

A Review of the ANU-UPNG Partnership 2021-2024



**Australia-Papua New Guinea Economic
Partnership
29 August 2023**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a rapid review of a Government of Australia (GoA) funded ANU-UPNG Partnership aimed at strengthening the School of Business and Public Policy (SBPP) located at the Waigani campus of the University of Papua New Guinea.

The Partnership has consisted of two phases: Phase 1 – 2015 to 2021 and Phase 2 – 2021 to 2024. The review has been conducted by the Australia-Papua New Guinea Economic Partnership (APEP) and is focused on activities in Phase 2. Data were collected using a range of methods including document analysis, interviews, surveys and focus discussion groups. A total of 157 (110 males and 47 females) people engaged with the review.

The ANU-UPNG Partnership consists of four activity streams.

Stream 1: Strengthening SBPP teaching and the student experience

Key activities are strengthening SBPP to provide high quality and well-resourced undergraduate economic courses and postgraduate studies leading to a Master of Economics and Public Policy (MEPP) from UPNG and a Master of International Development Economics (MIDEC) from ANU. Five students have graduated from ANU and returned to teach at SBPP, and three more are enrolled in MIDEC.

All stakeholders involved in strengthening SBPP teaching and the student experience from undergraduate economic students, current post graduate students and graduates from MEPP and MIDEC, SPBB staff, ANU in-country and ANU visiting staff are unanimous in attributing high levels of personal and professional success and achievement to the Partnership.

These are significant outcomes for the Partnership. There is evidence in the review to support the success and achievement of Stream 1. There were 1,297 students (885 males and 412 females) enrolments in undergraduate courses in 2022, a 29% increase over the past three years; women are enrolling in undergraduate courses in growing numbers, an increase of 67% in three years; and research outputs by local researchers continues an upward trend despite the effects of COVID-19.

The only constraint on the long-term success of the Partnership is an issue to be solved by UPNG in providing permanent employment for an increasing number of students who will graduate from the MIDEC program. Already there is a UPNG limit on permanent positions with more graduates to come who are committed to teach SBPP courses for an extended period. The Partnership may need to become more active in this matter and advocate for new thinking to develop sensible options for MIDEC graduates to take up permanent work in other locations beside SBPP.

Stream 2: Collaborative research and outreach

Collaborative research is occurring between SBPP staff and ANU staff. Devpolicy blogs are increasingly co-authored by expatriate researchers and UPNG staff. The PNG Update is building a stronger reputation each year with a record 137 abstracts submitted for the 2023 Update compared to 106 in 2022 - a sign of increased interest in conducting research by local researchers.

A major product of the Partnership has been the development of a series of valuable economic databases with information that would otherwise be lost or unavailable for future researchers and analysts. Two new databases have been established since 2022 by the Partnership: the PNG Economic Database and the Members of Parliament (MP) Database. The review found that 55% of respondents reported using the databases as part of their job including the PNG Budget Database and PNG Economic Database. One respondent confirmed using all the products to brief the Prime Minister on development matters while the respondent from the Bank of PNG said because they had their own sets of data, they used the budget and economic databases to make comparison or use the data they had not produced. DoT uses the databases on a regular basis.

Communications through Devpolicy blogs tend to go to those who are already interested in economic and research matters in PNG. There are good stories to tell a wider PNG audience as well. Other communication techniques may help to broadcast the messages of the successes of the Partnership at the same time promoting economic understanding and better economic practices. APEP may be able to assist the Partnership to bring important economic policy issues into the public domain and foster dialogue on key policy issues.

Stream 3: Student and faculty exchanges in economics and public policy

The review team was unable to gather extensive information in this stream because of the tight deadline and its strong focus on Stream 1 data collection. The review team is aware of the key role of the PNG Update and academic interest in PNG resulting from the updates. The Partnership itself sets high standards of faculty exchanges with regular visits from ANU staff for teaching and research activities and MIDEDEC studies in Australia for selected PNG students. The annual Summer Schools in Australia are another opportunity for faculty exchanges. The review team, on a number of occasions, was reminded by senior bureaucrats of the importance of Partnerships such as the ANU-UPNG Partnership to strengthen PNG institutions and to develop a strong and stable PNG in the region.

Stream 4: Project management

Stream 4 is required to ensure the smooth running of the contract with APEP, as well as adequate M&E and risk management. A monthly management meeting is held with Group 1 ANU staff based in Port Moresby and APEP staff.

APEP also funds what are called pastoral care costs such as Rapid Response call outs, accommodation for Group 1 academics, rent, personal distress alarms, phone credit and laptops in addition to contracted milestone payments. The pastoral costs are currently uncapped and totalled AUD417,237 in 2022/23. A cap on pastoral costs should be established with the Partnership.

The Partnership needs to ensure that Child Protection (CP) and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policies are well articulated within the Partnership arrangements consistent with GoA policies in these areas. This has been a weak area in the past.

The Partnership demonstrates value for Money (VfM) having attracted GoPNG co-funding of PGK5million to support SBPP; and provides an Australian-standard MEPP qualification at a fraction of the cost of sending students to Australia for postgraduate studies.

Learning/Challenges

The Partnership has had the dual benefit of building stronger connections, relationships and partnerships between PNG and Australia, while also building the economic teaching and research capacity of SBPP and PNG academics to contribute to the development of strong and stable economic conditions in PNG.

The Partnership is supporting local leaders to develop local solutions. The findings of this review could be used by GoA to consider other institutional partnerships between Australian and PNG universities or research bodies.

A key challenge for the Partnership is the retention of academics within UPNG once they have completed the ANU MIDEDEC program. While there is a five-year bonding agreement in place between UPNG and MIDEDEC graduates, the review found that UPNG conditions of employment are not attractive enough to retain well qualified academics in a market where these skills are in high demand.

ANU-UPNG PARTNERSHIP

BACKGROUND

A partnership between the University of Papua New Guinea's School of Business and Public Policy (SBPP) and the Australian National University's Crawford School of Public Policy commenced in 2014.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two universities, funded by the Government of Australia (GoA), was signed in March 2015 to provide a stronger foundation for collaboration by the universities. In 2018, the MOU was extended for a further three years until 2021. A second phase of the Partnership, now using a subcontract modality, has been funded by GoA from March 2021 and maintaining the partnership until February 2024.

The current phase of the Partnership provides for a two-year extension from 2024 to 2026. GoA required an evaluation of the current phase of the Partnership to inform the decision on whether to exercise the two-year extension. An open market request for tender to conduct an evaluation was advertised by APEP on 2 June 2023 with a closing date of 16 June 2023. Six organisations indicated interest but requested consideration to extend the timeline for the evaluation. The organisations were advised this was not possible and no bids were received as a result. DFAT requested APEP to conduct an internal review of the Partnership on 20 July 2023 with a deadline of 11 August 2023.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the review are:

- document and analyse the progress and achievements of the current phase of the Partnership from March 2021 to the present
- consider the overall Value for Money of the Partnership
- identify benefits of the Partnership for women and Persons Living with Disability (PLWD)
- identify lessons from the experience of the Partnership
- suggest ways to add value to the Partnership.

