

**FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**
(26–28 June 2018, Noumea, New Caledonia)

**AGENDA ITEM No. 4: Report from the Pacific Board for Educational Quality (PBEQ) –
a CRGA subcommittee**

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

Summary

1. This paper presents the outcomes of the third (3rd) annual meeting of the Pacific Board for Educational Quality (PBEQ) subcommittee (PBEQ Subcommittee), as agreed by the members of the PBEQ Subcommittee on 23 March 2018. The full report is appended as Annex 1.
2. The board met between 22 and 23 April 2018 to discuss matters regarding regional education quality and regional qualifications. Key discussions included the following:
 - i. Persistent low achievement levels in the regional Form 7 Certificate (SPFSC), particularly in mathematics and science courses.
 - ii. Regional qualifications and mutual recognition of qualifications across the region in pursuit of greater labour mobility for Pacific Island people.
 - iii. -The collection of national education data by international entities, such as the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), for international reporting purposes.
3. Key decisions from the board meeting included direction from the PBEQ Subcommittee that:
 - i. SPC's Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) will further investigate achievement levels and develop actions to improve capacity, resources and confidence in the qualification across participating countries.
 - ii. EQAP will do further work to identify the mechanics of mutual recognition and provide further information on how mutual recognition could work in the Pacific region, taking into consideration the implications and obligations of the Tokyo Convention and PACER Plus.
 - iii. EQAP will coordinate the data collection for the UIS second Catalogue of Learning Assessments and support countries in verifying and updating data already collected in the first Catalogue of Learning Assessments.

Recommendations

4. CRGA is invited to receive the report of the PBEQ Subcommittee, as presented in Annex 1.

Annex 1: Report from the third (3rd) annual meeting of the Pacific Board for Educational Quality (PBEQ) – a CRGA Subcommittee – 23 March 2018

Background

The Ninth Conference of the Pacific Community endorsed governance changes to the operation of the former Pacific Board for Educational Assessments. 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 Educational Quality as a subcommittee of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA).

A terms of reference was developed and endorsed by the PBEQ at their March 2016 meeting, the first official meeting of the new subcommittee. The terms of reference was endorsed by CRGA out of session in late 2017.

As per the terms of reference, the subcommittee is responsible for providing advice to EQAP and to assist it with some of its delegated functions, to ensure the 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.

The subcommittee met for a second time in March of 2017 and a third time in March of 2018. The outcomes of the third meeting, endorsed by the group on the 23rd March 2018, are provided for the CRGA in the remainder of this report with the PBEQ-endorsed outcomes of the two previous meetings appended in the annexes.

Director's Report

The Subcommittee has noted the following:

- a) An amendment was made to the Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) Business Plan adding a sixth outcome to the initial five.
- b) Integrated work across areas of expertise is ongoing within EQAP.
- c) EQAP is working collaboratively both with other divisions within and with organizations outside of The Pacific Community (SPC).
- d) Accreditation of eight regional qualifications has now been completed. This is a first in the world.
- e) Release of the South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC) exam final results prior to Christmas break attributed to new assessment software PacSIMS along with improved processes and quality assurance.
- f) Partnership arrangements between SPC, Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).
- g) Life skills support remains a priority although clarity is required in defining what it means. This is to be an agenda item for in-depth discussion at the next meeting of the subcommittee.
- h) UNESCO funding relating to the Qualifications work that was raised during the 2017 PBEQ meeting did not materialise however UNESCO is supporting Qualifications work in other ways, for example, the 2018 study tour to Malaysia.
- i) Regional education is one of SPC's top four priority areas following the Prioritization process.
- j) Data collection, capture and analysis through the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) Regional Support Facility is underway in preparation for the Forum Education Ministers' Meeting (FEEdMM) in Nauru in May 2018.
- k) EQAP is asked to provide a list of services that are available for countries to access, to minimise ad hoc requests and the process of accessing EQAP's assistance was clarified.
- l) EQAP is asked to provide a list of countries' projects and engagements to allow countries to learn from one another.

