 EQAP strengthens its regional and international leadership in education quality in the Pacific**

**4.4 EQAP improves its planning, prioritisation, evaluation, learning and innovation**

To meet PICTs requests for quality capacity development and education services it is vital EQAP maintains and continues to build it capability ensuring the right people are in the right place at the right time to undertake the work now and in the future.

### Why focus on this area?

To fulfil its mandate as a regional organisation, EQAP draws on expertise from across the region and internationally providing a solid understanding of Pacific contexts as well as international linkages, networks and expertise. EQAP recruits, maintains and develops a team of technical education specialists across technical areas in curriculum design and standards, teacher accountability, assessment, and education systems policy functions.

By drawing on Pacific expertise, EQAP also provides career pathways for education system specialists from national Ministries of Education. This enables the strengthening of relationships with PICT stakeholders and often provides continuity of leadership and advice to Secretaries and Ministers of Education, whose tenure may change each political election cycle.

#### D.4.1 Priority actions to achieve Outcome 4

**Builds and maintains relationships:** Good working relationships and partnerships are central to EQAP's success. EQAP cannot achieve desired outcomes without working effectively with PICTs to address their requests and provide services expected. As mentioned above, EQAP has not had the capacity to respond to the large number of requests from all PICTs. In 2018, the process for responding to requests was reviewed and a new refined process, providing greater face-to-face consultations, was developed to improve efficiency. The piloting of this new process began in 2018 and will be continued through 2019. EQAP will also continue efforts to improve stakeholder communication, with a focus on expanding the information about EQAP's services and results provided on the SPC website.

EQAP is a division under the SPC and works closely with the other divisions to promote their shared ambition and values toward achieving quality education throughout the Pacific. Equally important is EQAP's work with regional and international organisations, such as APTC, USP, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank to co-deliver capacity development initiatives. EQAP also values the support of funding partners, principally the Governments of Australia and New Zealand. Additionally, EQAP maintains strong relationships with their customers paying for quality assurance and accreditation services.

**Maintains and manages its valuable human and financial resources:** EQAP's staff are viewed as core assets, without which it is not possible to support PICTs. Utilising SPC's human resource processes from recruitment through to professional development, EQAP seeks to attract and retain staff with the knowledge, skills and attitude to achieve EQAP's outcomes. EQAP complies with SPC's financial processes to ensure transparency, integrity and value for money in its dealings. EQAP has attained a clean financial audit over the last two years.

To achieve its mandate as a regional organisation, EQAP develops and maintains networks with international education organisations and specialists; and **prepares and presents high quality regionally significant research on education quality in the Pacific**. EQAP also regularly **undertakes planning, monitoring and evaluation activities** to improve education for students and learners in the Pacific.

*Table 4: Outcome 4 indicators of success*

| No. | Description | Indicator/s of success |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | EQAP is increasingly recognised internationally as a leader and source of knowledge and expertise in education in the Pacific | % of PICT education stakeholders satisfied with the engagement and collaboration with EQAP (outcome) |
| 4.1 | EQAP strengthens its engagement and collaboration with PICT education stakeholders | # of stories of EQAP's work and results shared with stakeholders through the SPC website (output) |
| | | # of examples where EQAP and other SPC divisions have collaborated to deliver support to PICTs (output) |
| 4.2 | EQAP enhances the capabilities of its people, systems and processes | EQAP receives the incentive funding from DFAT annually (practice - key result) |
| 4.3 | EQAP strengthens its regional and international leadership in education quality in the Pacific | Examples of 1) positive feedback on the quality of EQAP research received from stakeholders on EQAP's presentations at national, regional and international education events; 2) examples of new or strengthened organisational relationships due to EQAP's presentations are national, regional and international education events (practice - key result) |
| | | # of research-related presentations delivered by EQAP staff at regional and national meetings (output) |
| | | Annual PacREF M&E report presented to FeDDM (output) |
| 4.4 | EQAP improves its planning, prioritisation, evaluation, learning and innovation | Intermediate outcomes show improvement across 50% of indicators from previous period (practice - key result) |
| | | >80% of actions related to member requests in BP completed (outputs) |
| | | Outputs in the business plan are delivered 80% of the time within the planned period (output) |

# Section E: Indicative 4-year work plan

As indicated earlier, much of EQAP's work is demand-led. PICTs have a variety of needs across the three outcome areas. In most circumstances EQAP works with a small number of PICTs on priority actions rather than all 15 countries. Annex 2 (separate document) contains further information on which PICTs EQAP is likely to work with during 2019-2022.

Those activities marked with * and ** indicate actions captured in the PacREF (and often implemented in collaboration with other organisations), with ** actions dependent on additional funding.