REVIEW TEAM

The review team consisted of Maxie Dominic – APEP MERL Manager, Dr Benjamin Barcson – MERLA Evaluation Specialist, Kathleen Natera – APEP Pillar 5 Team, Victoria Kwaindu – APEP Pillar 1 Team, Joe Kapa – APEP Pillar 1 Team, Edmond Waide – APEP MERL Officer, and Clive Gimlolo – APEP MERL Data Analyst.

The initial planning meeting of the review team was held on 10 July 2023 where it was agreed that draft survey forms be developed by 14 July 2023 for quality assurance by the team. Arrangements were made with Partnership staff based in Port Moresby for an initial meeting on 25 July 2023. Data collection with ANU-UPNG Partnership staff, SBPP students and other stakeholders took place from 26 July until 4 August 2023.

THE ANU-UPNG PARTNERSHIP

The Partnership consists of four components:

- Stream 1: Strengthening SBPP teaching and the student experience
- Stream 2: Collaborative research and outreach
- Stream 3: Student and faculty exchanges in economics and public policy
- Stream 4: Project management

Each stream became the focus for the review team.

BROAD FOCUS QUESTIONS

The following broad focus questions guided the review:

- What have been the achievements of each stream of the Partnership?
- To what extent has the Partnership been effective and why?
- To what extent have contracted deliverables been achieved and what is the evidence?
- How sustainable are the outputs and outcomes of the Partnership?
- What more can be done to support the SBPP becoming a regionally recognised, high quality centre for learning and applied research in economics and public policy?
- What Partnership activities and strategies worked well, and not worked so well, and why?
- Are there administrative constraints affecting the Partnership?
- Has the investment represented value for money?
- To what extent has the investment supported GEDSI outcomes?
- What lessons have been learned from the experience of the Partnership?

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team was allocated specific tasks and data collection roles.

The methodology consisted of a mixed methods approach collecting both quantitative and qualitative data using a range of techniques including document analysis; one on one semi structured interviews; survey forms, focus group discussions and email requests for information.

Document analysis included review of the ANU-UPNG Partnership arrangements (2016-2021); ANU-UPNG Partnership subcontract (2021-2024); ANU-UPNG semester reports (2021-2023); and six milestone deliverable invoices and associated payments.

A total of 15 survey forms have been developed by the evaluation team (Annex One). Survey forms were forwarded to respondents. Surveys were completed, where possible, at meetings to maximise the response rate.

The KOBO Toolbox was used to collect, store and to assist with the analysis of data. Coding has been used on some sections of data to identify themes emerging from the data frames.

Each evaluation team member wrote up a detailed data collection and findings report for each stream.

FINDINGS

The review has engaged with 157 (110 males and 47 females) respondents altogether acknowledged in Annex Two.

Stream 1: Strengthening SBPP teaching and the student experience

Stream 1 is focused on strengthening the SBPP faculty and providing teaching support to undergraduate and postgraduate economic and public policy courses, based on an approved annual work plan.

Stream 1: Strengthening SBPP Teaching

SBPP

The Dean and the Deputy Dean were interviewed separately. Both pointed out the history of the SBPP and how it progressed from a single staff member in 2013-2015 to support from ANU. Initial support from Professor Stephen Howes grew to eight staff prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and reduced to effectively three 'group 1' staff and other 'group 2' support staff in 2023.

The Dean of the SBPP, Professor Lekshmi Pillai and the Deputy Dean Dr Lawrence Sause were interviewed separately using (Annex 1 – Survey Form 3). Both confirmed that the Partnership was meeting expectations including:

Capacity Building – has greatly improved for SBPP. Since the Partnership begun, the capacities of eight national staff have been greatly boosted. These teaching staff have been offered scholarships to study in ANU under the Partnership. Out of this total, five staff have successfully completed their Master of International and Development Economics (MIDEC) and are now teaching undergraduate classes in economics and public policy at the SBPP. As a result, teaching staff at the economic and public policy strands are at full strength.

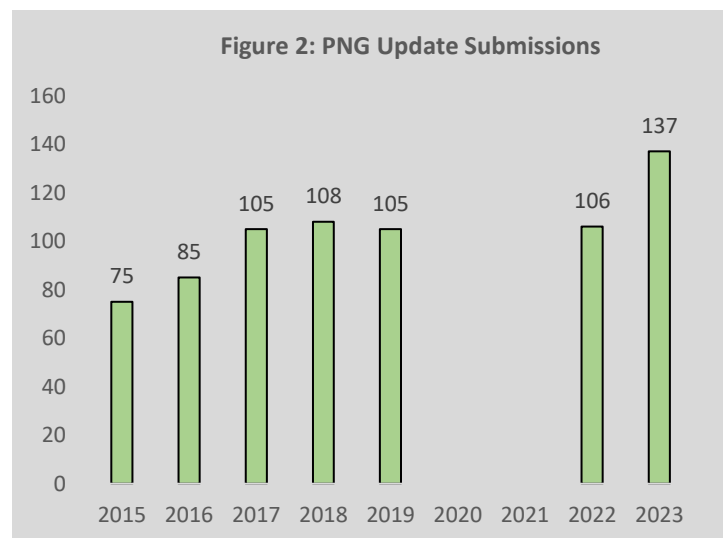
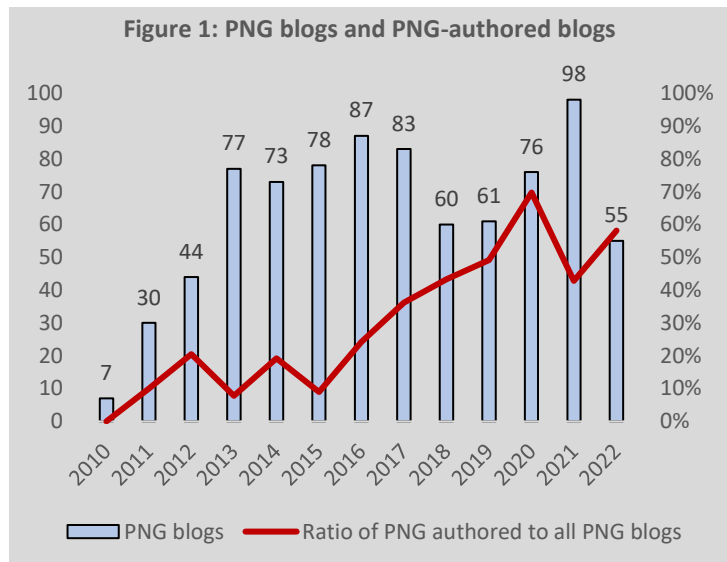
Master of Economics and Public Policy (MEPP) – is a jointly developed programme between ANU-UPNG offered by SBPP. It is internationally recognised; UPNG qualification and delivered in partnership with ANU; with 13 students graduating in 2021, 17 in 2022 (these data are not disaggregated) and 26 in 2023 (19 males and seven females). The course includes course work and research work. 99% of the research papers are marked by ANU staff.

DFAT Scholarships to PNG Public Service – under this support program from DFAT, the GoPNG Public Servants stand to benefit the greatest. It saves costs (for the same amount, five people get educated /qualified compared to one person being sent to Australia to study).

Development of Research Capacity – the support through the Partnership is continuously developing local capacity for local research. Most of the MIDEC graduates are undertaking research on different topics and publish them via ANU Devpolicy blogs.

