

# NIAPP Evaluation - Preliminary Findings and Recommendations

## Introduction

This evaluation was commissioned under the Indonesia-Australia Partnership on Food Security in the Red Meat and Cattle Sector (the Partnership) and has been conducted by the Advisory and Support Group (ASG).

The main objective of the evaluation is to determine the extent to which the program effectively contributes to the strategic objectives of the Partnership and whether the NTCA Indonesia Australia Pastoral Program (NIAPP) provides an effective training platform for those wishing to pursue a career in the sector.

## Background

NIAPP first commenced in 2012 after a pilot program in 2011 and has now been running successfully for 5 years under the auspices of the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association (NTCA). The program has been funded by the Partnership since 2013. Each year a batch of up to 20 students participate in cattle management training on pastoral properties in Northern Australia. This is supported by a reciprocal cultural exchange program whereby Australian industry partners visit Indonesia.

The program has been developed based on the assumption that selectively training university students in the cattle industry in Australia, including placements on cattle stations, will lead to greater job opportunities for them in the industry and encourage future long-term industry development. This is reinforced through an alumni support network that gets together annually at a national symposium, and through media coverage, with ongoing political support and engagement. In addition, industry professionals involved in the training undertake reciprocal visits to learn about the culture and history of Indonesia, as well as the opportunities and challenges faced by Indonesians working in the industry. This shared understanding of cultures, challenges and opportunities in the sector by Indonesian participants and Australian industry professionals is leading to a stronger industry partnership to support the supply chain, trade, and opportunities for investment in Indonesia and Australia.

Key success indicators are that:

- Students involved in the program choose a learning pathway that leads to professional and business opportunities in the red meat and cattle sector.
- Participants (alumni) are employed in the sector and have a career path that leads them into positions of influence in the industry.
- Political support for an ongoing partnership between Australia and Indonesia to focus on mutual industry benefits and evidence-based policy that supports the growth of the industry is maintained
- There are stronger industry to industry links between Indonesia and Australia to encourage improvements in the supply chain and investment

- In the longer term, a mutual understanding of opportunities and challenges in the Australian-Indonesian supply chain leads to collaboration and increases in industry investment in Indonesia and Australia.

The program operates on a number of assumptions:

- A common understanding of the industry in Australia and Indonesia, and the development of an alumni network linked to Australian industry professionals, will lead to closer and long lasting relationships which support the development of the cattle and red meat industry.
- The training and development of male and female Indonesian students, including placements on Australian Cattle farms, will encourage and enhance opportunities in the industry in Indonesia and Australia. Students will be influenced to choose pathways that lead to long term involvement in the industry.
- Ongoing media coverage and opportunities for political involvement will lead to strong support for the Australian and Indonesian cattle partnership and build public advocacy for greater collaboration and investment.
- Increased opportunity for higher learning in the industry, with support from the alumni network and industry professionals, will lead to careers within the red meat and cattle sector that could influence longer term policy and investment decisions. It is also assumed that there will be good career opportunities in the industry that attract the students.
- Alumni working in the industry, combined with ongoing political and industry support in Australia and Indonesia, will lead to positive outcomes and mutual industry benefits for Australia and Indonesia. There will be support for joint industry development with a good understanding of opportunities and competitive advantages in Australia and Indonesia.

## **Evaluation approach**

1. This evaluation was designed as a rapid assessment of the program. It was based on evidence from progress reports, project proposals, key informant interviews, the alumni database and notes from the Annual Symposium held in October 2016. Progress reports for 2014, 2015 and 2016 were reviewed.
2. Those interviewed included staff from:
  - a. Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, Canberra
  - b. NTCA staff and project managers in Darwin
  - c. Charles Darwin University staff and program managers
  - d. Department of Agriculture, Australian Embassy Jakarta
  - e. 20 Alumni from different cohorts between 2011 and 2015 in Jakarta and via phone
  - f. Course coordinators and lecturers in Indonesia

## **Key Findings**

### **Contributions to Partnership Outcomes**

The contribution NIAPP makes to Partnership outcomes are summarized below:

