

Evaluation of Skills Training under the Red Meat and Cattle Partnership

1. Introduction and Background

The Indonesia Australia Partnership on Food Security in the Red Meat and Cattle Sector (the Partnership) has sponsored a range of short courses to promote skills development in the Indonesian industry. These courses were conducted in 2015 and 2016 with each course being carefully monitored and evaluated according to the Australian Awards (AAI)¹ monitoring and evaluation standards, as well as undergoing assessments by the course providers. These documents are listed in Annex 1.

These courses were targeted to meet the emerging needs of the Indonesian industry and have included:

- **Producer courses** - animal husbandry and cattle production (University of New England)
- **Processor courses** – meat production, processing and supply chain management (TAFE Queensland South West)
- **Policy courses** – policy development for livestock production and supply chains (University of Queensland)
- **Senior policy courses** – sharing good practice in the Australian and Indonesian livestock industries (University of Sydney)

Short courses were monitored and evaluated using AAI's standard M&E framework, which is based on the Kirkpatrick four-level evaluation model to determine decisions regarding training effectiveness. This model involves four levels of assessment:

1. Reaction - what Awardees thought and felt about the training
2. Learning - the resulting increase in knowledge and/or skills, and change in attitudes
3. Behaviour - transfer of knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes from classroom to the job (change in job behaviour due to training program)
4. Results - effects on the business or environment resulting from the Awardees' performance.

The Australia Awards Indonesia program is underpinned by five clearly defined program outcomes relating to the benefits gained by the Indonesian alumni through the award experience. These include:

- The alumni's use of knowledge, attitude and skills to influence their professional fields and communities
- The linkages between the alumni and Australian organisations and Australians
- The positive perceptions that Alumni have of Australia and Australians.

1.1. Australia Awards Survey Results

The Australia Awards program conducts perception surveys to understand participants' views and actions after returning to their country and place of work. They also conduct interviews with selected participants to understand the survey results in more detail. Generally the results are very positive with the successes highlighted throughout the reports. From the summary report of all short courses, it was found that:

¹ See <http://www.australiaawardsindonesia.org/>

- More than 95% report that the course is relevant to their career plans, relevant to their organisation and relevant to their specific work duties
- More than 95% are satisfied with the course and 100% reported that they had a positive view of Australia and Australians
- Over 80% reported that they had made changes to the way they work and 80% also reported they had contributed to changes in the way the organisation works, with 83% reporting that employers were supportive of work changes
- Approximately 75% reported a greater understanding of gender and disability inclusion issues in the work place
- Over 90% reported that the course had improved their professional networks.

From an AAI perspective the courses appear to be highly successful and make a significant contribution to the AAI program's outcomes. In contrast this evaluation seeks to review the contribution the courses are making to the Partnership's strategic objectives.

2. Approach to this Evaluation

This evaluation involved interviews with a selected number of participants to understand how the courses targeting the red meat and cattle sector are contributing to the short term outcomes of the Partnership, namely:

1. Effective linkages exist between Indonesia and Australia at the levels of government, industry and enterprise in the sector.
2. Those working in the sector have the skills need to support a productive red meat and cattle industry
3. The Indonesian and Australian Governments have access to quality policy analysis to inform policy and investment decisions
4. Potential advances in the supply chain are identified and where agreed, tested, with lessons to inform policy, investment and production decisions.

In contrast to the M&E conducted by the AAI and the service providers, this approach involved interviewing those considered the more successful participants and the least successful participants.

The purpose is to understand what worked and what didn't and under what circumstances, and how the courses are contributing to the Partnership's strategic objectives. Although the sample was relatively small, one hour interviews were conducted with pairs of participants to contrast the various perspectives and cross-reference to the perception surveys. This is a rapid qualitative survey technique to draw out key issues and to compare and contrast views. It was notable that after only a couple of interviews for each course similar findings were being reported, indicating a rapid saturation point where additional interviews and effort are unlikely to reveal much new information.