PNG Update - that allows students, researchers and citizens to showcase research, new innovations or ideas. This is the main conduit for sharing knowledge and ideas. A small number of abstracts were submitted for earlier PNG Updates, however over recent years, the demand for research is increasing. With a modest number of 27 abstracts in 2014, the number of abstracts increased to 137 in the year 2023. To cater for this huge level of interest, a total of two days has been allocated for the PNG Update. There is a proposal to increase the number of days to three. This is clear evidence that a research culture is building from the activities of the Partnership. COVID-19 interrupted the Updates in 2020 and 2021.

Dr Sause noted that good leadership is needed to make the Partnership effectively and efficiently and deliver on its expected outcomes. It was noted that compared to all other Partnerships, at the UPNG this Partnership is the only one that is



actively and purposefully generating income for the University. It was noted that good leadership keeps everyone motivated. Professor Stephen Howes fulfills this role well. Both Executive Dean and Deputy Executive Dean (Resources & Planning) of SBPP expressed a desire for other UPNG schools to benefit from similar support and the value in staff exchanges, short placements, between ANU and UPNG.

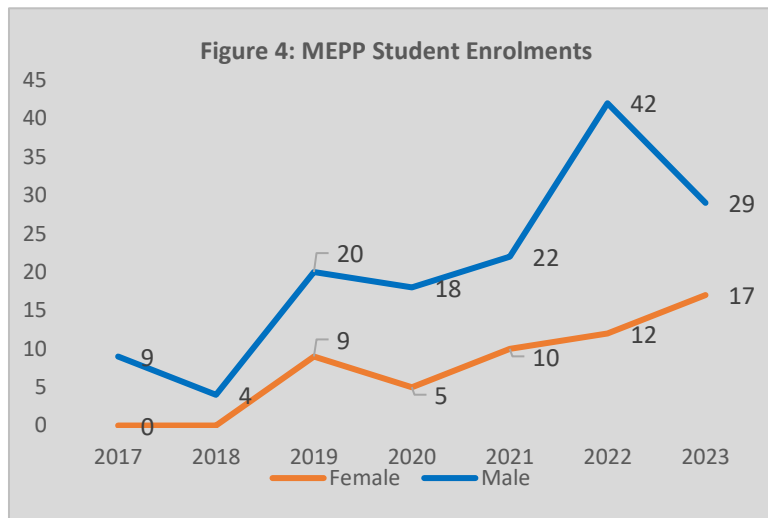
ANU Staff

The contribution of ANU to the Partnership is the placement of three academic staff permanently based in Port Moresby (Group 1 staff) and Group 2 ANU based academic staff who visit for short periods of time to deliver lectures and arrange events such as the PNG Update.

Group 1 UPNG-based Academic Staff

Two Group 1 staff were available for interview which were conducted separately using (Annex 1 - Survey Form 2a). Both respondents were very positive about the Partnership and the teaching achievements at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels at UPNG.

The Partnership has contributed to the quality of teaching at the SBPP, especially the economics and public policy divisions. The Partnership has changed the face and profile of SBPP, especially the economics division. Over ten years ago, the economics division was on life-support with only one or two staff teaching the entire undergraduate courses in the year. The economics division’s capacity is stronger in 2023. Enrolment in economic courses has increased each year as



students become aware of the quality courses being offered. The recent ANU economics graduates who were sponsored by the Partnerships carry the economics division’s teaching load.

The MEPP program benefited the most from the Partnership, and as a result the quality, interest and gender balance in the program have improved.

MEPP is contributing to the revenue generation efforts of UPNG through its tuition fees. The annual tuition fees (first and second years combined) are around K31,000/student.

The Partnership also provides student and staff exchanges, support to students’ associations (economics and public policy students), research collaboration between ANU and UPNG faculty (staff), and outreach such as the annual PNG Update. These activities have helped transform SBPP and lift its profile.

Young academics have benefited from the program through the scholarships being provided to them, mentoring opportunities, and exchanges. ANU staff teach both undergraduate and postgraduate courses at SBPP which strengthens the capacity of SBPP.

Group 2 ANU-based Academic Staff

Four ANU (three males and one female) staff responded to the (Annex 1 - Survey Form 2b) by email. Each respondent provided extensive comments on the support received by SBPP and APEP in terms of security, accommodation, and vehicle access. Each respondent expressed positive views about their engagement with UPNG from varying perspectives. For instance, teaching MEPP students and

participating in research activities including co-authoring blog articles with UPNG staff. A comment from a female lecturer:

The SBPP economic division now has many more and better qualified lecturers to teach a wider range of courses to undergraduate students at a higher level of quality which is a major improvement on the past. A research culture is also growing within the economic division, with lecturers gaining research positions in eminent institutions such as the Lowey Institute and writing for Devpolicy and other publications. Attendance at the UPNG Update is also growing.

A male lecturer who teaches Quantitative Research Methods and Applied Cost Benefit Analysis mentioned:

Apart from classroom, I usually set up WhatsApp group and google classroom, they are key forums to communicate with my students. Most of my students are full time employees and government officials and have limited time to travel to the University during the working hours. Thus, online consultation helps them with sharing their questions. In the Trimester 3, 2022, I delivered the course Applied Cost Benefit Analysis via Zoom.

Another male lecturer focused on research outcomes of his engagement with the Partnership.

I have published the following publications focused on PNG: One academic book chapter, co-authored 3 UPNG academics; three journal articles; one additional journal article (co-authored with two UPNG academics) is currently under peer review; 9 discussion papers; 3 of these were coauthored with academics from UPNG; 2 more were published with PNG nationals not from UPNG.

The third male, in response to a question on the soundness of teacher-student relationships indicated:

This is less relevant to me as I am mostly involved in organising the PNG Update and conducting research (including collaborative research with UPNG colleagues). The support from the project is very good. I help organise the PNG Update, for example, and the project has provided a variety of resources to ensure the conference is delivered to a high standard. The project also provides assistance and other administrative support to aid my research on Papua New Guinea. My relationship with UPNG colleagues is excellent and rewarding.

What are the benefits of the Partnership for UPNG?

SBPP is now recognised as UPNG's best school. The economics division has gone from the point of collapse to being a strong teaching school. The MEPP has been introduced and is popular and attracting strong students. The PNG Update is of great benefit to UPNG as it is widely recognised as the country's premier public policy forum and it brings the Prime Minister to open the forum every year.

There is also the benefit of the new building which SBPP would not have received without the Partnership. Importantly, the Partnership has supported UPNG to raise funding of PGK5million from GoPNG has gone directly to supporting the MEPP and to maintain the building.

There are financial benefits. The MEPP makes money for the university through high enrolments and tuition fees.

The Partnership is contributing to a stronger PNG which is in Australia's interests as much as it is in PNG's interest. Strong relationships are being developed between the two countries through the Partnerships teaching and outreach activities and sharing of human resources. PNG is the leading economy in the developing South Pacific region. Graduates from MEPP and MIDECA will contribute to informed understanding of economic issues and capacity to plan and deliver well developed economic responses to development issues and provide leadership throughout the Pacific.

What are the benefits of the Partnership for ANU?

ANU has developed a strong partnership with UPNG and has been able to expand its research and outreach in PNG. Responses from PNG participants in this review clearly indicate satisfaction with the work and contribution of ANU and will be looked upon favourably for other opportunities.