- 1. Effective linkages exist between Indonesia and Australia at the levels of government, industry and enterprise in the sector: Major contribution** - The most significant contributions the program makes are in establishing industry to industry linkages at the grass roots level, and in providing opportunities for industry partners, senior officials, academia and politicians to come together for informal industry discussions. The events created around the training and course completion, as well as the reciprocal visits to Indonesia by Australian industry representatives, have created a mutual understanding of industry issues and long lasting relationships. The main benefits from the program will be realized through the long term industry relationships that could potentially develop once the students get into more influential positions in industry and government. All students interviewed had a very positive view of the Australian industry and the relationship with Indonesia. Australian industry representatives participating in the reciprocal visits were also impressed with the industry in Indonesia, alleviating many concerns around animal welfare issues and stimulating discussions of investment prospects.
- 2. Those working in the sector have the skills needed to support a productive red meat and cattle industry: Moderate contribution** - The technical skills developed have some application in the industry in Indonesia such as animal health and welfare, breeding systems and cattle handling. The program continues to improve and respond to demand and addressing gaps in knowledge. There are considerable differences in the specific skills required in the Indonesian and northern Australian cattle industry – e.g. Indonesia’s emphasis on artificial insemination. Participants also train others on return and share knowledge and experience. In all cases, the experience has assisted alumni to gain employment. However, the main value created is in the soft skills and inspiration it creates in participants to establish and lead a business in the industry. The program increases the number of graduates aspiring to work in the industry and increases the chances of employment in the Industry when compared to the overall graduating cohort<sup>1</sup>. If the program can create cattle industry entrepreneurs and investment in Indonesia then the outcomes will be significant, however, this is a long term proposition.
- 3. The Indonesian and Australian Governments have access to quality policy analysis to inform policy and investment decisions: Minor contribution** - The program raises awareness of significant policy issues amongst participants such as the use of natural breeding versus artificial insemination; and comparative trade advantages between Indonesia and Australia in terms of cattle fattening and breeding respectively. This can influence policy formulation if/when the alumni move into leadership positions. However, the program is not designed to make a significant contribution to policy analysis. The program could be improved by examining farm business economics and reflecting on the impact of various policies on business outcomes.
- 4. Potential advances in the supply chain are identified and where agreed, tested, with lessons to inform policy, investment and production decisions: Minor contribution** – The program raises awareness of supply chain issues through the placements, training and reciprocal visits. This could be strengthened through a greater focus on supply chain issues during the course and

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<sup>1</sup> This is based on the proportion of students (30% in one cohort) who changed their career aspirations to focus on the cattle sector. Although many do not go immediately into a career in the sector, most still retain the aspiration to work in the sector and will switch when the opportunity arises.

exposure to facilities and services that make up the supply chain between Australia and Indonesia.

Key points of merit regarding the contribution to Partnership outcomes include:

1. Strong and lasting relationships are made between the students, host farms and training providers. There is evidence that these relationships are sustained as alumni progress their careers. Social media plays an important role in maintaining relationships, promoting activities, and attracting other students to the program. The host farms, as key industry players, acquired an extensive network of Indonesian friends and friendships are maintained through Facebook, further promoting grass roots relationships between the two countries.
2. The program has provided opportunities for high level political engagement through 'soft diplomacy'. It has provided good opportunities for media engagement and promoting an Indonesia-Australia cattle partnership, particularly in Northern Territory (NT). The Indonesian Consul to the Northern Territory has been a strong supporter and uses the program as an opportunity to bring together politicians, industry representatives and students. The program has been effective at getting high level officials to come together at NIAPP Alumni events or NTCA conferences for informal industry discussions. The program has strong support from Universities in Indonesia but could benefit from greater political support and media attention in Indonesia to link it to the Partnership.
3. There is a significant level of commitment to the program from students, course organizers and host stations through in-kind and financial contributions. Students<sup>2</sup> make financial contributions in terms of internal flights to Denpasar, insurance coverage and other costs during the course of the visit. They also often delay graduation by a semester in order to participate. The Universities in Indonesia actively participate in the coordination and selection processes. Host farms fully support the students with training, food and accommodation without compensation. They also participate in events in NT at their own costs and some have participated in reciprocal visits while using annual leave. The NT Government, through the Department of Primary Industry and Resources, provides training support and participates in events at no cost to the program.
4. The reciprocal visit was considered to be a highly valuable component of the program for culture exchange, establishing industry to industry linkages and increasing knowledge of the supply chain in Indonesia for the live export industry. During the visit, there were numerous discussions on investment. There is the potential to encourage future Australian investment should the Indonesian policy environment stabilize. For many Australians involved, the program provided reassurance that animals are well treated, the facilities in Indonesia are adequate and the abattoirs are of international standard.
5. Alumni are potentially good ambassadors for the industry and trade between Indonesia and Australia. They all recognize that the northern Australian industry's strength is breeding while Indonesia's comparative advantage is fattening.
6. Generally the monitoring and evaluation of the program is good, and improving, with the most recent reports providing information on program outcomes and a good analysis of results. The

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<sup>2</sup> In 2011 students paid all the costs to participate in the initial trial program. Students interviewed said this was worth the investment, reporting that getting employment in the industry, through the connections made was easier.

program is at the point where the monitoring and evaluation system should be documented and the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) revised to align with the Partnership's strategic objectives.

