



**FORTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**
(18–20 June 2019, Noumea, New Caledonia)

**AGENDA ITEM No. 4.1: Report from the Pacific Board for Education Quality (PBEQ) –
a CRGA subcommittee**

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

Summary

1. This paper presents the outcomes of the fourth annual meeting of the Pacific Board for Education Quality (PBEQ), a subcommittee of CRGA, as agreed by the board members on 22 March 2019. The full set of meeting outcomes is appended as Annex A.
2. The subcommittee met on 21 and 22 March 2019 to discuss matters regarding regional education quality and regional qualifications. Key discussions included the following:
 - a. Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) 2018 results (at the PILNA steering group meeting prior to PBEQ);
 - b. Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) 2018 results;
 - c. EQAP's role in the qualifications area;
 - d. New EQAP business plan for 2019–2022;
 - e. Role of EQAP in implementing the new Pacific Regional Education Framework;
 - f. Country request methodology implemented by EQAP in 2018.
3. Key decisions from the PBEQ meeting included direction in four main areas:
 - a. Results reporting
 - b. Qualifications
 - c. Business plan and work plan
 - d. Priorities for EQAP in 2019, which fall under the four business plan outcomes. Specific work towards the priorities includes the analysis and reporting of PILNA 2018 results, which are to be released on July 22, 2019. Following release of the results, EQAP will focus on supporting countries in disseminating their national results to stakeholder groups, including ministry officials, school leaders, teachers and parents as well as in-country sector partners.

Recommendation

4. CRGA is invited to receive the report of the CRGA subcommittee, the Pacific Board for Education Quality (PBEQ), as presented.

Report from the Pacific Board for Education Quality (PBEQ) – a CRGA subcommittee

Purpose

5. This paper presents the outcomes of the fourth annual meeting of the Pacific Board for Education Quality (PBEQ), a subcommittee of CRGA, as agreed by board members on 22 March 2019. The full set of meeting outcomes is appended as Annex A.

Background

6. The Ninth Conference of the Pacific Community endorsed governance changes to the operation of the former Pacific Board for Educational Assessment. The Conference agreed to rename the SPC programme as the Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP), and to approve the role and function of the Pacific Board for Education Quality as a subcommittee of CRGA.
7. Terms of reference (TOR) were developed and endorsed by PBEQ at their March 2016 meeting, the first official meeting of the new subcommittee. The TOR were then endorsed by CRGA out of session in late 2017.
8. As per the TOR, the subcommittee is responsible for providing advice to EQAP and assisting it with some of its delegated functions to ensure good governance of the programme. The following points from the terms of reference are provided as context for this report:
 - It is expected that all subcommittee members and member representatives have the expertise and authority to represent their nominating country or organisation with respect to the business of the PBEQ. It is expected that subcommittee members and member representatives will in turn keep their national CRGA member representatives informed on PBEQ matters.
 - The Subcommittee shall make provision to convene an Issues Meeting at least eight weeks before the CRGA of each year.
 - In all meetings of the Subcommittee, outcomes shall be arrived at through discussion and consensus. Outcomes shall be agreed to by all members of the subcommittee and shall be transmitted to the CRGA.
9. The subcommittee met for the fourth time in March of 2019. The outcomes of this meeting, which were endorsed by the board on 22 March 2019, are provided for CRGA in the remainder of this report.

Results reporting

10. The Secretariat draws CRGA's attention to improvements made to results reporting in the 2018 EQAP results presentation and the direction given to EQAP for further improvement of reporting in future:
 - a. PBEQ noted the progress made over the past three years from activity reporting to reporting against business plan outcomes.
 - b. PBEQ directed EQAP to provide more in-depth information, including data and evidence showing how EQAP results contribute to improvements in classroom teaching and

learning, challenges identified and types of mitigation strategies employed, lessons learned, and best practices, as well as consideration of cross-cutting themes such as gender, disability and other marginalised groups.