*Table 5: EQAP indicative 4-year work plan*

| | No. | Description | Estimated years of implementation | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 |
| **Outcome** | **1** | **More national Ministries of Education and other key institutions increase the use of information for policy development and implementation, planning and management** | | | | |
| **KRA** | **1.1** | **More PICTs implement and maintain education management information systems** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 1.1.1 | EQAP supports coordination and development of country IT and EMIS policies | | | | |
| | 1.1.2 | EQAP provides IT system, data auditing and software advice and training (incl. EMIS systems) | | | | |
| | 1.1.3 | EQAP conducts data quality assessments (using the Data Quality Assessment Framework and other assessment frameworks) | | | | |
| | 1.1.4 | EQAP provides advice and technical support on the enhancement of national education databases | | | | |
| | 1.1.5 | EQAP implements enhancements to PacSIMs (incl. update to include all country generic data) | | | | |
| | 1.1.6 | EQAP designs and/or tests education IT data collection and analysis solutions (e.g. e-learning; apps) | | | | |
| **KRA** | **1.2** | **More MoEs conduct good quality education research using existing and new data** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 1.2.1 | EQAP provides advice and training designing and implementing research to MoE staff | | | | |
| | 1.2.2 | EQAP provides advice and training on quantitative and qualitative data collection | | | | |
| | 1.2.3 | EQAP coordinates regional education research network | | | | |
| **KRA** | **1.3** | **More MoEs revise policies and interventions to address gaps** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 1.3.1 | EQAP assesses and reports policy intent, policy implementation, and policy development | | | | |
| | 1.3.2 | EQAP provides advice and training in policy development and review; monitoring and evaluating policies | | | | |
| | 1.3.3 | EQAP conducts institutional analysis and skills audits | | | | |
| **KRA** | **1.4** | **PICTs MoEs use regional literacy and numeracy comparative assessment data** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 1.4.1 | EQAP develops valid and reliable instruments and metrics to assess literacy and numeracy levels | | | | |
| | 1.4.2 | EQAP trains national curriculum specialists on item writing | | | | |
| | 1.4.3 | EQAP conducts regional literacy and numeracy assessments (as PILNA) and other early grade reading assessments | | | | |
| | 1.4.4 | EQAP disseminates findings and reports to MoE Curriculum and Assessment Section and schools | | | | |
| | 1.4.5 | EQAP develops and tests tools that extend regional literacy and numeracy assessments to lower secondary level (PILNA) ** | | | | |

| | No. | Description | Estimated years of implementation | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 |
| **Outcome** | **2** | **More PICT schools increase and improve the assessment of students' performance against curricula** | | | | |
| **KRA** | **2.1** | **More MoEs improve the clarity of national curricula** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 2.1.1 | EQAP facilitates PICT curriculum review and development processes | | | | |
| **KRA** | **2.2** | **More PICT teachers improve teaching of curriculum incl. literacy and numeracy** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 2.2.1 | EQAP provides ongoing advice to MoEs to deliver the curriculum to teachers (including outcomes-based teaching; and SPFSC) | | | | |
| | 2.2.2 | EQAP provides advice and training to MOEs on classroom-based assessments (incl. SPFSC) | | | | |
| **KRA** | **2.3** | **More MOEs improve the quality of curriculum assessments** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 2.3.1 | EQAP provides training and advice to MoEs and/or facilitates the development and review of national literacy and numeracy assessments | | | | |
| | 2.3.2 | EQAP develops valid and reliable instruments and metrics to assess literacy and numeracy levels * and non-cognitive skills ** | | | | |
| | 2.3.3 | EQAP provides advice, training and enhancements to development and maintain national examination databases (PacSIMs) | | | | |
| | 2.3.4 | EQAP facilitates PICT curriculum assessment processes (incl. class-room based; external examinations) | | | | |
| **KRA** | **2.4** | **More PICTs (MoE, schools, school leaders and teachers) increase the frequency and quality of teacher and principal performance (incl. self) assessments** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 2.4.1 | EQAP advises MoEs on and develops and revises regional and national teacher and principal competency frameworks and performance assessment (including self-assessment) tools, software (PacSIMS Module) and instruments * | | | | |
| | 2.4.2 | EQAP provides training to MOE staff on teacher and principal performance standards and assessments * | | | | |
| **KRA** | **2.5** | **More MOEs and primary schools regularly conduct school quality assessments *** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 2.5.1 | EQAP develops standardised school quality (including self) assessment tools * | | | | |
| | 2.5.2 | EQAP provides advice on national school quality assessment programmes * | | | | |
| **KRA** | **2.5** | **More MOEs and schools assess school readiness**** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 2.6.1 | EQAP supports teachers to assess, respond to and report school readiness ** | | | | |