### **Effectiveness of the training platform**

1. The technical skills developed throughout the program are partially transferable to the Indonesian context, particularly in the areas of animal welfare, nutrition, cattle handling and some aspects of breeding systems. This is particularly relevant to working with Australian cattle in feedlots, under palm or with those companies or small holder cooperatives developing breeding programs. The skills may also be relevant for working on pastoral properties in eastern Indonesia where there are similar conditions. Some alumni now work for Australian owned companies and Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) in Indonesia. These appointments may be attributable to their knowledge of animal welfare issues and cattle handling.
2. The soft skills developed were considered to be the most valuable component of the program by course providers and participants in terms of personal development. These included confidence building, working independently, team building, work discipline and work ethic, appreciation of physical work, relationship building and communication skills (public speaking and English skills). Some students reported developing greater empathy towards people in Indonesia doing physical work. They became more sympathetic to what most farmers in Indonesia have to go through on a daily basis.
3. The student selection processes appear to be appropriate in attracting high achievers and well-motivated individuals who are focused on working in the cattle sector. There is a focus on getting diversity (religious and geographic) although there is no specific gender selection strategy. Despite this, the balance of males to females (50% in the last cohort) appears to be effective. There is a good geographic spread although some students find it difficult to attend selection interviews due to the internal travel costs in Indonesia.
4. Demand to participate in the program has increased significantly since its inception. Although there are only 20 placements, the number of universities with participants has increased from 2 universities in Java to 14 Universities across 11 provinces. Now there are 32 universities competing for positions in the program. One University lecturer attributed increases in enrolment in Animal Sciences to the opportunity of being able to participate in the program. It was also noted that the reciprocal visits by Australian industry representative to Indonesian universities were of great interest, attracting up to 200 students at presentations by the visitors.
5. Many commented on the uncertainty created by delays in this year's funding and support. This can have a negative impact on students planning to apply in the future and the overall future of the alumni network. Providing a greater level of funding certainty (e.g. 3-4 years) will also help to attract students to the discipline knowing they will have an opportunity to apply when the first enroll in University.
6. All students and alumni interviewed presented their experiences and shared their training with other students on their return.
7. Students considered the experience to be life changing. Students were initially motivated to participate to learn more about the cattle industry in Australia and its culture. There is evidence that the program has influenced many students to pursue a career or high degrees

- in the cattle industry where they had previously not considered it. In some instances, the students went against family wishes in order to pursue a career in the cattle industry. In all cases, students felt that participation in the course had improved their employment prospects.
8. Not all alumni interviewed who had graduated had progressed to a career in the agricultural sector or cattle industry<sup>3</sup>. Many reported that it was difficult to get a job in the industry. All those interviewed wanted to work in the industry but a lack of opportunity had resulted in them accepting other jobs. Most of those interviewed (65%) wanted to establish their own business or farm in the cattle industry once they had developed sufficient skills and acquired capital. Others wanted to be specialists or leaders in the cattle sector.
  9. Alumni received some help in getting employment by contacting people through their networks, however there is no structured career pathway or counselling to help alumni move into the industry. Although some would like to work for government they said gaining employment in the sector is very difficult. Given all alumni interviewed would like to work in the industry, significantly better outcomes could be achieved if the program could assist with work placements.
  10. The program is considered to have a bigger impact on undergraduate than post-graduate students. Undergraduate students are more likely to be impacted by the course and encouraged to follow a career path in the industry. Masters and PhD students, although already potentially pursuing a career pathway to support the industry, are less likely to be attracted to practical tasks or benefit from the skills developed. If one of the outcomes is to encourage a new generation of people to grow the industry then this will more likely be achieved at the undergraduate level.
  11. The program has demonstrated continuous improvement and has become increasingly relevant to skills applicable to the industry in Indonesia. The most recent course includes training on animal health, breeding systems and breeder care, including understanding body condition assessment. Alumni generally report that many of the skills learnt have been applied (either on campus or in their place of employment), particularly cattle handling procedures.
  12. Men and women on the course were expected to do the same work and were generally treated the same. Many women attending felt empowered by the experience and one commented that the course had changed her outlook on life. She is now more independent and wants to establish her own farm. Prior to the course she was planning on being a housewife.

## Recommendations

### Selection

1. The selection process should continue to target undergraduates in years 3 or 4 and be open to post graduates where it can be shown that they can demonstrate the practical relevance of the program to their research and career development.

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<sup>3</sup> According to the 2016 report, 66% or 21 of the graduates were now employed in agriculture and 12 of these worked in the cattle sector. Evidence suggests that this is higher than expected if they had not participated in the NIAPP. In other words, NIAPP is influential in encouraging graduates to pursue a career in the cattle sector.