SPFSC 2017 Results

The Subcommittee:

- a) Requested that the low achievement levels in specific subjects be further investigated, particularly naming Maths and Sciences.
- b) Endorsed the idea of work with ACER to look at how the current outcomes-based SPFSC compares to the traditional scaled-score SPFSC in place prior to outcomes-based education.
- c) Encouraged capacity building at the local level such that ministries and schools are empowered to do the school-based training in the future.

- d) Acknowledged that resource materials for teachers and students will be available for next year, initially across five subjects.
- e) Asked EQAP to provide indicative costs for national support (teacher training, facilities, resources, etc.) to the countries and engage with the ministries individually to improve levels of in-country support for delivery of SPFSC.
- f) Acknowledged that in addition to ensuring teachers' qualifications, there is a need to have an assessment of teachers' competency.
- g) Noted that Vanuatu has gathered and is using videos from online sources to support teaching of SPFSC concepts.
- h) Asked that students who are "Yet to Achieve" be provided with an opportunity to re-sit the SPFSC.
- i) Requested that countries who are part of University and Teacher Training institution councils for education advocate for inclusion of outcomes based education in pre-service teacher training programs.
- j) Asked EQAP and the countries to consider ways of building confidence in the qualification within the region.
- k) Directed EQAP to continue to provide provisional results to Ministries of Education prior to the release of the final results.
- l) Directed EQAP to continue the current practice of providing only outcomes based reporting of results unless a specific request for a grade-equivalent or skill-score report is made for institutional purposes (scholarship evaluation, admission to a program/institution).

Qualifications

The Subcommittee

- a) Decided not to establish another subcommittee to endorse accreditation recommendations from the accreditation committee.
- b) Decided to leave the system of endorsing recommendations for accreditation as is with modifications to ensure timely responses:
 - a. The recommendation and request for approval will be sent out with a delivery and read receipt activated and clear due date for response (generally one calendar week)
 - b. A reminder will be sent out immediately following the due date providing one week of additional time. The reminder will clearly state that a non-response would be taken as an agreement to the recommendation.
- c) Directed EQAP to explore accreditation of online learning provided by The Virtual University of the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).
- d) Agreed in principle that EQAP should pursue the mutual recognition of qualifications within the region.
- e) Directed EQAP to do further work to identify the mechanics of mutual recognition and provide further information on how mutual recognition could work in the Pacific region, taking into consideration the implications and obligations of the Tokyo Convention and PACER Plus.

SPC/DFAT/MFAT/ACER Partnership

The subcommittee:

- a) Noted that the FEEdMM in May will finalize the new regional education framework and set regional priorities.
- b) Acknowledged that national priorities defined at the country level will guide how EQAP engages with each country.
- c) Agreed to participate in country by country consultation processes to develop the next business plan.
- d) Acknowledged the value of a whole-group discussion of priorities to inform business planning once the individual consultations are complete.

Research Proposal

The subcommittee:

- a) Expressed support for the concept, highlighting the need to link to national priorities and the regional education framework.
- b) Identified that there could be two or even more strands aimed at teachers, ministry level personnel and policy makers.
- c) Directed EQAP to develop further the proposal from the concept and provide information back to the subcommittee indicating the process, the costs, who will bear the costs and timelines.

Educators International

The subcommittee:

- a) Acknowledged the information provided and raised questions around specific details including training costs for teachers, smart phone costs, printer costs and related items.
- b) Noted that EQAP has budgeted for a trial of the tools in a few schools in countries interested in participating in such a trial.
- c) Several countries expressed interest in being part of the trial – follow up will be done with those **countries** to plan further timelines and logistics.

Request from UIS

The subcommittee:

- a) Acknowledged the request from UNESCO UIS to engage EQAP in the collection of the Catalogue of Learning Assessments (CLA) 2.0 data in 2018 and the potential value to countries in being able to benchmark their own progress over time.
- b) Directed EQAP to coordinate the data collection and support countries in verifying and updating data already collected in the first CLA.
- c) Acknowledged that reviewing the SDG4 targets in advance of data collection may help to inform countries in the types of information they will likely be asked to provide.