| | No. | Description | Estimated years of implementation | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 |
| **Outcome** | **3** | **More PICT national agencies, employers and learners increase the use of recognised quality assured qualifications** | | | | |
| **KRA** | **3.1** | **More accredited institutions deliver quality and relevant qualifications and micro-qualifications** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 3.1.1 | EQAP conducts more accreditation assessments of higher education and training providers, qualifications and micro-qualifications | | | | |
| | 3.1.2 | EQAP validates providers' delivery of regional qualifications and micro-qualifications; and provides recommendations | | | | |
| | 3.1.3 | EQAP develops micro-qualifications and qualifications | | | | |
| **KRA** | **3.2** | **More NQAAs improve the development of qualifications (incl. micro) and accreditation of providers** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 3.2.1 | EQAP provides advice to PICTs on establishing NQAA (incl. the development of systems and protocols). | | | | |
| | 3.2.2 | EQAP facilitates quality audits as requested by national qualifications agencies | | | | |
| | 3.2.3 | EQAP provides training and advice to NQAAs on qualifications and accreditation | | | | |
| **KRA** | **3.3** | **Employers and institutions use the PRQS information on accredited qualifications and qualified persons** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 3.3.1 | EQAP promotes PRQS information to governments, employers and institutes | | | | |
| | 3.3.2 | EQAP maintains and enhances PRQS database | | | | |
| **KRA** | **3.4** | **More learners' foreign qualifications are recognised by employers, schools and universities** | | | | |
| Priority Action | 3.4.1 | EQAP assesses foreign qualifications to determine their local equivalence | | | | |
| **KRA** | **3.5** | **More PICT MoEs design and implement interventions based on the principal / teacher competency & professional development frameworks** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 3.5.1 | With others, EQAP designs and delivers school leader and teacher professional development (in-service) and pre-service training * (including teachers' skills in assessing school readiness**) | | | | |
| | 3.5.2 | EQAP facilitate the development of regional school leader and teacher quality assurance framework ** | | | | |
| | 3.5.3 | EQAP facilitates the development and implementation of regionally recognised qualifications for school leaders and teachers** | | | | |
| | 3.5.4 | EQAP accredits regional accreditation and registration of school leader and teacher education programs ** | | | | |
| **KRA** | **3.6** | **More secondary school students in more PICTs have access to accredited secondary school skills qualifications ** ** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 3.6.1 | EQAP accredits SPFSC qualification | | | | |
| | 3.6.2 | EQAP accredits schools to deliver SPFSC (incl. new subjects; and renewals) | | | | |
| | 3.6.3 | EQAP provides SPFSC curriculum, internal assessment documents, learning outcomes | | | | |
| | 3.6.4 | EQAP conducts SPFSC examinations and communicate results in a timely manner | | | | |
| | 3.6.5 | EQAP maintains and enhances SPFSC Module in PacSIMS database | | | | |
| | 3.6.6 | EQAP maintains and enhances the SPFSC section on EQAP website | | | | |

| | No. | Description | Estimated years of implementation | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 |
| **Outcome** | **4** | **EQAP is increasingly recognised as a leader and source of knowledge and expertise in education in the Pacific** | | | | |
| **KRA** | **4.1** | **EQAP strengthens its engagement and collaboration with PICT education stakeholders** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 4.1.1 | EQAP communicates its role and activities to regional and international audiences | | | | |
| | 4.1.2 | EQAP rolls out and refines its approach to receiving and assessing country requests | | | | |
| | 4.1.3 | EQAP provides technical advice and support to other SPC divisions on education quality initiatives they are leading on | | | | |
| | 4.1.4 | EQAP liaises with and seeks technical input from relevant SPC divisions on specific programming needs | | | | |
| | 4.1.5 | EQAP develops and maintains relationships with key country, donor and development organisation/programmes | | | | |
| **KRA** | **4.2** | **EQAP enhances the capabilities of its people, systems and processes** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 4.2.1 | EQAP recruits, trains and retains staff with the relevant knowledge, skills and experience | | | | |
| | 4.2.2 | EQAP maintains accurate financial records | | | | |
| | 4.2.3 | EQAP maintains and enhances internal IT software systems and processes | | | | |
| | 4.2.4 | EQAP implements knowledge management systems and processes | | | | |
| **KRA** | **4.3** | **EQAP strengthens its regional and international leadership in education quality in the Pacific** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 4.3.1 | EQAP prepares and presents high quality regionally significant research on education quality in the Pacific. | | | | |
| | 4.3.2 | EQAP develops and maintains networks with international education organisations and specialists | | | | |
| | 4.3.3 | EQAP coordinates the development and implementation of the PacREF monitoring and evaluation framework | | | | |
| **KRA** | **4.4** | **EQAP improves its planning, prioritisation, evaluation, learning and innovation** | | | | |
| Priority Action(s) | 4.4.1 | EQAP produces annual work plans and budgets; half-yearly and annual reports of progress and achievements | | | | |
| | 4.4.2 | EQAP holds half-yearly reflection discussions on staff, identifying improvement actions | | | | |
| | 4.4.3 | EQAP prepares and publishes mid-BP progress report | | | | |
| | 4.4.4 | EQAP completes a end-of-term review of the BP 2019-22 implementation | | | | |

# Section F: Monitoring, evaluation and learning

SPC's Planning, Evaluation, Accountability, Reflection and Learning (PEARL) policy set out the guide for EQAP's work on monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL).