2. The emphasis on getting good diversity in the cohort in terms of religion and geography should also include ensuring gender diversity; and the inclusion of gender and social inclusion principles throughout the program.

### **Pre-departure briefings**

3. Pre-departure briefings should be structured to prepare students to be ambassadors for Indonesia and the industry, and to understand the trade relationships. Briefings should also raise awareness of the cultural differences, work ethic and expectations around food and access to facilities (e.g. wifi) and services on stations.

### **Skills training**

4. To increase the relevance of the program to the Partnership objectives, there should be a greater focus and exposure to the supply chain between Australia and Indonesia, perhaps through visits to port facilities, transport services and abattoirs, as well as gaining an understanding of import and export processes.
5. Given the high number of students interested in establishing their own business, training on the key principles for setting up a profitable cattle business in the Indonesian context would be useful. A sound understanding of basic business economics would enable participants to be more prepared for setting up a small business in Indonesia; and to advise small holders and farm cooperatives on how to establish a profitable enterprise. Exposure to agri-business software used by Australian agricultural enterprises would also be useful.

### **Linkages with Indonesian and Australian institutions**

6. There needs to be greater awareness of the program amongst Indonesian industry partners and government institutions. The program needs greater exposure with better acknowledgement and links to the Partnership. There are now sufficient success stories to demonstrate the value of the program to Partners and the public.
7. Regular alumni events in Indonesia centered around pre-departure activities, returning graduates and reciprocal visits, where there is an opportunity to mix with industry representatives and government officials, would encourage stronger linkages and promotional opportunities.
8. Encourage the expansion of the program to other areas of northern Australia (Western Australia and Queensland) to increase the exposure of the program to other parts of Australia and different environments.

### **Relationship and Communication**

9. NTCA have a strong relationship with media in the NT and have managed to get good media coverage. Under arrangements with DFAT, this should be allowed to continue to take advantage of emerging opportunities. DFAT should provide media guidelines and work with NTCA to also extract maximum benefit for the Partnership.
10. The Partnership should also explore ways to leverage from the media coverage and events the NIAPP generates to improve public diplomacy for the Partnership and the cattle trade between Australia and Indonesia.

## **Career Development**

11. The program should fund annual internships for students who have participated in the NIAPP and who have recently graduated. Four internships would cost the program approximately \$20,000 per annum and provide a career opportunity for graduates. This would raise the profile of the NIAPP as a useful program to Indonesia, and provide a career pathway for students. Internships would be awarded through a competitive process to those graduates who have completed the program. The concept of internships could include private partners, private sector organisations and associations such as MLA. This could be done on a cost sharing basis with the Partnership.
12. The program should provide career counselling on return to Indonesia to help those wanting to get into the industry map out a career pathway and to be connected with industry networks. This could include options for working in Australia on temporary work visas; future study options and working for government and industry in Indonesia. Given all graduates interviewed had a desire to work in the industry, there is a significant opportunity to increase the number who could continue to apply their skills in the industry and move into influential positions.
13. To support the career counselling and promotion in Indonesia, a full time local staff member should be employed in Indonesia to support the program. This could include a range of tasks including identifying career opportunities, coordinating selection processes, management of the alumni network and functions, communication, promotion and career counselling.

## **Value for Money**

14. Given the high degree of in-kind support and other contributions made by participants and organisers, it would be expected that the overall cost per student (approximately \$20-\$25,000) should be much lower; or other value-added services should be included. The program could represent excellent value for money given the significant level of in-kind support from the industry, academia and government.
15. In-kind support from Indonesian and Australian organisations should be documented as a key performance indicator. This demonstrates a level of commitment to the program by all stakeholders.
16. Given the value of the NIAPP, the Partnership should consider supporting a 3-4-year program to provide certainty to students, particularly if the concept of internships is also supported. This would also allow for better use of resources, continuity of support staff, retention of knowledge, and ongoing commitment and forward planning for host farms involved in the program.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

17. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework should be documented to ensure consistency for future reporting and the KPIs should be revised to align with the Partnership objectives. The alumni database established and maintained for the program is a valuable resource for analysis and should continue to be maintained. Should the program continue, tracer studies would be useful to document the progress of alumni towards establishing industry careers and businesses in the cattle industry. These studies should highlight the role the program plays in empowering women.
18. Case studies should be conducted with Alumni who have started their own business or are currently planning to set up a business in the cattle industry. This would be useful to understand

the current barriers faced by alumni who want to establish a business in the industry; and areas of assistance or training that could enhance their success.