The Partnership has brought the UPNG Vice Chancellor to ANU twice, and this month (August 2023) has brought the ANU Vice Chancellor to UPNG. The Partnership is to be augmented by an ANU-UPNG university-wide MOU in the coming months. Its content is yet to be announced.

The Partnership demonstrate Value for Money (VfM) in the following ways:

There is a high level of leverage across the Partnership arrangements.

- The GoPNG contribution of PGK5million is recognition that GoPNG can co-fund activities judged to be in the country's best interests and is a significant financial contribution to supporting the Partnership.
- Professors Pillai and Howes do not receive any remuneration for managing the Partnership. Nor do any of the UPNG staff or any of the PNG Update presenters get additional payments for their work in the Partnership. A small payment of PGK200 is paid for each Blog published in Devpolicy regardless of the number of authors.
- The Partnership is increasing the number of course offerings, enrolments and graduation numbers with a 40% reduction in funding after inflation from Phase 1 (2015-2021) to Phase two (2021-2024) of the Partnership.
- Increased use of online teaching, and reduced in-person presence in POM, resulting in reduction in indirect costs (accommodation, security). The number of Group 1 staff peaked at seven pre-pandemic, and is now three, reducing to two if the extension is granted.
- The MEPP itself displays VfM. It costs AUD150,000 to bring a PNG student to Australia for a two-year program or AUD75,000 a year. There are 50-60 MEPP students enrolled at any one time. The cost of having this many students in Australia would be some AUD6 million per year, whereas the Partnership contract is AUD4.5 million for three years. The Partnership provides an Australian-standard MEPP qualification for a fraction of that price.
- Ten MEPP scholarships for public servants are provided by PNG Australian Awards. DFAT (through Abt) at a cost of AUD14,000 per student. This is a good example of cross-program collaboration.

Stream 1: Student Experience

SBPP Undergraduate Students

UPNG offers a four-year Bachelor of Economics program. The evaluation team engaged with year three and year four students using (Annex 1 - Survey Form 4). There is a total of 67 students enrolled in years three and four in 2023 of which 84% (38 males and 18 females) completed a Kobo survey on the impact of the Partnership.

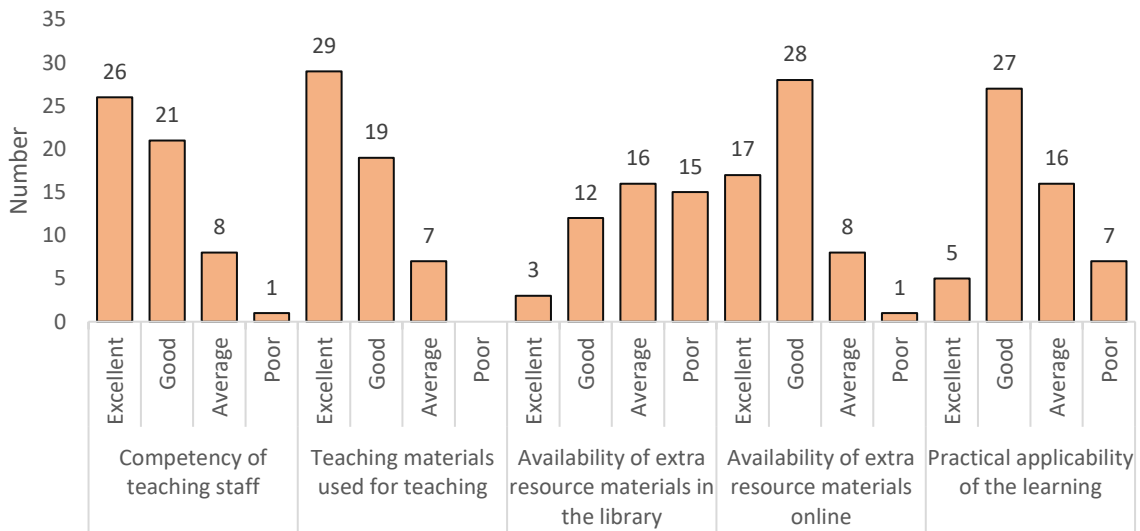
All of the survey respondents indicated they were aware of the ANU-UPNG Partnership. Most associated it with Masters scholarships (45%), and the Summer School Program (24%). 14% understood the Partnership in terms of stronger teaching, learning, and research.

The expectations of Year 3 and 4 students highlighted areas such as enhanced learning facilities and services; opportunity to study abroad (36%), and access to better lectures (21%).

Students views on how the ANU-UPNG Partnership was meeting these expectations were mixed. Over half (55%) indicated that it was meeting expectations, whilst 38% indicated it was not meeting expectations.

Students were asked to elaborate on five key areas: competency of teaching staff, quality of teaching materials, availability of library resources, online materials, and practical applicability of learning.

Figure 5: Number of student responses on competency, teaching materials, library resources, online resources, practical applicability



The majority of students that their expectations for four of the five key areas scored good or excellent ratings. Competency of staff (84%) and quality of teaching materials (87%) were rated highly.

Excellent or good ratings for practical applicability of learning (60%) and availability of library resources (33%) rated lower. Students were asked about the low rating for library. Year 3 and 4 undergraduate students were seeking access to the SBPP library which have a better range of economics texts than the Somare Library to which they have access. The SBPP library is smaller and is used by the MEPP students. There is a case to be made for a review of economic texts in the Somare Library and to bring the holdings up to date and appropriate for year 3 and 4 economic students.

Students were asked about challenges that they faced in their course. Two of the greatest challenges expressed by students was the need for the course to have practical elements (33%) followed by understanding lecturers with strong accents (12%) and lecturers with poor teaching skills (12%).

Students were asked if their experience of studying had changed. 45% of students commented on better learning experiences. 19% of students noted increased competition in gaining Summer School selection which is seen as a very desirable add on to their studies.

Finally, several things were suggested for improvement: increasing scholarship numbers (22%), increasing summer school numbers (15%), and greater access to the SBPP library.

Current SBPP MEPP Students

There are 45 MEPP students enrolled in year one, and 40 MEPP students enrolled in year two in 2023. Altogether 43 (28 males and 15 females) MEPP students participated in the review. Due to work commitments and the availability of students two data collection techniques were used.

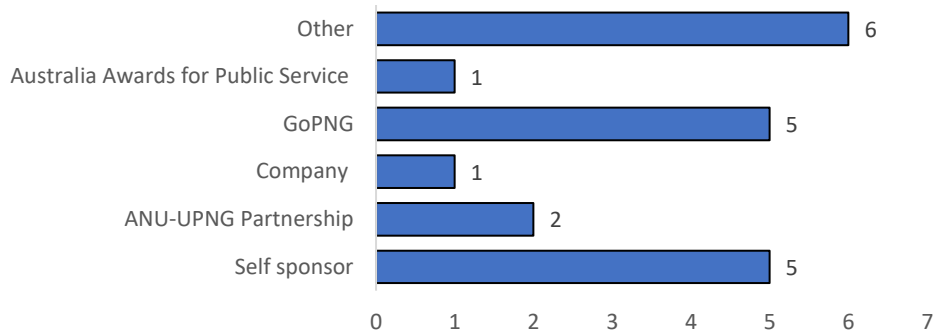
Group 1 consisted of 20 (11 males and nine females) students who completed (Annex 1 - Survey Form 5a) using the Kobo toolbox. Group 2 consisted of 23 (17 males and six females) who joined a focus group discussion at nighttime.