Monitoring, evaluation and learning plays a critical role in SPC's and EQAP's delivery of effective, relevant and quality services to its members. SPC's PEARL policy sets out streamlined and coherent processes to analyse progress towards and the achievement of EQAP results. The processes assist EQAP to identify lessons, make informed decisions, adapt its practice and improve the services it provides to PICTs. Monitoring and evaluation also play an equally important accountability function, where EQAP can demonstrate its accountability to Pacific Community members as well as partners such as the Governments of Australia and New Zealand through the PBEQ and CRGA.

Given EQAP's emphasis on learning for improving implementation, the primary users of the MEL information are EQAP staff and national and regional organisations EQAP is working with to deliver support, e.g. Ministries of Education, National Qualifications and Assurance Agencies, ACER. Secondary users include the PBEQ and SPC.

## F.3 EQAP's approach to MEL

EQAP's approach to MEL is based on its theory of change. Theories of change are not predictive tools. This highlights the critical aspect of ensuring EQAP seeks to learn what is and is not working, why and to use this information to improve its work. More regular monitoring and smaller internal evaluation activities are key to learning and adaption. EQAP has already commenced steps to improving its MEL and it will continue to build on these steps over the next four years.

These activities are guided by five key evaluation questions, which seek to understand what EQAP did and what difference that made to short, medium and longer-term outcomes. Successful external evaluations require monitoring data. Establishing key evaluation questions guides regular monitoring and internal evaluative activities to ensure relevant monitoring data is collected throughout the business plan period.

**Relevance:**

1. To what extent, are EQAP's activities based on regional and country priority needs and requests for support?

**Efficiency:**

2. To what extent, is EQAP delivering its priority actions to the levels of quality, quantity, timeliness and budget planned for?

**Effectiveness:**

3. What key results and outcomes have been achieved, and what is EQAP contribution?

**Sustainability**:

4. To what extent, are the results and outcomes likely to be sustained or improved further beyond EQAP's support?

**Learning:**

5. To what extent, is EQAP identifying lessons and using these to improve its actions and increase the chance of success?

### F.3.1 Regular monitoring

Regular monitoring will be undertaken on an ongoing basis. Core processes include:

- Monthly tracking implementation and budget expenditure;
- Meeting with country stakeholders to specifically discuss progress and challenges and agree actions to increase the chance of success;
- Measuring indicators of success, particularly at the output level.

Regular monitoring is a key responsibility of Team Leaders, supported by the Finance Manager on budget expenditure. Team Leaders are supported by internal EQAP staff experienced in M&E who provide guidance, tools and share experiences[34]. EQAP has started to integrate more regular team-level planning and monitoring meetings to track progress and manage plans in, sometimes rapidly changing situations including country priorities and availability. A lesson identified in EQAP's review of its 2016-18 Business Plan was to ensure adequate staff time for monitoring, evaluation and learning was planned for. In 2019, EQAP will better coordinate staff travel to ensure as much as possible that the EQAP leadership, finance manager and team leaders are available for planning and monitoring meetings. The Director maintains responsibility for progress across EQAP, with resource management and allocation decision-making responsibility.

Data collection and analysis methods for regular monitoring will depend on what is being measured. In most cases for monthly meetings, it will involve information available through normal day-to-day management. However, it may also involve collecting and analysing existing information, interviewing key informants, conducting surveys and observation for monitoring progress towards and achievement of key result area indicators.

### F.3.2 Targeted internal evaluative activities

Several targeted evaluative activities will be undertaken by EQAP during implementation. These are smaller targeted activities that examine performance and lessons on specific EQAP work or issues and are not EQAP-wide evaluations. Examples of evaluative activities include:

- Conducting after action reviews at the end of key implementation milestones e.g. completion of a major activities such as PILNA data analysis, or development of new products e.g. school readiness assessments;
- Evaluating the effectiveness of new strategies or pilot approaches e.g. the Fiji phonics pilot;
- Assessing EQAP's contribution to change;
- 6 monthly internal reflection discussions;
- Mid-point extended internal reflection process.

Targeted internal evaluative activities are the responsibility of Team Leaders, supported by the EQAP leadership and internal M&E support. In 2018, six-monthly reporting requirements has largely driven activities to collect data on progress and achievements. From 2019, EQAP will undertake more evaluative activities throughout the year to ensure timely information is available to manage EQAP; and provide more in-depth information on progress and results.