- c. PBEQ requested that, in addition to the overall EQAP results, member countries each be given specific information about EQAP's work in that country and the results achieved.

Qualifications

11. The Secretariat draws CRGA's attention to the high level of interest of countries and development partners in EQAP's role in regional qualifications work. PBEQ directed EQAP to continue to work with a wide variety of stakeholders representing industry as well as education to facilitate increased consultation and collaboration around qualifications, quality assurance, mutual recognition and micro-qualifications. PBEQ also noted that the needs of member countries differ greatly as some countries have national qualifications authorities while others do not.

Business plan and work plan

12. The Secretariat draws CRGA's attention to the significant changes made to the ways in which EQAP engages with member countries and the region as a result of the partnership with New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and Australia's Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), which came into effect in early 2018. As a result of the partnership, EQAP has long-term sustainable programmatic funding in place to work with countries and regional partners towards achieving business plan outcomes. PBEQ supported and endorsed the new EQAP business plan 2019–2022, which has four outcomes:

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

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

Outcome 3: More PICT government agencies, employers and learners increase use of recognised, quality-assured qualifications.

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

13. PBEQ supported and endorsed the new country request methodology, which includes in-depth consultation with the Ministry/Department of Education in the country and relevant sector partners to understand how EQAP can best support efforts to achieve national education priorities. The consultations fed into the business plan and will continue to feed into annual work plans.
14. PBEQ endorsed the activities proposed under the Pacific Regional Education Framework that are assigned to EQAP and that fit within its new business plan. The board directed EQAP to pursue those activities in partnership with member countries, development partners and other implementing agencies following further prioritisation by Pacific Heads of Education Systems at their meeting in late April.

Conclusion

15. PBEQ received the results of EQAP's work in 2018 and provided constructive feedback and direction to make results reporting more useful to members in future years. The board provided clear direction to EQAP on the decision items presented and expressed support and appreciation for the efforts made in articulating the new business plan, which was endorsed. PBEQ also commended EQAP on its efforts to improve how country requests are solicited and responded to through the country programming methodology and supported the pursuit of regionally agreed actions under the rolling plan of the Pacific Regional Education Framework.

Recommendation

16. CRGA is invited to receive the report of the CRGA subcommittee, the Pacific Board for Education Quality (PBEQ), as presented.

Annex A

Report from the fourth (4th) annual meeting of the Pacific Board for Education Quality (PBEQ) – a CRGA Subcommittee – 22 March 2019

Outcome from the Director's report

The Subcommittee noted the report with appreciation.

Outcomes from the EQAP results report

The Subcommittee

- a) noted the comprehensive report and also noted that there is international recognition for EQAP's work.
- b) acknowledged the progress in outcomes-based reporting over the past three years progress in EQAP Work.
- c) acknowledged that there is a need to use data to ensure improvements in the classroom moving to more impact/outcomes, sharing and learning and using that at a national level.
- d) requested that, from the next meeting of the PBEQ, each country should be given an opportunity to share experiences of EQAP's work in their respective country.
- e) requested that future reports monitor EQAP's progress using more in-depth analysis and coverage of outcomes and how the data collected is used to contribute to improvements in the classroom for the regional report,
- f) articulated the need to have individual country reports (additional to the regional report) that are tailored for the information and use of each country.
- g) suggested the inclusion in all reports the challenges identified, the types of mitigation strategies employed, the lessons learnt and best practices including cross-cutting themes such as gender and disability and other marginalized groups.

Outcomes from the South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC) report

The Subcommittee

- a) has noted and acknowledged the comprehensive report.
- b) noted that an investment in SPFSC teachers provides significant benefits.
- c) requested that the next report include actual numbers of students as well as percentages to identify if changes are statistically significant.
- d) acknowledged the new direction towards developing a Moodle platform and at the same time is mindful of the internet challenges each country face. EQAP was advised to further explore the idea and introduce it incrementally.
- e) acknowledge the need to assess national teacher standards against the Pacific/EQAP teacher framework to help us compare and improve standards in the region although the national standards will continue to be the focus and extend the assessment to other Years, and for EQAP to assess if this can be extended to PILNA.
- f) directed EQAP to continue with the Micro-Qualification for examiners and moderators for Years 12 and 13.

