

Erasmus+ National Policy Reviews 2024

Papua New Guinea



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Contributor

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This national policy review provides a detailed analysis of Papua New Guinea's educational policies and their alignment with the Erasmus+ programme. It offers official, first-hand information into the country's engagement with Erasmus+ from 2021 to 2024, highlighting opportunities for improvement and identifying strategies to enhance integration and outcomes. Prepared and submitted by the Erasmus+ National Focal Point, this review contributes to ongoing efforts to strengthen international cooperation and to maximise the benefits of the Erasmus+ programme in Papua New Guinea.

Reviews of policies, initiatives, projects, and/or stakeholders

NSDA (National Skills Development Agency)

The NSDA is one of the major initiatives that the government of PNG has established to foster private-sector collaboration with TVET. It was formally launched by the government on 30 July 2019 and was established under the HE General Provision Act (2014).

The NSDA is a platform for industries and civil society to engage with TVET HEIs to advise on skills development priorities, training packages, TVET standards and employment outcomes. Its inaugural meeting was conducted on 14 April 2021. NSDA reviewed a range of skills policy initiatives and the National Quality Assurance documentation designed to increase the quality and industry relevance of accredited technical and vocational skills qualifications in PNG.

The NSDA is an advisory group and is further supported by the Industry Skills Group (ISG). Government, industry, civil society, and HEIs make up the NSDA Advisory Group, while the ISGs consist of members who are specialised in a particular industry. The NSDA Advisory Group provides oversight and guidance to the ISGs to develop training packages that meet industry standards. Three (3) ISGs have been established for Agriculture, Construction and TVET Teacher Training. An induction for the 3 ISGs was undertaken on 17 February 2022. Through the advisory role of NSDA, New Quality Assurance Frameworks and National Standards for National Training Packages were developed in alignment with the PNG National Qualifications Framework and PNG National Higher Education Standards. These include:

- Higher and Technical Education Quality Assurance Framework Manual
- DHERST Quality Assurance Manual Requirements
- Training Package Development and Approval Process Policy
- Standards for National Training Packages 2021
- Training Package Products Policy
- Workplace Training and Assessment Policy.

Also, in consultation with the NSDA and key stakeholders, DHERST has developed the National Skills Development Plan 2021 – 2025, which aims to improve the quality, access, and relevance of TVET.

<https://web.dherst.gov.pg/about/hte-sector-plans>

NOSS (National Online Selection System)

NOSS allows for Grade 12 student selections to be conducted online. DHERST facilitates a common selection process through the NOSS. Institution selectors can access the system and set their admission requirements for each program offered. This ensures transparency between the Grade 12 student applying and selectors. Previously, selections of Grade 12 students to tertiary institutions were done manually. DHERST would

coordinate the selection and bring all institution selectors to a central location to conduct the selections manually.

NOAS (National Online Application System)

NOAS allows Grade 12 students to apply to HEIs online. Students can create their online accounts and complete the school leaver forms online. Selections are conducted based on the requirements provided by the selectors through the National Online Selection System (NOSS). All necessary information about programmes and requirements is made available on NOAS so that students can make informed choices about their study preferences.

Improved TVET for Employment Project

The Improved TVET for Employment Project is a pillar investment project by the Government of Papua New Guinea (GoPNG). It will be funded by the Asian Development Bank, the Government of PNG, and the Government of Australia through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The project intends to strengthen PNG's Technical, Vocational, Education, and Training subsector in line with the recent reform in the higher and Technical Education sector.

Key project activities include strengthening the capacity and management of 10 TVET colleges, providing high-quality TVET teacher training, developing a curriculum for demand-driven TVET programs, upgrading teaching facilities at TVET colleges to be gender-responsive to increase female students' access to TVET, and strengthening national TVET. The project will focus on building competencies and skills currently lacking in the Construction Trades and Agriculture sector.

The project will be implemented in the following ten TVET colleges: Port Moresby Technical College, Kiunga TVET Centre, Highlands Agriculture College, Mt. Hagen Technical College, Don Bosco Technical College (Simbu), Goroka Technical College, Madang Technical College, National Polytechnic Institute (Lae), West New Britain Technical College and Bougainville Technical College.