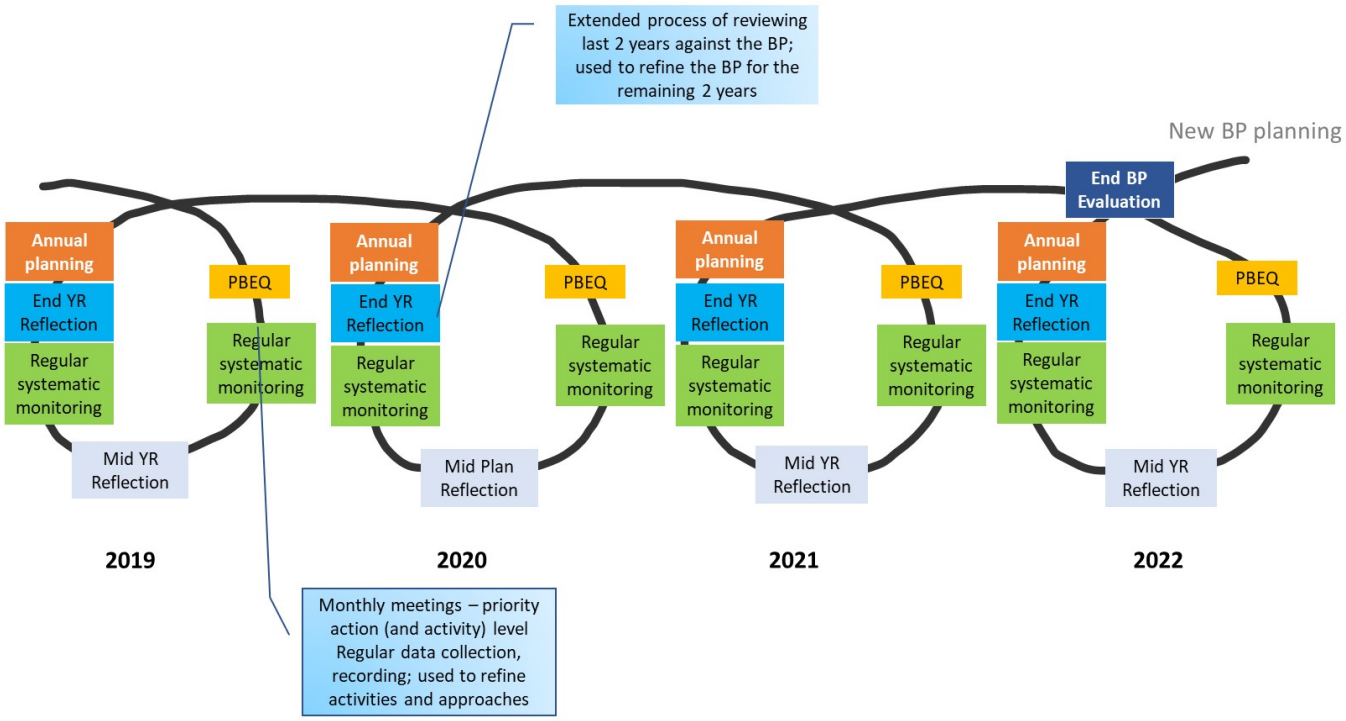
Data collection and analysis methods for evaluative activities will depend on what is being evaluated. Some activities may involve primary data collection using interviews, surveys or observation at the national or regional level, while others may consist of a review and synthesis of existing data e.g. records of how many people accessed information on the PRQS.

### F.3.3 End of business plan external evaluation

EQAP's major funders will commission an external evaluation of EQAP to be conducted at the end of 2022, in time for it to inform new discussions on continued funding beyond mid-2023. The evaluation will be based on the key evaluation questions outlined above but may also be supplemented by additional areas of enquiry identified by DFAT, MFAT and EQAP. While the external evaluation is commissioned by funders, it provides an important source of information for EQAP to use for its continuous cycle of improvement.

[34] EQAP does not have dedicated M&E specialists to support teams in their work. M&E support is provided by staff who also have other responsibilities. If funding is available under PacREF, EQAP will provide a coordination role for the overall PacREF M&E and recruit two M&E staff to support this function. These staff will also be a valuable resource to EQAP more broadly.

*Diagram 4: EQAP's cycle of planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning*




### F.3.4 MEL Planning

From 2019, and following approval of the Business Plan, EQAP will develop more detailed plans for monitoring, evaluation and learning. The plan will include a calendar of activities for each outcome and key result area; along with activities related to staff training, and development of MEL guidance and tools. This is to ensure that ensure staff have the required knowledge, skills and confidence required to undertake their responsibilities, as well as guidance and tools to support them for specific activities.

It is expected that this work will include the development of rubrics to capture key criteria and levels of performance which can be guided to guide data collection and evaluative processes. Rubrics allow for more in-depth descriptions of performance than indicators, which by their nature are specific to limited areas of performance. Rubrics are useful to help EQAP identify and collect credible evidence that answers the key evaluation questions and provides a framework for synthesising data for reporting on results in an efficient and effective manner. They can also be developed through participatory processes with stakeholders enabling EQAP and PICTs to reach a shared understanding of what PICTs' consider successful and the type and depth of changes they would like see.