Work Program and Methodology

The subcommittee:

- a) Requested and received clarification of newly defined priorities as well as the difference between the former work program request process and the new methodology.
- b) Suggested that there should be three-year planning by countries increasingly to align with EQAP's three-year planning process, acknowledging changing priorities.
- c) Suggested that countries work to bring together development partners, bi-lateral planning processes, national planning processes and EQAP to inform aligned planning.
- d) Directed EQAP to work with focal points at the country level to ensure timely confirmation of engagement.
- e) Directed that there should be more equity across country access to EQAP services, bringing newer countries into the process.
- f) Committed to working with EQAP towards a phased implementation of the new process beginning with the voluntary participation of Vanuatu and Solomon Islands and tentative participation of the Cook Islands following review at home.

PBEQ Terms of Reference

The subcommittee:

- a) Discussed the subcommittee's link to FEdMM, with clarification provided by PIFS that the FEdMM agenda setting process is facilitated through the Pacific Heads of Education Systems (PHES) with secretariat support from UNESCO.
- b) Asked who is to respond to the articles from the Nadi Declaration coming out of the 20th CCEM. Suggested that future subcommittee agendas include reference to alignment with SDG4 and CCEM.

**Annexes to the
Report from the third (3rd) annual meeting of the Pacific Board for Educational Quality (PBEQ) – a CRGA
Subcommittee – 23 March 2018**

Annex A: Outcomes of the first (1st) PBEQ CRGA subcommittee meeting

1. The Meeting was attended by Chief Executive Officers, Directors, Permanent Secretaries and representatives of Ministries of Education from Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu; Observer members from Cook Islands and Niue; Consultative members from the University of the South Pacific, UNICEF, Forum Secretariat, BOSTES (formerly the New South Wales Board of Studies) and New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA); development partners from Australian DFAT Suva Office and New Zealand MFAT Suva Office as well as representatives from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). A complete list of Participants is attached as *Appendix*.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

2. The meeting chaired by DFAT representative Ms Sheona McKenna, convened at 0900 with an opening prayer from the USP representative Dr Kedrayate.
3. The Chair welcomed all the members present, and acknowledged the presence of the two SPC Deputy Director General from the Suva and Noumea offices, Dr Audrey Aumua and Mr Cameron Diver, adding that their presence was an indication of the importance of this meeting.
4. In her opening remarks, she reminded the members of the 2015 meeting in which a lot of clarification was shared by the Director General and DDG Cameron Diver, the new name EQAP and retention of the PBEQ Board and the confirmation from the CRGA of this Board being a Subcommittee.
5. With regards to the appointment of Chair, she was happy to remain and chair through this meeting and perhaps revisit the appointment of Chair towards the end of the meeting. There was no objection to this proposal.

Agenda

6. PIFS requested for a time slot for a brief regarding regional update, under 'Any Other Matters'.
7. The election of Chair was also amended so that it becomes the last item on the agenda.
8. The agenda was adopted with those changes.

Apologies

9. Apologies were received from Kiribati, New Zealand Development Counsellor Mr Jonathan Rowe, UNESCO and RMI who was still travelling. Absent was Papua New Guinea.

Minutes of the 2015 Board Meeting

10. The members considered the minutes of the 2015 meeting. There was an amendment from Vanuatu on the correct name of their Ministry, which should be 'Ministry of Education and Training'.
11. There were no other amendments.

Matters Arising from the Minutes of 2015 Board Meeting

12. There were no issues raised. The Minutes of the 2015 Board meeting were subsequently adopted with the above amendment.