Outcomes on Qualifications

The Subcommittee

- a) noted the general support for EQAP's work on Qualifications.
- b) suggested reviewing and reconsidering appropriate terminology to delineate between micro-qualifications and recognized short courses.
- c) requested that EQAP ensure that Micro-qualifications (MQs) are really part of a pathway to a qualification if that is what they are intended to be.
- d) identified the need to address cross credits and mutual recognition across the region.
- e) requested that EQAP coordinate (facilitate?) increased consultation and cooperation between higher education commissions or equivalents with EQAP.
- f) endorsed consultation with industry stakeholders labor colleagues as related to qualifications work.
- g) noted the contribution of regionally coordinated work on qualifications to PACER Plus (labor Mobility).
- h) requested that work be pursued to address the issue of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL),

Outcomes from the Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS) Presentation

The Subcommittee

- a) has noted the presentation by the Fiji Ministry staff .
- b) Endorsed that as a way forward, countries wishing to take advantage of the FEMIS/VEFIS database architecture (no cost for this) to contact Fiji, who will then submit a paper to Cabinet so that all countries get access and work together to develop national capacities with Vanuatu, PNG and Fiji with support from EQAP and we share all improvements.
- c) endorsed that smaller nations may wish to look at a limited number of modules.
- d) noted that Fiji is working with the Commonwealth of Learning to get some technical support in data analysis and to develop the reporting functions particularly to meet UIS requirements

Outcomes from Partnership

The Subcommittee has noted the following:

- a) that the partnership is progressing very well and the opportunity for long term planning.
- b) the benefits of the partnership and of the long term funding.
- c) the intention of DFAT to provide funding towards the PacREF and UIS Collaboration initiatives.

Outcome from Innovation Funding

The subcommittee has endorsed the pursuit of the concept presented – Phonics intervention in Samoa at the transition level from vernacular to English language literacy in a bilingual education context.

Outcomes from the Business Plan 2019-22

The Subcommittee

- a) congratulated EQAP on the scope and volume of work dedicated towards developing its new four year Business Plan (2019-2022). The Business Plan is evident of EQAP expansive role in supporting countries in the region improve quality of education. It demonstrates a strong level of accountability and responsibility on EQAP's role in the raising the quality of education in the region.
- b) acknowledged the transition from Strategic Planning towards Business Planning. The volume of the work in the Business Plan is indicative of the demand from the countries and EQAP is encouraged to look at its resources and partnership arrangements to ensure that the BP outcomes are met.
- c) noted the excellent presentation of the BP and suggested the inclusion of regional knowledge and tools, gender and social inclusiveness, cultural and traditional knowledge learning, and alignment to SDGs.
- d) suggested adjustments to (1.1) role of EMIS and (1.3) creating a policy clearing house to share policies for adaptation under Outcome 1, and revision to 3.1 to include "in conjunction with NQAs".
- e) expressed its collective support and endorsement for the EQAP Business Plan 2019-2022.

Outcomes from Country Request Methodology

The Subcommittee

- a) acknowledged the new methodology and the level of country participation in the formulation of the country requests. Key education stakeholders were consulted and country priorities are identified in alignment with EQAP's mandate.
- b) noted that in the past countries have used the Country Request Form to indicate their requests.
- c) expressed its appreciation for the opportunity to deliberate face-to-face with EQAP staff on the types of support they can access and to agree on the best mode for engagement with identified national education priorities.
- d) expressed its full support and endorsement of the new country methodology.

Outcome from EQAP in PacREF

The Subcommittee endorsed EQAP's pursuit of the activities suggested in the current version of the PacREF rolling plan.