### F.3.5 Results Framework

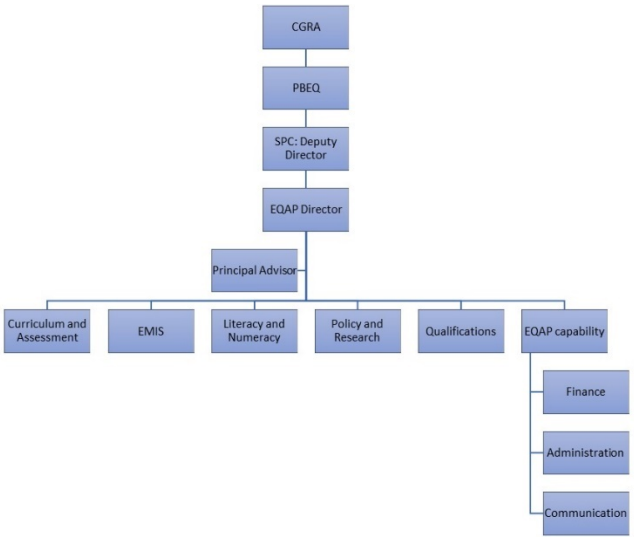
The draft results framework is attached as Annex 3 (separate document). The results framework outlines the indicators of success at output, key result and outcome levels of the theory of change, along with what information will be used to assess achievement of the indicators.

# Section G: Management

EQAP is managed by the EQAP Director, supported by a team of 31 staff, organised into technical areas. The team structure is an efficient way to deliver the day to day activities required to realise the theory of change. Since stimulating quality education improvements requires a range of technical inputs the EQAP team structure does not equate with the theory of change. This reflects the cross-cutting and integrated nature of the work where EQAP staff from one team often provide inputs into the work led by another team.

The Pacific Board for Quality Education, under the SPC Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA), govern EQAP. CRGA sets the strategic direction for SPC and EQAP. As a division within SPC, EQAP also provides a clear and sustained focal for Ministries of Education seeking policy and technical support. This distinguishes it from many other avenues of support, such as short-term bilateral development programmes.

*Diagram 5: EQAP organigram*




As a division of SPC, EQAP receives SPC support for specific functions including financial management; human resource management; planning, monitoring and evaluation and information, communication and technology.

## G.1 Planning

The overall intentions of EQAP's four-year business plan provide direction for the medium term. The business plan is underpinned by more detailed annual work plans, that allow EQAP to adapt to changing needs and circumstances.

This business plan comprises a few well-established areas of work that are relatively predictable in the types of activities, level of effort and scheduling. For example, PILNA. Most of the business plan comprises activities that relate to PICT's requests for support and EQAP is not able to plan in detail four-years in advance nor in some cases annually. Historically, EQAP has sought input from PICTs annually on support for the following year. In 2018, it commenced piloting a different approach with countries, based on more face-to-face consultations that also sought to understand support needs over a longer period, where activities one year were expected to contribute to a longer-term outcome. The effectiveness of this strategy requires however that PICTs have a longer-term vision and planning capacity or EQAP can, over time, influence this planning through the way to facilitates consultations. In many cases, MoE's plan one year at a time, and due to school year cycles key participants from the PICT Ministries of Education or teachers are available only at the same limited times of the year. PICTs also frequently change the activity scope and expected timing during the year, requiring EQAP to regularly follow-up, double-check needs and timing. Again, EQAP strategy is to engage with key country stakeholders, including MoE senior management, to manage its plan and expectations as well as possible.

The scope of work outlined in this Business Plan is linked to the resources (financial and human) available. EQAP receives more requests for support from PICTs than it has the capacity to undertake. Where this occurs,

EQAP communicates with PICTs and where feasible identifies alternative delivery mechanisms e.g. joint activities with another country.

## G.4 Budget and resource mobilisation plan

The total business plan 2019 – 2022 budget is EURO 11m.

The new four-year business plan allows EQAP to more closely tie its planning to key funding agreements.[35]

EQAP' financial resources originate from a variety of sources: SPC member commitments to education quality (17%); donor funds, such as those under the multi-year agreement with partners DFAT and MFAT (73%); and through fees earned from delivering critical education services, such as SPFSC and quality assurance and accreditation (9%), to the region.

*Table 6: EQAP 4 – year budget*

| Year | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | Total | Percentages |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Core | 482,400 | 482,400 | 482,400 | 482,400 | 1,929,600 | 17% |
| DFAT | 1,350,000 | 1,500,000 | 1,800,000 | 2,015,000 | 6,665,000 | 59% |
| MFAT | 825,000 | 825,000 | - | - | 1,650,000 | 15% |
| SPFSC | 252,000 | 252,000 | 252,000 | 252,000 | 1,008,000 | 9% |
| | 2,909,400 | 3,059,400 | 2,534,400 | 2,749,400 | 11,252,600 | 100% |

From 2019, EQAP has structured it budget in accordance with its outcomes so it will more accurately be able to manage and monitor its expenditure against the theory of change.