Thirteen participants of short courses were interviewed during the Short Course Awards Symposium conducted in November 2016:

- Four interviews (2 male and 2 female) - Animal husbandry and cattle production (University of New England)
- Four interviews (2 male and 2 female) - Meat production, processing and supply chain management (TAFE Queensland South West)
- Four interviews (2 male and 2 female) - Policy development for livestock production and supply chains (University of Queensland)
- One interview (male) - Sharing good practice in the Australian and Indonesian livestock industries – Senior policy course (University of Sydney)

3. Key Findings

3.1. Animal Husbandry and Cattle Production

1. The training was highly valued by participants and all gained significant knowledge and skills from the training. Most expectations were met. Their perception of the Australian industry was positive, which they considered to be the international “gold” standard.
2. The overall contribution to Partnership goals was deemed to be problematic. In three out of the four cases the priority of the participants on return was assisting small holder farmers and promoting community development, while the fourth was part of a dairy cooperative. None had a direct link to the commercial cattle sector in order to further the commercial interests of the industry.
3. The training provided a strong connection to the Ministry of Agriculture and met the needs of the Ministry. All participants demonstrated that they were able to put into practice and train others on return to Indonesia.
4. The major issues affecting the Indonesian cattle sector were identified as changing government policy. Even within government, policy is recognised as an issue that is expecting immediate results. The lack of a proper breeding and recording system for cattle production in Indonesia was also raised.
5. Participants identified the need for understanding and promoting more integrated farming techniques. Using waste products for fertiliser and feed to make production more efficient.
6. The methods used for breeding were natural in Australia compared to Indonesia’s widespread use of artificial insemination (AI). It would have been more useful to learn about how to improve AI to increase the success rate, or to provide evidence to support a policy change in Indonesia with regard to AI.
7. The women attending the course have gained a new level of respect and credibility on returning to their positions. The farmers now listen to what they have to say and they have more influence. This is a positive gender outcome.
8. Participants did not generally recall any discussions on gender equality, social inclusion and disability inclusiveness.

3.2. Meat production, processing and supply chain management

9. All four participants worked in the meat production and processing industry. The training was directly relevant to their current positions. All training was highly regarded and valued. The teaching techniques were appreciated and many are trying to emulate the approach of the trainers to instil more enthusiasm in their in-house training courses.
10. The training met expectations, however, there were concerns raised regarding the applicability in Indonesia and some participants identified a few areas that could have been strengthened².
11. The system in Australia was regarded as a very high standard. Participants were aiming for incremental improvements in their operations but did not expect to achieve the standard demonstrated in Australia.
12. The participants commented that the course was aimed at supervisors although managers were encouraged to also attend to support the implementation of changes to work practices. Supervisors who attended had encouraged their managers to attend the next course, and

² It is understood that these areas identified through participant feedback sessions following the course and were included in subsequent training programs.

managers who attended encourage their supervisors to attend. It is clear that if change is to happen both need to be present.

13. Participants from private abattoirs were able to return and apply what they had learnt including training others and implementing changes in work practices. In contrast government workers found it difficult to make changes on return due to the management structures and investment required. All participants appear to have been able to share what was learnt with co-workers.
14. All those interviewed did not recall much discussion on gender or disability.

3.3. Policy development for livestock production and supply chains

15. All interviewees were from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). Three were vets and one was an inspector. They deal with public health and animal welfare issues. Although the course met expectations one respondent did say they were a bit shocked about the course – *“it was explaining about policy but I did not really care about policy – my background was removed from policy”*. Of those we interviewed there appeared to be some mismatch between their overall expectations and the course content. One interviewee commented that most participants were not policy makers and that the material should be adjusted to the participants’ needs. Another noted that the actual component on learning about policy was very short.
16. In terms of policy discussions it would have been useful to discuss the policy with respect to the structure of the industry in Indonesia – the difference between large scale commercial farming and small holder farmers, particular with respect to breeding and production.
17. Some participants appeared to be more motivated by their personal objectives, such as studying in Australia, rather than assisting the industry in Indonesia. This can lead to positive long term outcome for the industry on their return provided their studies are focussed on supporting commercial industry development.
18. Participants reported that everything they learnt was useful, however, there were areas they wanted to learn a bit more about such as breeding, particularly as it relates to the Indonesian situation. Participants mentioned the course was too short and there were many areas that they would have liked more detail.
19. A common theme in the discussions was being able to apply what was learnt in Australia to the Indonesian context. Others did mention the usefulness of learning problem solving skills and applying it in this context.
20. Participants could not recall any discussions on gender issues.
21. All participants were able to apply what they learnt on return to Indonesia. This was a positive outcome and all discussed a new motivation to improve their work practices. Attending a course in Australia provides inspiration.
22. All those interviewed appeared to be given greater responsibility on return to their positions. This indicates that their skills were being recognised by their immediate managers.