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DHERST's i-PNG Networking Project

The i-PNG Management Information and Networking System aims to transform the higher and technical education sector into a diverse and growing network of linked post-secondary institutions that prepare students for the application of knowledge at an advanced level. The i-PNG model includes cloud-hosted libraries that feed learning and curriculum content to routers for easy download access to higher and technical education subsectors, eliminating large internet access costs.

www.dherst.gov.pg

National Higher and Technical Education Plan 2021 – 2030 (NHTEP)

The National Higher and Technical Education Plan 2021-2030 (NHTEP) is a 10-year aspiration of the Higher and Technical Education Sector in Papua New Guinea.

NHTEP 2021-2030 is a successive sector plan encompassing a review of the NHTEP 2015-2024 and maintaining the convention of 10-year planning cycles with 5-yearly review. A new 10-year cycle commencing 2021 was considered necessary for a range of reasons, primarily to focus on the significant reforms brought about by the 2020 amendments to the Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014 (HEGPA) and the transfer of HEIs to DHERST regulatory oversight in accordance with Higher Education Reform Act 2020. The NHTEP also incorporates elements of the Higher and Technical Education Strategic Implementation Plan 2017-2038 considered relevant to the 10-year planning cycle.

https://www.web.dherst.gov.pg/phocadownload/higher_education_plans_2022/20221502-nhte-plan-2021-2030.pdf

PNG NQF (National Qualifications Framework)

The PNG National Qualifications Framework (PNGNQF) is a system of formal qualifications for post-secondary (tertiary) education in Papua New Guinea. An award recognises a qualification after the successful completion of formal studies. Typical names for formal qualifications are awarded as certificates, diplomas, bachelor, master and doctorates.

The PNGNQF defines 10 levels of qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and the volume of learning. The framework awards a PNGNQF level (1-10), which describes the standard of learning, and the PNGNQF Award-Type, which describes the purpose, volume, and progression opportunities associated with a particular award. It is designed to ensure compatibility in the standards and quality of tertiary education qualifications and awards, which are nationally and internationally recognised.

<https://www.wrb.dherst.gov.pg/quality-assurance/national-qualification-framework>

Digitalisation rollout strategy and support systems

Digitalisation and innovation in the higher and technical education sector is a priority for the government and is one of the KRAs in the transition of HEIs to DHERST. DHERST will develop the Higher and Technical Education Information Management System (HTEIMS) to improve coordination and monitoring of HEIs. The HTEIMS will transform the higher and technical education sector into a diverse and growing network of linked HEIs that prepare students for the application of knowledge at an advanced level.

The HTEIMS will comprise the current management information and networking systems, such as the National Online Selections System (NOSS). It will further expand to include systems for managing the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP), hosting online Learning Management Systems for the proposed Open University, and planning e-Library databases for HEIs.

TESAS (Tertiary Education Scholarship Scheme)

TESAS is the national scholarship program that the Government has continued to support to address access to higher education. The Government has allocated K47.07 million for the 2023 TESAS. An estimated 19,000 scholarships were awarded for the 2023 academic year.

<https://edu.pngfact.com/education-news/png-government-scholarships-tesas>

Legislative reforms and/or policies that have been put in place in the past three years or that are still being discussed

Higher and Technical Education Reform Act 2020

The Higher and Technical Education Reform Act 2020 (HTRA 2020) and related amended Acts legally transfer the oversight of Public HEIs from the Ministry for Education and other State Agencies (Department of Health and Department of Agriculture and Livestock) to the MHERST and DHERST. It also transfers regulatory oversight of private HEIs formally under the National Training Council (NTC) to the MHERST and DHERST. The HTRA 2020 addresses the issues of duplication of regulatory and budgetary functions.

In 2021, HEIs have been formally transferred to DHERST regulatory oversight, according to the National Gazette No. G343 and No. G551. The HEIs include Technical, Nursing, Teacher Education, Agriculture, Fisheries and Maritime Colleges.