Funding from DFAT and MFAT is relatively stable for the next four years. Currently donor funding agreements with DFAT funding expire in 2023, while MFAT funding expires in 2021. DFAT and MFAT also provide funds that are not tied to specific projects, critically enabling EQAP to manage funds flexibly and direct resources to areas of high demand. Resources provided by SPC members is also relatively stable, although the timely payment of membership fees periodically impacts on implementation. Fees earned from examinations are already included in the budget.

Key cost drivers include regional travel to deliver support and services. EQAP uses a variety of strategies to ensure value for money objectives are achieved. Given the high cost of travel, EQAP schedules work travel so that several activities can be undertaken at the same time, using staff flexibly to support other technical areas where feasible. EQAP embarked on new efforts to strengthen its engagement with PICTs to better understand needs and plan areas of support by conducting more face-to-face consultations. Early indications are that this changed approach is welcomed by PICTs and is deepening EQAP's understanding of contexts, opportunities and challenges. However, the approach is more expensive than the previous approach of sending a form to countries to complete and submit. Some activities are costlier than others. PILNA is a valuable regional resource, with its value increasing with each additional cycle of implementation, yet it is expensive to conduct. This heightens the importance of increasing efforts to work with PICTs and other stakeholders to use the information to improve education quality across the Pacific.

However, there may be opportunities for EQAP to deliver additional support and services should additional financial resources materialise during the business plan period. There are indications that fees earned for quality assurance and accreditation services may grow in the upcoming period, allowing EQAP to deliver increased services. Fees are set on a 100% cost recovery basis. Periodically, PICTs may pay for additional services, as they have done in 2016-18.

EQAP regularly engages with other donor organisations, such as the European Commission, Asian Development Bank and Global Partnership for Education, discuss partnership opportunities in order to meet PICTs demand for EQAP services. EQAP has a flexible structure that enables it to increase or decrease its human resource capacity or change the mix of specialists in accordance with demand and availability of financial resources.

[35] Previously, EQAP developed three-year business plans.

## G.3 Risk management

Outlined below are key EQAP-wide risks. These are considered to have a higher likelihood of occurring and a higher impact if they do occur. While the EQAP Director has overall responsibility for ensuring risk management processes are effective, all EQAP staff are responsible for identifying and managing risks within their specific work areas. This includes elevating risks to the appropriate levels of authority within EQAP for further decisions and actions.