Director's Report

13. The Director again welcomed all the members present including the education partners from around the region. The highlights of her report included the following:
 - a) The Programme (EQAP) is well established and respected, and continues to provide essential support for the Pacific Community members and education related matters.
 - b) EQAP is equipped with highly qualified staff with specialised skills across all the necessary domains that included teaching, curriculum, technology, leadership and research as well as having intimate knowledge of the Pacific education system.
 - c) EQAP officers have regional perspectives and experience within several education systems across the region as well as close connections with those education systems which adds value to the work they do in the region.
 - d) As a regional programme, EQAP can ensure that all member countries and territories are able to access the skills and expertise of the professional officers rather than the expertise being limited to individual countries whose ministries might be able to recruit that expertise into a national role.
14. The Board noted:
 - a) the move from project funding to programme funding to ensure long term sustainability of core functions.
 - b) the various challenges such as; that a number of projects would be ending in June 2016, the limited resources available to continue to support the countries with the regional qualification and the form 6 national examinations

in the countries, the core funding barely covering the core activities and administrative costs and the ongoing issue of resourcing of EQAP.

- c) that although the EQAP is faced by these challenges, it has also provided an opportunity for the Programme to think of a way forward, to consider what the region requires of EQAP and how we are going to collectively reach that stage, that's where the importance of the Business Plan comes in.

EQAP Business Plan

15. The Board has noted:

- a) EQAP's business plan with key areas and processes and how it ties to the SPC Strategic Plan and priorities, including the various goals and outcomes, the specific results of those outcomes and the identified action points anticipated to achieving those outcomes.
- b) the four major risks outlined with the respective mitigation strategies.
- c) that there is no shortage of requests from the countries so the services and support continues to be in demand, but it all comes down to resources, Also, how these priorities would be managed from the current resources in order to meet the anticipated outcomes, at the same time exploring other opportunities of acquiring additional resources.
- d) the system in place in which the countries are asked to submit the areas they need EQAP assistance with, then there would be discussions on the finer details of the request leading to the implementation of the request. In the process, changing priorities in the countries are factored in. EQAP was asked if it could develop a plan to show the priorities in the countries and to ensure continuity in providing the required support. The countries input would be solicited in this process.
- e) that EQAP members still benefit from the core contribution put together by its members and that the scope of services delivered to each country is not relative to the member country's contribution level (regional solidarity). All the requests received are assessed, the priority requests are identified and those are the ones that usually take priority in addressing. Remote assistance are also carried out wherever and whenever it is possible.
- f) that the finalised work plan is the outcome of negotiations between EQAP and the countries, taking into consideration the priority areas they have requested assistance for.
- g) that in terms of servicing the 26 members of SPC, this could be addressed in the TOR of the PBEQ CRGA subcommittee and that countries who give additional contribution specifically for EQAP could be primary beneficiary of EQAP services, and that services beyond that can be on cost recovery mode. Education is a global need across the SPC membership and that it probably needs strategic focus and a more and broader conversation than just the EQAP members.
- h) that there has never been a reduction of services to countries from EQAP, although there has been a drop in funding and that there has not been a decision to drop/reduce the services of EQAP although the core funding has remained the same for a long period of time. The focus should not be whether more core funding be directed to EQAP, but how to leverage the core funding to the services of EQAP and how we can promote sustainability of project funded activities.
- i) its concern regarding the shortfall in EQAP finances and requested for information on whether there has been any attempt to get EQAP out of its current financial situation. The Secretariat responded that it is now actively looking at ways to resolving that, whilst maintaining providing services to the countries and exploring an efficient management system of its resources.
- j) that DFAT has also taken note of the fact that there is a shortfall in all its supported projects ending in June 2016. DFAT is also pursuing the development of a longer term partnership funding to fund EQAP instead of individual projects. In this process, there will be a period of transition and the transition funding that DFAT will provide is intended for the three projects that end in June (PaBER, PRQS and Literacy and Numeracy). This funding is not intended to cover the shortfall of EQAP as showing.
- k) MFAT's intention to increase its support through the MFAT funded project on literacy and numeracy in the region (PILNA), as opposed to increasing its contribution.