3.4. Sharing good practice in the Australian and Indonesian livestock industries

23. Only one senior policy maker was available for interview. He worked for the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs (CMEA). His major expectation from the course was to explore ways where the policies of the two countries could be better aligned to achieve better conditions for commercial farming; and to address the major problems with the industry such as land supply and production of meat (given the structure of the industry in Indonesia where there is a significant proportion of small holder farmers who cannot meet demand efficiently).

24. Overall the course was very useful. It covered (1) the cattle production system; (2) building animal security mechanisms; (3) creating export/import supply chains and (4) increasing productivity.
25. As a result of the course the participant recognised that policies need to change. It is recognised that the problem is the timing of demand and supply, with the harvesting time in Australia not aligning with the demand in Indonesia. The import quotas need to align with the business plans of feed lotters.
26. It was recognised that the 20% quota applying to breeding stock will cause problems. This policy came from the Ministry of Trade.
27. Applying what has been learnt from the course will be a big task under CMEA. There are four ministries coordinated by CMEA and feeding information to Ministers through advisers is difficult. His boss understands what he is trying to do but other sections of the agency are not really interested. He has managed to hold discussions with the industry on the policy issues.
28. The participant reported that gender was not generally discussed.
29. One key performance indicator (KPI) of CMEA is to control price. This is where many policies are originating from.
30. The course should be designed to target more senior policy officers and advisers. It should be shorter to allow more senior officials to attend. The course was targeted at an Echelon 3-4 level but would need to be adjusted to meet the needs of an Echelon 1-2.

3.5. Progress towards partnership outcomes

It is evident that the skills training courses are progressing the Partnership outcomes, however, the extent to which this is happening is unlikely to result in significant progress in the short term. There are areas that could be strengthened to have a greater impact.

It appears that in some instances the focus of AAI is in meeting their outcomes rather than the outcomes of the Partnership. Their M&E reporting is more focussed on reporting against the AAI outcomes instead of the Partnership outcomes. This should be addressed leading to a more focussed selection of participants, particularly those who will be more influential in promoting the commercial industry in Indonesia. Similarly, reporting conducted by course providers is aligned more to addressing teaching effectiveness and course satisfaction than achieving partnership outcomes.

Although gender and social inclusion were included in all training programs under the AAI mandate, this does not have appeared to resonate with the participants interviewed. This is an area of concern that should be strengthened and contextualised.

The contributions towards Partnership outcomes resulting from the skills training can be summarised as:

- **Effective linkages exist between Indonesia and Australia at the levels of government, industry and enterprise in the sector:** The training is making a moderate contribution in this area supported by the annual symposium and alumni networks. The Partnership could leverage more from this interaction between Indonesian participants at training courses, the industry and government. There is an opportunity to develop better linkages with the MoA through short course activities.
- **Those working in the sector have the skills needed to support a productive red meat and cattle industry:** The training is making a major contribution to skills development through direct training and subsequent on-training by participants, however, there should be more focus on including participants that can be more influential in developing the commercial sector. The focus is still weighted towards assisting small holder farmers in regional areas. It is recognised that this is a focus of MoA, however, it will have little impact on the commercial sector unless small holder farmers can be linked with commercial scale supply chains.
- **The Indonesian and Australian Governments have access to quality policy analysis to inform policy and investment decisions:** The training only makes a minor contribution in this area. One objective should be to develop a core group of policy analysts in the CMEA

who are well respected by the economic agencies. It is clear that the senior policy course could have a significant impact if senior officials could also attend and interact with Australian policy makers. There is strong evidence that the courses are raising awareness of policy issues contributing to an increase in policy dialogue within government. This could also improve the level of trust between industry and government.