These legislative changes and their successful implementation will significantly enhance the higher education quality assurance system in Papua New Guinea (PNG). All HEIs, both public and private, will now be required to operate under a single qualification framework (PNG National Qualifications Framework), which is benchmarked across the APEC region. This will set the foundation to encourage cross-border education, academic mobility and improved educational pathways.

The implementation of the reforms will contribute to the following main outcomes:

- Empowered institutions under the semi-autonomous model
- DHERST regulatory oversight
- Development of National Training Packages and National Curriculum
- Strong industry and private sector engagement
- Targeted funding and infrastructure development
- Upskilling of educators in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

DHERST has established a Higher Education Transition Secretariat and relevant technical working groups to oversee and coordinate the implementation of reform activities. DHERST has developed a Transition Work Plan which details five (5) Key Result Areas (KRAs) to be achieved. The KRAs include:

- KRA 1: Transfer of Budgetary Allocations from Affected Agencies to DHERST.
- KRA 2: Establishment of Governing Councils for transferred HEIs and rollout of the Governance Manual.
- KRA 3: Transfer of Registration and Accreditation functions from National Training Council (NTC) to DHERST.
- KRA 4: Establishment of new Salaries Terms and Conditions for HEIs, transfer of functions from NDoE to DHERST.
- KRA 5: Digitalisation rollout strategy and support systems.

Budgetary transfer relating to the transferred HEIs formally under NDoE has been effected as of 1 January 2022. DHERST, through close consultation with key central agencies, have collated and submitted both the recurrent and development budgets of the transferred institutions to the Department of Treasury on 24 August 2021 for the 2022 budget. Two appropriations have been moved to DHERST: Pre-service teacher education (K13.3m) and technical schools operation (K19.7m).

The establishment of the new Governing Councils of transferred HEIs is part of the reform strategy to appoint new Governing Council members who have the required expertise to promote effective governance and accountability in the HEIs.

All private HEIs are now required to register with DHERST only, in accordance with the amended provisions of the Higher Education General Provisions Act (HEGPA) 2021. On 3 December 2021, DHERST and NTC jointly published a statement formally announcing the transfer of registration and accreditation functions of private HEIs from NTC to DHERST.

<https://www.parliament.gov.pg/index.php/bills-and-legislation/view/higher-and-technical-education-reform-act-2020>

Higher Education (General Provisions) (Amendment) Act 2020 (HEGPA 2020)

The passing of the HEGPA, the Higher and Technical Education Reform Act 2020, and associated legislation provide DHERST and the sector with the legal framework that will drive higher education reforms consistently with changes both at the national and international levels. Regulation, quality assurance, governance, and management of HEIs are key functions of any higher and technical education system.

A cyclical approach is being adopted under the HEGPA to ensure compliance and ensure that only reputable and genuine HEIs offer higher and technical education in PNG.

<https://www.parliament.gov.pg/index.php/bills-and-legislation/view/higher-education-general-provisions-amendment-act-2020>

Initiatives and/or programmes that have been launched in the past three years

Higher Education Sector Public Investment Programme

The Government's Public Investment Programme (PIP) in the HE sector is intended to develop the capacity of HEIs to ensure access, quality, and successful completion for students. DHERST is tasked with coordinating the PIP, which aims to rehabilitate and recapitalise infrastructure within HEIs.

In the last five years, there have been noticeable changes in terms of rehabilitation and development of infrastructure in all institutional types across PNG. The teaching and learning infrastructure are gradually being improved through the PIP that DHERST is tasked to manage. As a result, spaces have been created, and enrolments are increasing annually through the PIP. The teaching and learning environment are also improving through the PIP.

<https://www.web.dherst.gov.pg/development-projects>

PNG – HELP (Higher Education Loan Programme)

The HELP initiative of the National Government of Papua New Guinea aims to facilitate access to quality tertiary education. It aims to address the increasing number of students unable to access post-secondary due to a lack of financial resources. It will provide all eligible higher education students with an income-contingent loan with zero-based interest and loan balances adjusted annually for inflation while offering flexible loan repayments commencing on productive employment.

HELP's financial component will be delivered as a student loan programme to support students' learning, teaching, and research fees in accordance with the Funding Agreement between HEIs and the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST).