Draft Terms of Reference

16. A draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for this specially mandated CRGA Subcommittee had previously been circulated before the meeting for member's review. Some points that were raised for consideration and inclusion in the ToR included:

- a) the inclusion of the full SPC membership and the opportunities of accessing EQAP services, but for this Subcommittee to agree first on whether other countries can participate and then work on a modality of accessing EQAP services. Perhaps include a footnote to further elaborate on membership.
- b) mention of voting members.

17. The finalised version of the Draft ToR is available as an *Informational paper*.

Update papers:**PILNA**

18. The Subcommittee has noted:

- a) and acknowledged the support from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) towards PILNA and particularly, its intended support for a longer term rather than just a one-time implementation. MFAT commended EQAP for the amount of work done and the preparation that went into it, within a short period of time.
- b) that one of the objectives of the 2015 administration was to promote the effective use of data in formulating national policy, in monitoring and in designing appropriate intervention programmes to improve students' achievements. Consequently and in line with this purpose, EQAP will continue to support the countries in the implementation of targeted interventions.
- c) the objective of the call by the Ministers of Education for the re-implementation of PILNA which was to provide them with information on where to put resources in their education systems, at regional and national level,
- d) that the detailed information with regards to the dissemination of results of the 2015 implementation will be discussed more in greater detail at the PILNA Steering Committee meeting which was scheduled for the next day after this meeting.
- e) Recommendations

The Board has:

- i. noted the update and progress of the 2015 PILNA.*
- ii. indicated its support in the commitment of the countries in the dissemination of the 2015 results to relevant stakeholders.*
- iii. indicated its support the development of various strategies to implement intervention.*
- iv. supported the proposal for a long-term programme of PILNA.*

PaBER

19. The Board noted the PaBER overall goal which was to see that the level of literacy and numeracy of children in the Pacific region improve. This overarching aim is expected to be supported through the outcomes of the PaBER pilot programme in terms of developing and using tools to inform and identify policy and intervention that support learning improvement.
20. The countries that participated in the pilot stated their support to the PaBER approach as it has made them aware of their situation and consequently, has led them to make relevant changes to their policies and embark on new activities and integrating new concepts into their education system.
21. Also, the approach has made them more aware that the perception and understanding of those who work in the offices, is not necessarily as true as to what goes on in the classrooms/fields.

Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS)

22. The Board recognised the need for the PRQS to continue and was pleased to hear that PRQS is intended to be taken up by EQAP once its project life ends, but subject to funding availability.
23. Also noted the original intention of the PRQS that when the framework becomes robust, it should be self-sustained.
24. The PRQS is not intended to replace the national registers but rather, brings the region together. It also helps the countries that do not have any qualifications framework agencies such as Kiribati and Tuvalu.
25. Recommendations:

The Subcommittee has endorsed:

- a) the progress of the PRQS developments;*
- b) the regional accrediting function of EQAP; and*
- c) the development and recognition of regional qualifications;*

Regional Qualification – South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC)

26. The Board noted:

- a) the qualification's financial status which was showing a deficit. However, EQAP has put in place measures to resolve this issue, such as utilising the capacity of project staff for qualifications related activities.
- b) that there has not been a decline in the number of enrolments since Tonga nationalised the qualification, the enrolment number has continued to increase but gradually.
- c) that some smaller countries do not have any other option at this level such as Tuvalu, a challenge for the 'bigger countries' on regionalism and how they can help the smaller countries and ensure that this regional qualification continues. However, for Vanuatu, the SPFSC is a long term arrangement and that it has been integrated into their system.

- d) Tuvalu's concern over the delay in the release of the students' examination results. The Programme (EQAP) explained that it has reviewed its entire examination processes and have worked out plans to resolve this and subsequently the entire examination cycle processes as a whole.
- e) that for some countries, they have given the liberty to the heads of the schools to choose which option they take. However, noting the fact that the request to set up this qualification had come from this Board, it is only fair that this Board should support it. The Board is also requesting for more information to be able to make decision on how to support this qualification, going forward.
- f) USP continues to recognise the SPFSC as an entry qualification and has included it in its Handbook for enrolment into their university. However, they have seen that the influx of their enrolment has come from the foundation level.
- g) that most of the examiners who are engaged in the writing of examination papers for the SPFSC are current and past examiners at the New Zealand NCEA level so the standards are comparable.