- **Potential advances in the supply chain are identified and where agreed, tested, with lessons to inform policy, investment and production decisions:** The training appears to currently make a minor contribution in this area. It is unlikely that the current participants will be influential in improving the supply chain. Those attending the course on “Policy development for livestock production and supply chains” appeared to be mismatched with the course content (however this is an observation based on limited interviews and analysis.)

4. Recommendations

The skills training is well managed, efficient and effective in terms of achieving training outcomes. The training providers are well respected and have been recognised by participants as providing excellent tuition, pastoral care and support. However, there are some weaknesses with regard to achieving Partnership outcomes that need to be addressed:

1. All courses should be designed, monitored and evaluated with a focus on Partnership objectives and outcomes as well as training effectiveness (and AAI outcomes). The results need to be measured against the partnership outcomes and not necessarily whether the participants are putting into practice what has been learnt. A stronger focus on the Partnership outcomes in the design stage would result in a different and more relevant selection of influential participants.
2. A continued attempt should be made to attract senior policy officials to short courses on trade and investment policy in the sector. These courses should attempt to bring together officials from the MoA and the ministries under the CMEA, and engage with Australian Government officials and industry. There appears to be a common willingness to achieve outcomes that are mutually beneficial and that align the policies of Australia and Indonesia.
3. The course on “Policy development for livestock production and supply chains” should pay particular attention to participant selection. Potential advances in the supply chain can only be made with influential policy makers. An outcome of the course could be the identification of projects that the Partnership could support. This could be achieved by conducting a group learning session with participants and the working group on logistics.
4. There is an opportunity to improve relationships with MoA through the skills development training. Many MoA staff attend the training and the symposium, however it is likely they associate the skills training with Australia Awards rather than the Partnership. There is an opportunity for the Partnership to engage more actively with the participants to start to build trust and commitment towards a common vision.
5. Participants are keen to put into practice what has been learnt, however, the difference between Australian and Indonesian systems means the gap is difficult to bridge. Training providers should contextualise the training so that it is easier to understand how it can be adapted to the local situation. Courses such as the “Meat production, processing and supply chain management” have done this successfully through site visits and on-site technical assistance. Courses on breeding need to acknowledge the use of AI and work with Indonesia to make this more cost-effective in practice or provide evidence for widespread change in approach.
6. Gender and disability inclusion, while included in training courses, is not having a significant impact on the views of participants. This area should be re-examined to ensure it is more effective. This could be achieved by a more contextualised and practical approach.

Annex 1: Completion and Status Reports

Australia Awards Indonesia (2016a) Indonesia-Australia Partnership on Food Security the Red Meat and Cattle Sector Skills Development Program - Status report

Australia Awards Indonesia (2016b) Policy Development for Livestock Production and Supply Chains 2016 Course Completion Report (7 female and 8 male participants, February – April 2016)

Australia Awards Indonesia (2016c) Sharing Good Practice in the Australian and Indonesian Livestock Industries – A course for Senior Indonesian Government. Completion Report (6 male and 2 female participants)

Australia Awards Indonesia (2016d) Policy Development for Livestock Production and Supply Chains 2016 Short Term Award Reintegration Report October 2016

Eckhardt, G and M. Rickard (2016) TAFE Queensland South West Report on Meat production, processing and supply chain management Cohorts 1&2 (Cohort 1 – February –March; Cohort 2 April-May) (Report produced June 2016)

Eckhardt, G and M. Rickard (2016) TAFE Queensland South West Report on Meat production, processing and supply chain management Cohorts 3 October – November 2016

Gibson, J and P. Fitzgerald (2016) University of New England - Australian Awards Indonesia: Short Course Award Course Completion Report: Animal Husbandry and Cattle Production (On Farm Management, Operation of Livestock Markets, Whole Farm Planning February – April 2016).

Gibson, J and P. Fitzgerald (2016) Post course survey - University of New England - Australian Awards Indonesia: Short Course Award Course Completion Report: Animal Husbandry and Cattle Production (On Farm Management, Operation of Livestock Markets, Whole Farm Planning February – April 2016).