The fundamental eligibility requirement for HELP is that students must be enrolled in a university or a college registered to DHERST and the academic programmes they are studying have been reviewed and accredited.

<https://web.dherst.gov.pg/help>

Projects which are examples of good practice that have been launched in the past three years

Regulation and Quality Assurance

- National Standards for HEI Registration and Programme Accreditation

The National Standards provide the benchmark for all institutions to be assessed against. Over time, these Standards are reviewed to ensure they are compatible with standards used by National Accrediting agencies worldwide.

The PNG National Qualifications Framework (PNG NQF) supports the National Standards by regulating each level of qualification offered by any institution in the country. PNGNQF is basically the system of formal qualifications for tertiary education in PNG.

The PNGNQF has 10 levels of qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and the volume of learning and design to ensure comparability in standards for qualification awards nationally and internationally.

<https://web.dherst.gov.pg>

Benchmarking with International Quality Assurance Agencies

As an accrediting body, one of the main focus of DHERST is to continuously update and review its systems and processes to ensure it is aligned to best practices accepted globally.

Part of this strategy is its membership in the International Network for QA Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN). DHERST, through GoPNG, is also an active member of UNESCO. DHERST adopted many of the good practices from these QA agencies as a benchmark to regulate higher education in the country. DHERST actively participates in conferences, which are mostly held biannually.

Key players and networks (stakeholders) at the national level (or at the regional level with a national component)

Over the past years, DHERST continued to meet statutory reporting obligations by submitting reports to the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council (PM&NEC), the Department of Finance (DoF), the Department of Treasury (DoT), the Department of National Planning and Monitoring (DNPM). There are some areas that the department determines to review and improve processes and systems to be more accountable and transparent in delivering government services.

Prime Minister and National Executive Council (PM&NEC)

The Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council (PM&NEC) is a government agency in Papua New Guinea that provides policy advice and support to the Prime Minister and the National Executive Council (NEC). The department was established in 1975 when PNG gained independence from Australia, and its mandate has since expanded to encompass a wide range of responsibilities.

The PM&NEC is responsible for developing and implementing policies and strategies that advance the government's objectives and priorities across all sectors of the economy. This includes working with other government agencies to identify policy priorities and develop strategies to achieve them. The department is also responsible for overseeing the country's national security issues, including domestic and international threats.

<https://pmnec.gov.pg/about-us/>

Department of Finance

The Department of Finance is a key central agency of the Government of Papua New Guinea mandated by the Constitution, the Organic Law on Provincial and Local-level Governments and the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA).

The Department is responsible for providing direction and support in financial policy formulation, financial systems development and maintenance, financial and accounting information processing, financial management and accounting procedures, monitoring of financial performance against the budget and legislative compliance and financial reporting requirements for the whole of Governments.

<https://www.finance.gov.pg>

Department of Treasury (DoT)

The Department of Treasury delivers a fair distribution of opportunities in education, health, and income earning to all Papua New Guineans. The Department also provides sound, timely, and influential economic policy advice and manages the economy based on informed decision-making and a long-term whole-of-government approach.

The major functions include:

- Undertake research and provide advice to the Government on economic issues
- Provide advice to the Government on financial issues that arise from the National Budget.
- Prepare and monitor the National Budget

- Provide policy advice to the Government on the finance and resource management of National Government Departments, Provincial and Local Level Government and state owned enterprises

<https://www.devex.com/organizations/departments-of-treasury-papua-new-guinea-137235>

Department of National Planning and Monitoring (DNPM)

The role of the Department of National Planning and Monitoring is to lead, plan, coordinate and facilitate appropriate national and international initiatives that address and promote equitable and sustainable development of Papua New Guinea, in accordance with both a long-term vision for the Nation that has the support of the citizens of Papua New Guinea.

The DNPM Corporate Plan 2020-2024 is the blueprint to guide the Department's operations and functions from 2020 to 2024. It entails key deliverables and targets with specific timelines for the department to measure its performance over five years.