Any other matters

27. PIFS Brief to the EQAP Board on Regional Education

Background

- FEdMM meeting
 - 2001 first meeting of FEdMM
 - FBEAP development
 - FBEAP Review in 2008
 - PEDF agreement in 2009
- PIFS has been leading regional education coordination for the past 15 years

PEDF

- 2009 – 2015
- Need for review and development of new regional education framework

PHES Meeting Resolution

- Discussed a draft FEdMM agenda
- Established a Small Working Group

The way forward:

- Comprehensive review of regional education
- Consultancy to review PEDF and regional education
- Meetings of Small Working Group of PHES
 - Finalise FEdMM agenda and working procedures
 - Discuss the new PEDF
- Consultation on new PEDF

Funding:

- Consultation with Global Partnership for Education
- UNESCO funding
- SPC Regional EMIS Facility

FEdMM:

- Deferred to first quarter of 2017
- Venue and time TBC
- Agenda for high level decisions – thematic areas PEDF to be thematic in structure rather than subsectoral

28. Update from the Fiji Ministry of Education on the effect of cyclone Winston that affected most of the Fiji schools.

29. Nomination of Chair: Fiji was nominated as Chair.

30. The next meeting of this Board should convene at least 8 weeks prior to the CRGA meeting.

Concluding Remarks

31. The Board members thanked the Chair, Ms Sheona McKenna for a wonderful job in chairing the last two meetings and noting that this was her last meeting. Also thanked her for all her support, collaboration and assistance to the region.

32. Also a vote of thanks to the Director and staff of EQAP for all the work done and the clarity of the business plan, to PIFS on the work they are doing about FEdMM and to all the members present.

33. The meeting ended at 4.45pm.

Annex B: Outcomes of the second (2nd) PBEQ CRGA Subcommittee Meeting

Opening Remarks

1. The Meeting was attended by Chief Executive Officers, Directors, Permanent Secretaries and representatives of Ministries of Education from Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Niue, Nauru, Kiribati, FSM and RMI; Development Partners from the University of the South Pacific, UNICEF, UNESCO, Forum Secretariat (PIFS), NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Education Standards (BOSTES), New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), Australian DFAT (Canberra and Suva office) and New Zealand MFAT (Wellington and Suva office) as well as staff from the Pacific Community (SPC).
2. The Second (2nd) meeting of the PBEQ CRGA Subcommittee commenced around 8.30 am with the Director EQAP briefly welcoming the Subcommittee members present.
3. Mr Gordon Burns of the Australian DFAT was asked to assume the role of the Chair as the presiding Chair, Fiji had sent in their apologies.
4. Following a prayer from the Secretariat, the Deputy Director General of SPC, Suva, Dr Audrey Aumua extended a warm welcome to the Subcommittee including the Development Partners. She highlighted the importance of SPC being part of education in the region. For the other programmes within SPC to be sustainable, one of the important tools is education, adding that education is the key to resolving most challenges and issues around us. Hence, the work of EQAP is important. She also highlighted the specialised skill sets within EQAP, reiterating the importance of EQAP's work in the region.
5. The Chair reiterated the comments by Dr Aumua stressing the importance and the need to continue with EQAP's work.

Election of Chair

6. Mr Paul Hewitt of the New South Wales Board of Studies, Teaching and Education Standards (BOSTES) volunteered to chair the meeting as there was no nomination for the Chair and the motion was open to the floor for a volunteer.
7. Apologies were received from Fiji.

Minutes of the First (1st) meeting of the PBEQ CRGA Subcommittee.