*Table 7: Key risks and mitigation strategies*

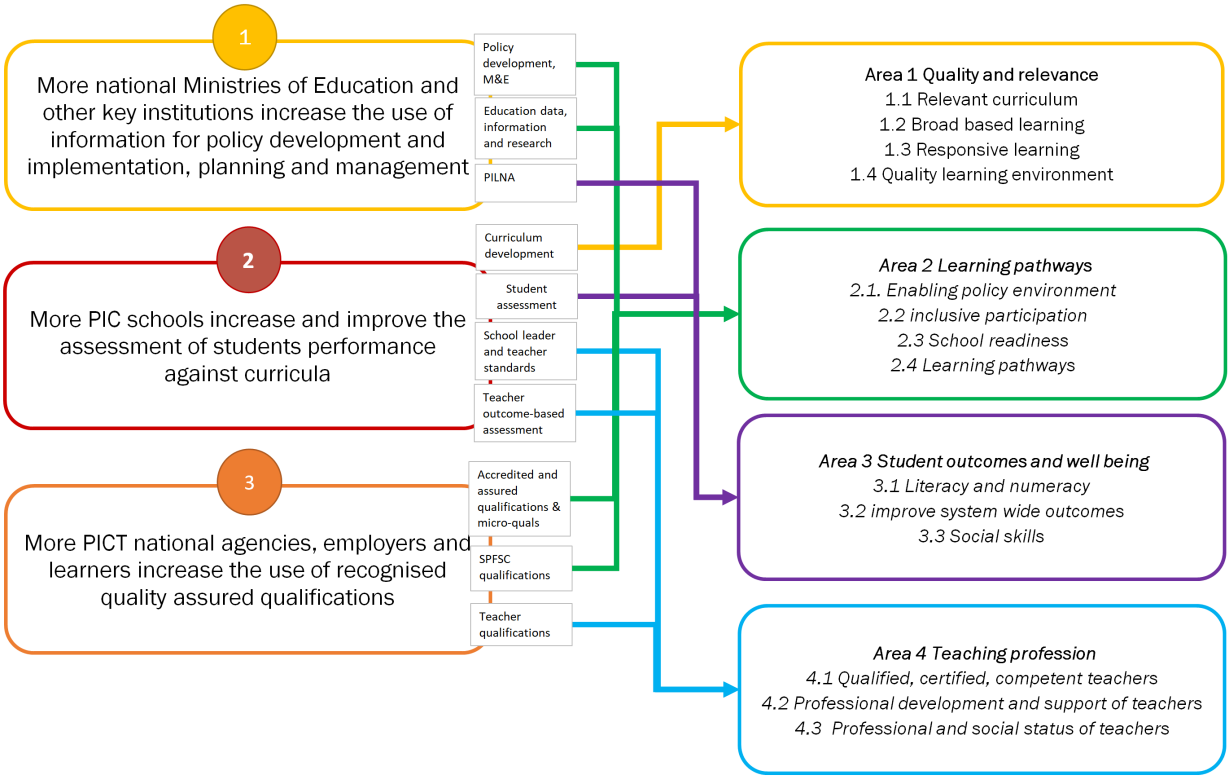
| No. | Key risks | Risk mitigation strategies | Responsibility for risk mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | PICTs do not have or are unable to retain adequate capacity (knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence, and organisational resources) to implement new or revised policies, interventions etc EQAP supports | EQAP discusses with the MoE and/or other relevant organisations the capacities and resources needed to implement initiatives; discusses options for implementation including using approaches such as phased implementation and cost-sharing | Team Leaders / EQAP Country Focal Points |
| 2 | EQAP does not have or cannot retain adequate capacity (breadth and/or depth of knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence, and organisational resources) to meet PICTs requests for EQAP's support (increasing risks in maintaining constructive working relationships with PICTs) | EQAP transparently and openly communicates its key capacities with PICTs at key points in the planning and implementation cycle (including PBEQ meeting that endorses the EQAP workplan annually) as a way to manage expectations<br>EQAP uses efficiency-saving approaches to best manage resources associated with travelling to/from multiple PICTs during the year. Approaches include using telephone, email, skype communication tools and supporting EQAP specialised staff to support the work of other teams<br>EQAP negotiates the scope, depth and timing of support with PICTs<br>Where able, EQAP supports PICTs to seek support from other avenues (e.g. other PICTs, service providers, multilateral development organisations, bilateral donors)<br>Where relevant and feasible, EQAP further develops its capacities to meet priority needs<br>EQAP, with the support of SPC, ensures efficient recruitment and procurement processes needed to recruit staff, ensuring wherever possible appropriate staff are on long-term contracts; utilises short-term contracted staff or consultants to fill needs | Director, Principal Advisor, Team Leaders / EQAP Country Focal Points, Finance Manager |
| 3 | Due to high-workloads, geographical distances and MoE turnover, EQAP finds it challenging build and maintain relationships with key education stakeholders at the country level | EQAP uses country focal points to provide an overview of EQAPs work in specific countries; encourages staff to visit key stakeholders (such as MoE, donors, other organisations) on a regular basis during country visits (which also ; is timely in its follow-up to requests for support<br>EQAP uses regional meetings as opportunities to share updates about EQAPs work, maintain communication and strengthen relationships<br>EQAP staff share country updates with colleagues before/after field visits | Director, Principal Advisor, Team Leaders, Country Focal Points |
| 4 | PICTs change national policy directions and priorities impacting on EQAP's support, the achievability of previously agreed outcomes and/or sustainability of outcomes | EQAP continues its collaborative approach to develop and maintain strong regional education quality frameworks, standards, benchmarks that provide foundational guidance and direction for PICTs | Director, Principal Advisor, Team Leaders |
| 5 | EQAP does not have sufficient funding to implement the Business Plan including the PacREF (specifically those activities where EQAP contributes) | Ensure PBEQ understands EQAP's funding position and outlook; Explore new funding avenues (e.g. GPE, EU, Norway)<br>EQAP to monitor and engage regularly with PacREF stakeholders on funding situation, including managing expectations about EQAP support and deliverables | Director, Other PacREF stakeholders, SPC Corporate Finance |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Key regional education bodies (FEDMM, CRGA, PIFs, Heads of Education) add responsibilities to EQAP's mandate thereby changing EQAP's directions and priorities | If additional responsibilities are raised discuss implications with PICTs, key EQAP donors and other education stakeholders in the region; EQAP uses regional forums to emphasise the focus of its mandate | Director |
| 7 | MoEs and other education stakeholders do not use the data and information captured, published and disseminated (through EQAPs support) for education policy, planning, monitoring and management | EQAP includes activities to increase data and information use in its activities | Director, Principal Advisor, Team Leaders |
| 8 | EQAP's varied stakeholders have differing interests and perspectives on EQAP's priorities, resulting in conflicting expectations making it impossible to meet them all | EQAP seeks to understand different stakeholders' expectations and changing expectations; where expectations impact negatively on EQAP's planning and support raise issues arising from different expectations with the SPC Deputy Director and PBEQ members. | Director |

# Annex 1: EQAP Business Plan Links to PacREF

The diagram below illustrates how key areas of EQAP's theory of change relate to the Pacific Regional Education Framework theory of change.

*Diagram 6: Link between EQAP TOC and PacREF TOC*



# Annex 2: 4 Year Indicative Work Plan

*See separate document*

## Annex 3: EQAP 4 Year Results Framework

*See separate document*