Group 1 Current MEPP Students

The majority of the students came from the public sector (18). Most are engaged in middle management (37%), senior management (26%) and lower management categories (37%).

Figure 6 indicates the sources of student sponsorship.

Figure 6: Student Sponsorship Sources



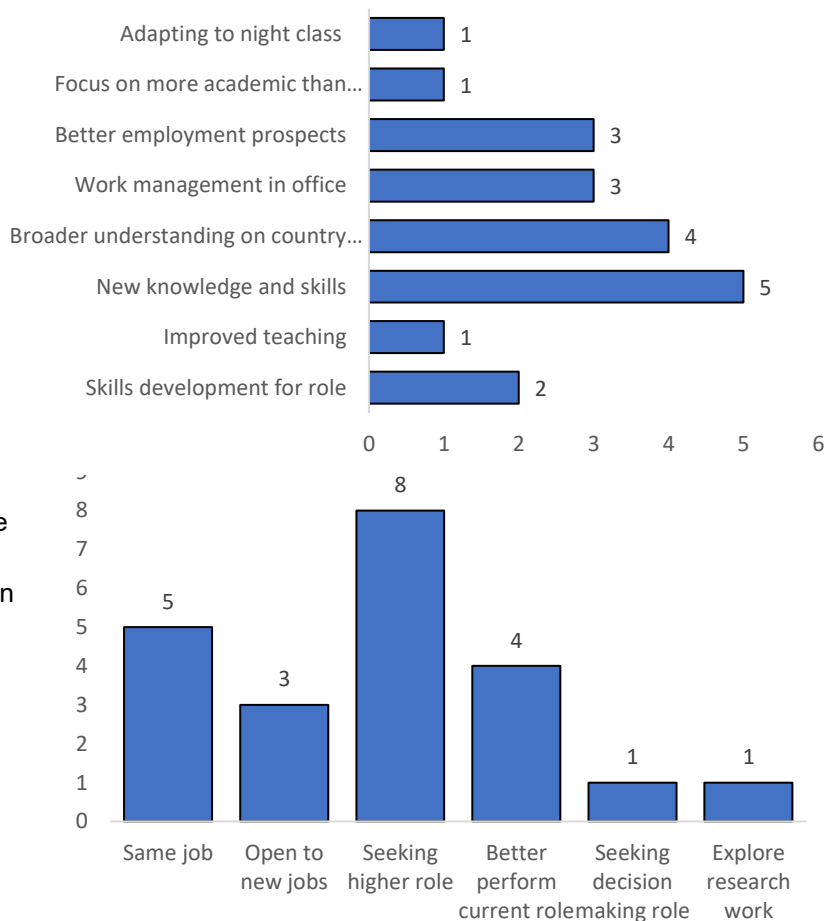
Respondents nominated what they liked most about the MEPP: the course content related to the public service structure and mechanisms (28%), practicality of course content (24%) and learning new subject matter (12%). Balancing work, the timing of classes and arranging transport were the major dislikes about the program.

All the students knew about the ANU – UPNG partnership. Most of the students came to know about it when they joined the program (35%) or through Media (30%). A lesser percentage learnt about it from former MEPP student (20%) or from work colleague (10%).

Students were asked to comment on the competency of teaching staff, teaching materials, availability of resource materials and practical applicability of learning. The majority of the students gave an excellent rating for all areas.

The greatest thing noted was new knowledge and skills (5). This was followed by broader understanding of country policies (4), better employment prospects (3) and work management in the office (3).

Figure 7: Changes resulting from MEPP



Most of the students anticipated that they would be seeking higher roles (8) upon graduation. Five indicated that they would still be in the same job. Four indicated that they would perform better in their current roles.

Group 2 Current MEPP Students

The second group of current MEPP included 23 (17 males and six females) who joined a focus group.

The following positive comments about the MEPP were made during the focus group.

- ANU Lecturers were informed and easy to understand although the topics are complex.
- The teaching is contextualised to PNG context.
- Lecturers gave us a presentation and backed it up with video.
- The best thing about this course is relating the theory part of the course into the practical part in the workplace.
- One thing I like about the course is the mixture of expatriate and PNG lecturers.

A male respondent summed up the views of the group:

The best thing about this course is the blending of the two courses Economic and Public Policy. It helps us to firstly study the PNG issues before coming up with a policy. This course is really helping in that area.

The group confirmed that knowledge about Economic and Public Policy has improved and has led to improved networking at a professional level. A female respondent pointed out:

My level of thinking and the way I view things have improved, I have seen a lot of improvement than when I first enrolled here. For example, one achievement that that I have this year was writing of a PIP. This was my first time to write one submission.

The following ratings were given by the group:

- Competency of the teaching staff - excellent
- Availability of extra material - excellent
- The practical applicability of the learning – good
- Your personal learning experience – good.

The following were dislikes about the MEPP from the discussion group.

- We need to have the notes and course materials prior to attending the lectures as this was done last year.
- It would be good to take time off and come and do the course. As we are in middle management to top management demand at work is high and at school is also high.
- We are not academics trying to pass an exam, we are professionals/practical. The course should be tailored towards practical activities. Can UPNG reduce the number of examinations? We should do practical assignments. On the job research should be the content of this course. If we get a P or F in this, it does not reflect how I am performing in the workplace. This should be where you measure the real result of the course.
- The duration is too short, and we should have our exams in week 12 or 14. Not after 10 weeks.

SBPP MEPP Graduates

A total of nine (seven males and two females) MEPP graduates responded to (Annex 1 - Survey Form 5b) using the KOBO toolbox.

Seven male respondents were employed in full time positions with the following agencies: BPNG, Climate Change and Development Authority, ICCC, National Energy Authority, Pacific Institute of Leadership and Governance, and PNG Immigration and Citizenship Services. PM&NEC sponsored a male and a female student and the Department of Implementation and Rural Development sponsored one female.

The graduates appreciated the quality of the ANU lecturers (27%) and the way the courses were delivered (27%). This included teaching style, the use of technology such as google classroom and

Zoom. 33% commented that the PNG lecturers were not competent in course delivery. The respondents rated teaching competency, teaching materials, online resources, and practicable applicability of learning as excellent or good.

All respondents stated that they expected to be taught by well qualified lecturers. 89% stated that they expected to attain a high qualification and experience better job prospects. All of the respondents confirmed that their expectations were met. 67% of respondents returned to their same jobs while two (33%) got new employment after attending the MEPP program

Most respondents (73%) stated that their experience was very positive while some participant also added specific comments. For instance; one participant stating that the learning experience was of a high quality as the lecturers were well qualified. Another participant stated that the Economic and Public Policy concepts learned during the course were being applied in the workplace while one more indicated an increased understanding of economic and public policy as a result of attending the MEPP program.

The majority of the respondents (58%) have stated that their job prospects look promising, as an example, one stated having a salary increase. 25% stated feeling some form of personal satisfaction while a small number (17%) stated that attending the course had increased their understanding of economics and public policy thus also helping them understand the development challenges of PNG.