<https://pmnec.gov.pg/about-us/>

National Department of Education

A NEC decision number 25/2017 determined that the technical colleges, along with the teachers' colleges, are Higher Education Institutions that has come under the auspices of DHERST. Department of Education has worked with DHERST which made the transition as smooth as possible.

Higher Education Institutions in PNG operate under the auspices of the DHERST. In 2020, the business and technical colleges, along with the teachers' colleges that were with the Department of Education, were relocated to DHERST. This subsector also includes nursing colleges and several miscellaneous colleges, such as the Maritime College.

<https://www.education.gov.pg/documents/nep-final-2021-2029.pdf>

Papua New Guinea Teaching Service Commission (TSC)

The Papua New Guinea Teaching Service Commission (TSC) looks after the welfare of Teachers in Papua New Guinea. Its core functions are to determine terms and conditions of service and welfare of teachers and monitor and regulate the implementation of its delegated powers and functions carried out by other authorities within the national education system in Papua New Guinea.

<https://edu.pngfacts.com/tsc.html>

Australia

- Papua New Guinea-Australia Comprehensive Strategic & Economic Partnership

The Papua New Guinea-Australia Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership (CSEP) was signed by Prime Minister Hon. James and Australian Prime Minister Hon Scott Morrison at the Virtual Leaders' Summit in August 2020.

The CSEP reinforces the strong bonds between our two countries and strengthens our ambitious vision for the future, elevating relations and deepening bilateral cooperation across security, trade and investment, governance, development cooperation, health, education, gender equality, climate change, people-to-people, and institutional links.

At the conclusion of the Virtual Summit, the two Prime Ministers also witnessed the signing of the Statement of Intent of the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) between the then Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, Hon. Nick Kuman, MP and Australia's Minister for International Development and the Pacific Hon. Alex Hawke, MP.

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/papua-new-guinea-australia-comprehensive-strategic-and-economic-partnership-signed.pdf>

- PNG-Australia commitment on Technical & Vocational Education and Training

The governments of Papua New Guinea and Australia have reaffirmed their commitment to working in partnership to improve outcomes from Papua New Guinea's Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector and increase the number of skilled workers in the country.

PNG has a critical shortage of qualified workers with technical and vocational skills, with less than two percent of PNG's population holding a vocational or technical certificate. As a result, PNG has experienced a shortage of skilled labour to keep up with growing industry demand.

The joint commitment by both governments acknowledges the critical contribution that education makes to national development and the establishment of a vibrant economy, and the longstanding cooperation between the two countries in education.

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China

On 16 November 2018, a MoU between the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China and the Government of PNG was signed to enhance Cooperation in Higher and Technical Education by providing scholarships for PNG students to study in China.

The MoU provided up to 10 government scholarships each year to be awarded to PNG students studying in China. The duration of the MoU is from 2018 and 2023. 2500 scholarships will be offered by China to Pacific Island Countries during the five (5) year term of the MoU. The scholarship covers the tuition fee, boarding and lodging fees, registration fees, and return airfares. Expenses for the program have increased slightly over the years.

DHERST will continue to collaborate with the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in PNG to effectively coordinate and implement the scholarship program. DHERST will ensure that the scholarship addresses PNG's human capital development requirements and efficiently facilitates the awarding of the scholarship. Furthermore, the Scholarship Working Committee will ensure the welfare of the students so that they can complete their studies successfully.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

- Digitalisation of Teachers Colleges in PNG through Partnership with JICA

JICA continues to work tirelessly for the cause of pre-service primary teacher education. Negotiations conducted by their senior officials in PNG with the University of Electro-Communication in the city of Chofu, which lies in the Tokyo metropolitan area, are well advanced to bring 3,000 tablets to the country for use in primary teacher colleges.

A further 1,000 will go to the Department of Education. The 3,000 tablets donated to DHERST will be used by lecturers and students at the primary teacher colleges to improve teaching and learning, particularly in connection with the upcoming maths and science project led by Japanese experts.

Students will use the tablets for lesson preparation, research, lesson implementation, and self-learning with digital content, in accordance with the new pre-service primary teacher education curriculum.

<https://studyinpng.com/2020/08/digitalisation-of-teachers-colleges-in-png-through-partnership-with-jica/>