8. The Minutes were considered and subsequently adopted with a minor amendment to it. (NZ / USP)

Matters arising from the Minutes

9. There were no issues raised from the Minutes.

Director's Report

10. The Subcommittee has noted the revised EQAP structure and the various work that has been carried out in 2016, which included strengthening of the research area.
11. The Subcommittee indicated their support to the transition of EMIS into EQAP. The Subcommittee has noted that the initial terms of the agreement, which includes the reporting lines, are still intact in this transition. In preparation for 2017 FEEdMM reporting, the data are to be made available to PIFS as soon as possible. Some countries indicated a need for assistance with EMIS and have asked EQAP for assistance. The Subcommittee was reminded that any data that is collected as a region needs to be reported back to FEEdMM.
12. EQAP's assistance in the evaluation and assessment of scholarships is still available for those countries that need it. EQAP will no longer be providing scholarship application evaluation and ranking for the Fiji and Tuvalu Australian scholarship awards. Although the Australian Government remains committed to Australia awards scholarship, the process of selecting scholars to receive awards is panelled in different ways around the world and this work has since been shifted by the DFAT posts to externally contracted agencies as part of the DFAT regional support facility.
13. EQAP has also partnered with World Bank with regards to Early Grades Reading Assessment (EGRA) to assist the countries by providing technical support and addressing gaps rather than having someone from afar.

EQAP Results Report

14. The Subcommittee noted that the level of this report was not to show specific details for each country but to provide a general overview. Additionally, the Subcommittee would like to see in future reporting:
 - a) the real outcomes achieved in this report as opposed to counting countries as an indicator of progress.
 - b) how the report takes into account rolling activities that runs from one year and into the following year.
 - c) the measure of the countries' satisfaction on EQAP's support, which would be an added and valuable information from the donor's perspective.

Work Programme

15. The Subcommittee
 - was informed that addressing the increasing number of requests for services from the countries was achieved through multi-model approach, multitasking and dovetailing of activities.
 - also noted that addressing countries' urgent and ad hoc requests was usually a challenge taking into consideration the limited resources.
 - also reviewed the proposed EQAP country work programme for 2017 and agreed that it is important for countries to do proper planning and prioritising their needs before engaging in negotiation with EQAP.

Regional qualification – SPFSC

16. The Subcommittee endorsed the proposal for EQAP to carry out an investigation into the root causes of high level of 'Yet to Achieve' results in some subjects as well as the poor performance of SPFSC students compared to alternative similar level qualifications such as the USP foundation.
17. There was a general agreement for EQAP to assist more strongly in helping the teachers, ministries and training colleges with the outcomes based systems.

PSSC Nationalisation

18. The Subcommittee requested for more information (paper and research proposal) on the processes that would be followed in the alignment audit between year 12 and year 13.
19. The Subcommittee also agreed that the audit be carried out in order to assist in the improvement of year 12 and year 13.

Early Grades Reading Assessment

20. The countries were in support of EQAP being involved in this work so they can be approached for assistance when required.

Accreditation of Kiribati Institute of Technology (KIT)

21. The Subcommittee was informed that EQAP only accredits technical institutions in the countries that do not have accrediting agencies.
22. The Subcommittee has endorsed the provisional accreditation of Kiribati Institute of Technology and that EQAP were to advise the institution accordingly.

Accreditation of a Regional Qualification

23. Subcommittee also endorsed the recommendation on the accreditation of the regional qualification: *Certificate 1 in Sustainable Energy* and that the relevant institutions were to be advised accordingly.

Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards

24. The Subcommittee were in agreement for the PRQS work to continue in the absence of specific funding and that the funding options be explored.
25. UNESCO had indicated that they would report back to this Subcommittee on options they could assist with.
26. The issue of the value of PRQS was to be taken to the FEEdMM through TVET discussion with EQAP's support in developing the paper.

Potential future Australia-EQAP Partnership

27. The Subcommittee supports the proposed approach for a programmatic (as opposed to project-based) funding partnership between DFAT and EQAP including a performance focus. Members agreed to provide further feedback to DFAT on the concept note circulated at the meeting, including how the members prefer to be engaged in the proposed design process.

Concluding Remarks

28. The Chair thanked all the members of the Subcommittee for their participation in the discussions and also to the presenters.