Two participants stated having to struggle between studies and work. They further suggested that it would be good to do fulltime studies as the course is intense and needs their full commitment.

ANU Summer School

The top ten students (five from economics and five from public policy) are selected by the Partnership and sent to ANU under the summer exchange program.

The evaluation team met with five SBPP final year students (three males and two females) who participated in a recent summer school.

The respondents commented positively about the experience in gaining additional knowledge; developing analytical skills; and developing a network of contacts which could assist with job references but felt the pressure of getting assignments in on a tight timeline.

The ANU lecturer responsible for this part of the program commented:

The students in the Summer School are exposed to a new way of learning as well as skills that receive less time and attention at UPNG such as academic writing, critical thinking and data analysis. The SS involve a variety of meetings with stakeholders such as DFAT, Australian Minister for International Development and the Pacific, the World Bank and the Lowy Institute which further enriched the student experience.

Master of International and Development Economics

The Master of International and Development Economics (MIDEC) program is offered by ANU. Selected students who have graduated from the UPNG MEPP program are invited to join the MIDEC program at the ANU campus in Canberra.

To-date, a total of nine students, three females and six males, have received/ receiving / will receive a MIDEC scholarship. Out of the total of nine students, three students are currently teaching the undergraduate course at SBPP after successfully completed MIDEC at ANU. One graduate has passed away. Three students are currently studying at the ANU and one student is currently seconded to the Lowy Institute based in Sydney who will be returning next year to teach. Another student is currently preparing to commence MIDEC studies at the ANU next year.

Current MIDEC students

Three students (two males and one female) are currently enrolled in the MIDEC program. Two (one male and one female) are in the first year of the program and the other male is in the second year of

MIDEC. The students expressed that the demands of the course were heavy with tight timelines for assignments and examination requirements. They indicated pride in contributing to academic blogs and discussion papers. They highlighted the importance of developing research skills suggesting SBPP provide support.

It is a privilege to benefit under this partnership. It gave me the exposure to research and academia, the connection to high-profile expatriates and the enhancement of my knowledge base and capacity. The best thing so far which will live on with me is the interaction with the Professors and Lecturers at ANU.

The students indicated concerns about their future and the agreement upon MIDEC graduation to teach SBPP courses for a period of five years. A female student commented:

Student 1: I am at ANU, doing MIDEC and as per the MOU signed, I have to go back to lecture for a minimum of five years. I will be more than happy to do that but with the way the human resources of UPNG are treated, I am doubting myself to last long there. As a young PNG woman and an elder daughter of my family, I have obligations and responsibilities to my parents and family and if SBPP does not treat me well, I feel that I have the right to make a decision that will be good for my wellbeing.

Student 2: Three of MIDEC graduates are permanent staff but other five are temporary positions. With higher demand for them out in the industry with good remuneration, there is less chances university will keep them under full time temporary positions-a position where one is only paid starting week six of each semester and put off from pay at week 12. No houses, no allowances, no super, no gratuity. It's like UPNG is just using them to keep UPNGs business going.

MIDEC Graduates

A total of eight students have graduated from the MIDEC program. Four graduates (three males and one female) were interviewed. All respondents were grateful for the opportunity to gain a Masters' qualification from a prestigious university. The respondents commented positively on the networks developed and the access to highly qualified international staff. The following four quotes from graduates speak highly about the training:

ANU staff make sure we have the necessary resources for teaching and activities hosted by the partnership. Furthermore, the ANU staff offer capacity training to enhance our teaching skills. Thanks to these initiatives we have learnt a lot on planning and delivery of lessons.

The ANU-UPNG partnership also organises monthly workshops focused on research topics pertaining to PNG. Participating in these workshops has been incredibly enlightening, as I have learned a great deal about various subjects and issues impacting PNG.

The ANU staff are approachable and welcoming, always ready to engage in joint research projects. I even had the opportunity to co-author a blog with one of the ANU staff, which was a rewarding experience.

I have been involved in a collaborative research project with the ANU-UPNG team, such as the PNG Economic History book that we have drafted. We have created a PNG Economic Database which is available online. We also contribute regularly to the Development Policy Blog.

The concerns of the respondents were not with the Partnership but rather with the conditions of employment at UPNG.

The MIDEC opportunity requires students to sign an MOU that they will work within the SBPP for a minimum of five years. A graduate commented:

I am currently working as a full-time temporary lecturer with the university. I am paid only when the semester is running. I am not entitled to housing, contribution to superannuation, and other employment benefits under this contract. I am not sure when I will be made permanent lecturer.

UPNG Student Organisations

The Partnership also supports student organisations. Three Executives (two males and one female) from the Economics Student Society (ESS) and four Executives (two males and two females) from the Public Policy Management Student Association (PPMSA) participated in a focus group session (Annex 1 - Survey Form 11) to understand the nature and extent of Partnership support for student organisations.

The two organisations receive K5,000 each annually from the Partnership based on an approved implementation plan and a budget cap of K1,000 per activity. The student executives verified that all funds received from the partnership are acquitted before further funding is released. Suggested improvements from the executives are:

in-kind assistance for soft skills development to the student associations and the undergraduate students such as public speaking and mentoring for fourth year students

similar level of support to be given to the public policy management program such as public policy writing courses and seminars similar to the Crawford School's public policy strand, which offers reading and writing enrichment classes.

Stream 1 Summary Findings

All stakeholders involved in strengthening SBPP teaching and the student experience from undergraduate economic students, post graduate current and graduates from MEPP and MIDEDEC, SPBB staff, ANU in-country, and ANU visiting staff are unanimous in attributing high levels of personal and professional success and achievement to the Partnership.

This is a significant outcome for the Partnership. There is evidence to support the success and achievement of Stream 1. Enrolments in undergraduate economics courses is increasing; women are enrolling in undergraduate courses in growing numbers; and there are signs of increased capacity for research.

The only constraint on the long-term success of the Partnership is a UPNG issue to be solved in providing permanent employment for an increasing number of students who will graduate from the MIDEDEC program. Already there is a UPNG limit on permanent positions with more graduates to come who are committed to teach SBPP courses for an extended period. The Partnership may need to become active in this matter and advocate for new thinking to develop sensible options for MIDEDEC graduates to take up permanent work in other locations beside SBPP.

Stream 2: Collaborative research and outreach

Stream 2 requires the contractor to provide collaborative research services to SBPP on topics relating to the latest trends in economics and public policy/public administration, including support services for the development of independent, rigorous and practical policy solutions to some of PNG's most significant challenges.

Eleven (nine male and two female) respondents representing eleven agencies: Department of Treasury (DoT) Department of Finance (DoF), Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council (PM&NEC), Department of National Planning and Monitoring (DNPM), National Trade Office (NTO) National Research Institute (NRI), National Statistical Office (NSO), World Bank (WB), Bank of PNG, (BPNG), Department of Lands and Physical Planning (DLPP), and Consultative and Implementation Monitoring Committee (CIMC) engaged with the Partnership on collaborative research and outreach using (Annex 1 - Survey Form 9).

Engagement consisted of sponsoring staff to attend MEPP, attendance at the annual PNG Economic Update, ANU Devpolicy blogs, PNG databases; and PNG budget data.

37% of respondents viewed the MEPP in positive terms that upskilled the workforce, improved the quality of data and analysis, and improved communication and partnerships between agencies and universities. All respondents agreed that engagement with the Partnership has improved the performance of individuals in their organisations based on actual change in performance of MEPP graduates.

Comments such as ‘Graduates are making changes in their own organisations, for instance, Higher Education, Bank of PNG, and Department of Prime Minister’. 27% of the respondents observed that the course enable staff to improve analytical and research skills. Some commented that a graduate of the program tends to think outside the box and challenge the status quo to see results and place challenges to current management and do help a lot in developing policies and addressing issues.

The agencies indicated that more publicity of the outcomes of the MEPP was needed along with increasing the number of student participants, particularly women. Several agencies asked what happens to MEPP graduates and value in conducting a tracer study of graduates. The graduates should have opportunities in other universities such as Vudal University and the University of Goroka to expand economic knowledge and understanding to a wide population. All agencies indicated the desire of the GoPNG government to take a co-funding role to begin underwriting the long-term sustainability of the MEPP.

The Partnership produces products. 55% of respondents used the products as part of their job. including the PNG Budget Database and PNG Economic Database. The Devpolicy blogs had are often followed.

One respondent affirmed using all the products to brief the Prime Minister on development matters while the respondent from Bank of PNG said because they had their own sets of data, they used the

Figure 9: Awareness of the ANU-UPNG Partnership

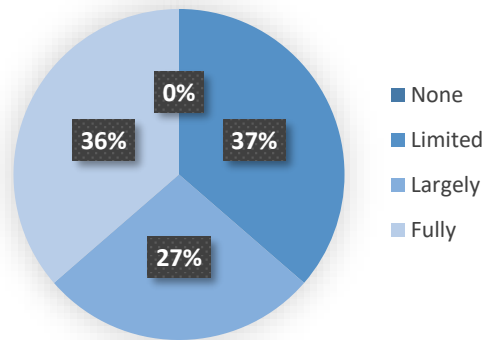
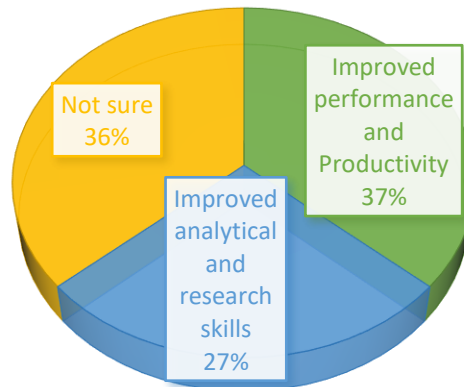


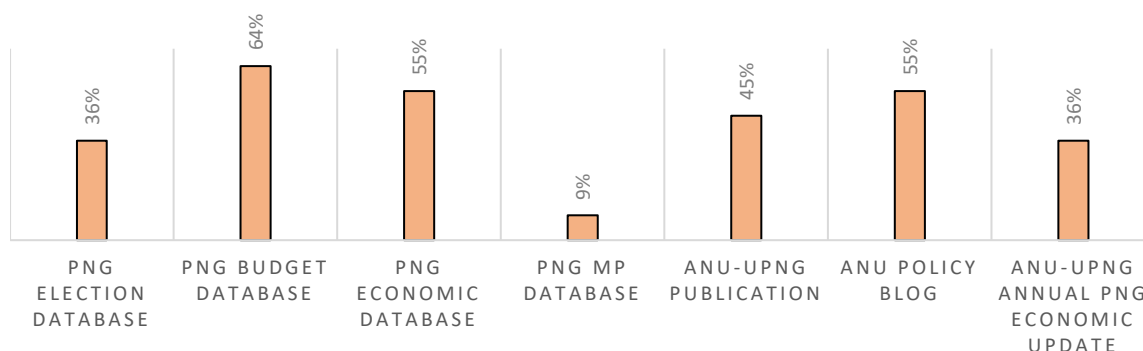
Figure 10: Effectiveness of MEPP



budget and economic databases to make comparison or use the data they had not produced. Those working for the World Bank and Asian Development Bank also use the Budget and Economic Databases to produce country strategic information. DoT also mentioned using most of the products for their work in economic policies, fiscal policies, and budget papers.

27% of the respondents admitted not using, or being aware of, the products coming out of the Partnership. The PNG MP database, for example, would benefit from a more effective communications approach to broadcast it to key stakeholders and to a wider audience of citizens.

Figure 11: Awareness of Partnership Products



The Partnership is very active and has developed new databases in recent times such as the PNG Economic Database and the PNG MP Database with information on sitting MPs and party affiliations.

Stream 2 Summary Findings

How effective is the Partnership's outreach? The PNG Update is building a stronger reputation each year and the valuable databases of information that would otherwise be lost and unavailable for future researchers and analysts.

There is evidence from the review that there is more work to be done even with key stakeholders about the work and products of the Partnership. The collection of data by the review team has had the effect of publicising the extent and value of products of the Partnership more fully.

Communications through Devpolicy blogs tend to go to those who are already interested in economic and research matters in PNG. How well is this publication known outside of the academic and research communities and the other products of the Partnership. There are good stories to tell a wider PNG audience as well. Other communication techniques can help to broadcast the messages of the Partnership at the same time promoting economic understanding.

Stream 3: Student and faculty exchanges in economics and public policy

Stream 3 is focused on supporting new researchers and lecturers in PNG and encourages two-way visits between the ANU and UPNG staff.

Five SBPP staff (four males and one female), recipients of ANU scholarships, completed (Annex 1 - Survey Form 8). Four staff (three males and one female) are employed as lecturers and the other (male) is a tutor. Responses indicated personal satisfaction in terms of knowledge gained, a post graduate qualification from a well-regarded Australian university, and scholarship benefits.

One of the goals of the Partnership is to increase research outputs. One respondent had been involved in research prior to undertaking studies. 40% of respondents indicated they had participated in ANU-UPNG collaborative research. The involvement included blog writing, data gathering, and writing a chapter for a book. Respondents indicated that more assistance was needed to develop a stronger research output.

The respondents were asked about teaching loads within the MEPP program. They contrasted times as undergraduate students themselves and the number of ANU teaching staff as opposed to the present time where there is an increasing number of qualified PNG staff conducting economic classes.

Stream 3 Summary Findings

The review team was unable to gather extensive information in this stream because of the tight deadline and its strong focus on Stream 1 data collection. The review team is aware of the key role of the PNG Update and academic interest in PNG resulting from the updates. The Partnership itself sets high standards of faculty exchanges with regular visits from ANU staff and MIDEAC studies for selected PNG students. The Summer Schools are another opportunity for faculty exchanges. The Dean of SBPP put forward the very idea of short exchanges between ANU and UPNG staff. The review team, on a number of occasions, was reminded by senior bureaucrats of the importance of Partnerships such as the ANU-UPNG Partnership to strengthen PNG institutions and to develop a strong and stable PNG in the region.

Stream 4: Project management

Stream 4 is required to ensure the smooth running of the project, as well as adequate M&E and risk management.

Milestones

The current phase of the Partnership has a total of eight milestones of which six have been fulfilled to date. The remaining two milestones are due in August 2023 and January 2024.

Management Meetings

As the partnership has evolved and matured, management meetings between APEP and UPNG have been extended from fortnightly to monthly. The meetings involve ANU contracted staff based at UPNG and APEP Pillar 1 staff. The meetings are mostly administrative meetings involving the logistical support that APEP provides visiting ANU lecturers including vehicles, accommodation rental issues, and information on staff movements. Meeting minutes have been kept in the past, but less regularly in more recent times.

In addition to the milestone payments, APEP also funds what is called pastoral care costs which include Rapid Response call outs, accommodation for Group 1 academics rent, personal distress alarms, phone credit and laptops. In 2022/23 pastoral costs totalled AUD417,237. There is no cap on pastoral costs in APEP's subcontract with ANU. It is strongly suggested by APEP that a cap be introduced should the Partnership be extended.

The milestones deliverables paid at the start of each calendar year require an annual plan and contractor statements related to Child Protection (CP) and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) and how the Partnership incorporates these policies within the Partnership. APEP has noted that CP and PSEAH statements have not been included as part of these milestone deliverables.

It is recommended that minutes of meetings be produced so that there is an official record of information exchanged and decisions and actions taken. APEP's Pillar 5 and the MERLA Unit should take a more active role to integrate the Partnership more effectively in APEP processes and interest rather than simply approving invoices and milestone payments.

Stream 4 Summary Findings

Stream 4 is required to ensure the smooth running of the contract with APEP, as well as adequate M&E and risk management. A monthly management meeting is held with Group 1 ANU staff based in

Port Moresby and APEP staff. APEP's Pillar 5 should also take an active role in management meetings to better integrate the Partnership into APEP than what has taken place in the past.

The Partnership needs to ensure that Child Protection (CP) and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policies are well articulated within the Partnership arrangements consistent with GoA policies in these areas.

The Partnership demonstrates value for Money (VfM) having attracted GoPNG co-funding support to SBPP; and provides an Australian-standard MEPP qualification at a fraction of the cost of sending students to Australia for postgraduate studies. A cap on pastoral costs is suggested by APEP to further demonstrate VfM.

LEARNING/CHALLENGES

Learning

Institutional partnerships between Australian and PNG organisations help to build stronger connections and relationships between countries and contributes to the broader objectives of the PNG Australia Partnership.

The partnership has had the dual benefit of building stronger connections, relationships and partnerships between PNG and Australia, while also building the economic teaching and research capacity of UNPNG and PNG academics to develop strong and stable economic conditions in PNG.

Challenges

A key challenge for the Partnership is the retention of academics within UPNG once they have completed the ANU program. While there is a five-year bonding agreement in place, evidence from the review found that UPNG conditions of employment are not attractive enough to retain well qualified academics in a market where these skills are in high demand.

From a sustainability perspective, it is unlikely UPNG could maintain the standards currently being achieved if the Partnership was to end. In this respect, the Partnership may be building a level of dependency and reliance that is not sustainable.

Cost and value for money remain a challenge given the high costs of implementing this kind of Partnership.

ANNEX ONE

Data Collection Forms



All Data Collection
Forms.docx

ANNEX TWO

ANU Staff (based at SBPP and abroad)	
Andrew Anton Mako	ANU Staff
Dr Nemat Bizhan	ANU Staff
Professor Stephen Howes	ANU Staff
Grant Walton, Associate Professor	ANU Staff
Terence Wood, Lecturer	ANU Staff
Truong Nguyen, Lecturer	ANU Staff
Alyssa Leng, Research Officer	ANU Staff
Former Summer School Attendees	
Zechariah Suii	SBPP Student
Thelma Oaike	SBPP Student
Gerhardt Siune	SBPP Student
Joel Kumusi	SBPP Student
Annette DANIELS	SBPP Student
SBPP Teaching Staff – MIDEDEC Scholarship Recipients	
Kelly SAMOF	SBPP Staff
Jollanda Mathew	SBPP Staff
Bobby Kunda	SBPP Staff
Maholopa Laveil	SBPP Staff seconded to Lowy Institute
SPBB Teaching Staff	
Professor Pillai, Dean of SBPP	SBPP Staff
Dr Lawrence Sause, Deputy Dean (Planning & Resource)	SBPP Staff
Moses Sakai	SBPP Staff
Kenneth Baliwasa	SBPP Staff
MIDEDEC Scholarship Recipients – Studying at ANU	
David Poka	Student at ANU
Kingtau Mambon	Student at ANU
Anna Kapil	Student at ANU
SBPP - ANU MEPP Scholarship Recipients (currently tutoring students)	
Raymond Dorum	SBPP Staff
Loretta Dilu	SBPP Staff

Collaborative and Research Outreach	
Wilson Thompson	National Research Institute
John Igitoi	National Statistical Office
Samson Metofa	Department of Finance
Philip Leo	Prime Minister and NEC
Wallis Yakam	CIMC
SBPP MEPP Year 1 Students	Position
Wauwa Legu	MEPP Year 1
Paul Pup	MEPP Year 1
George Rua	MEPP Year 1
Aaron Kotto	MEPP Year 1
Issabelle Vilau	MEPP Year 1
Selwyn ALUA	MEPP Year 1
Rachel Morehari	MEPP Year 1
Danielle Tenakanai	MEPP Year 1
Vanessa Salome Warren	MEPP Year 1
Cedric Yombi	MEPP Year 1
Jim Kara Wiai	MEPP Year 1
John Francis Karani	MEPP Year 1
Nathan Paul KIRI	MEPP Year 1
Victoria Bopi	MEPP Year 1
Nellie Holland	MEPP Year 1
Toleidemi Yalapan	MEPP Year 1
Rua George	MEPP Year 1
Tony Ute Davura	MEPP Year 1
Rachel Yange	MEPP Year 1
Lorraine Yainter	MEPP Year 1
Jacinta Dus	MEPP Year 1
Agnes Kaleve-Diap	MEPP Year 2
Balthazar Wally	MEPP Year 2
Benson Homiehombo	MEPP Year 2
Charles Kirimui	MEPP Year 2
Charlotte Tia	MEPP Year 2
Desmond Kuluwah	MEPP Year 2
Eric Sarut	MEPP Year 2
Evelyn Kimala Sarut	MEPP Year 2
Frank Ogira Akrakri	MEPP Year 2
James Olio Agio	MEPP Year 2
Jeffery Saina Tumu	MEPP Year 2
Larry Asigau	MEPP Year 2
Lorretta Dilu	MEPP Year 2
Nigel Ainui	MEPP Year 2
Norman Gulo	MEPP Year 2
Oscar Maina	MEPP Year 2
Peter Kongisi Kong	MEPP Year 2

Raymond Dorum	MEPP Year 2
Robert Numbaru	MEPP Year 2
Thomas Salima	MEPP Year 2
Waga Navei	MEPP Year 2
William Ketket	MEPP Year 2
Smilar Fred	MEPP Year 2
OTHER	
Peter Mondoro	Department of Treasury
Charlie Leo	National Planning Department
Peter Leo	Prime Minister & NEC
Samson Metofa	Department of Finance
John Igitoi	National Statistical Office
Wilson Thompson	National Research Institute
Dian Tuma	Bank of PNG
Wallis Yakam	CIMC/INA
Richard Yakam	National Trade Office
Dr. George Kerepa Bopi	World Bank /ADB
Dr. Charles Yala	Niugini Lands Property