

The Kokoda
Initiative
Second Joint
Understanding

Mid-term Review

Report

July 2014



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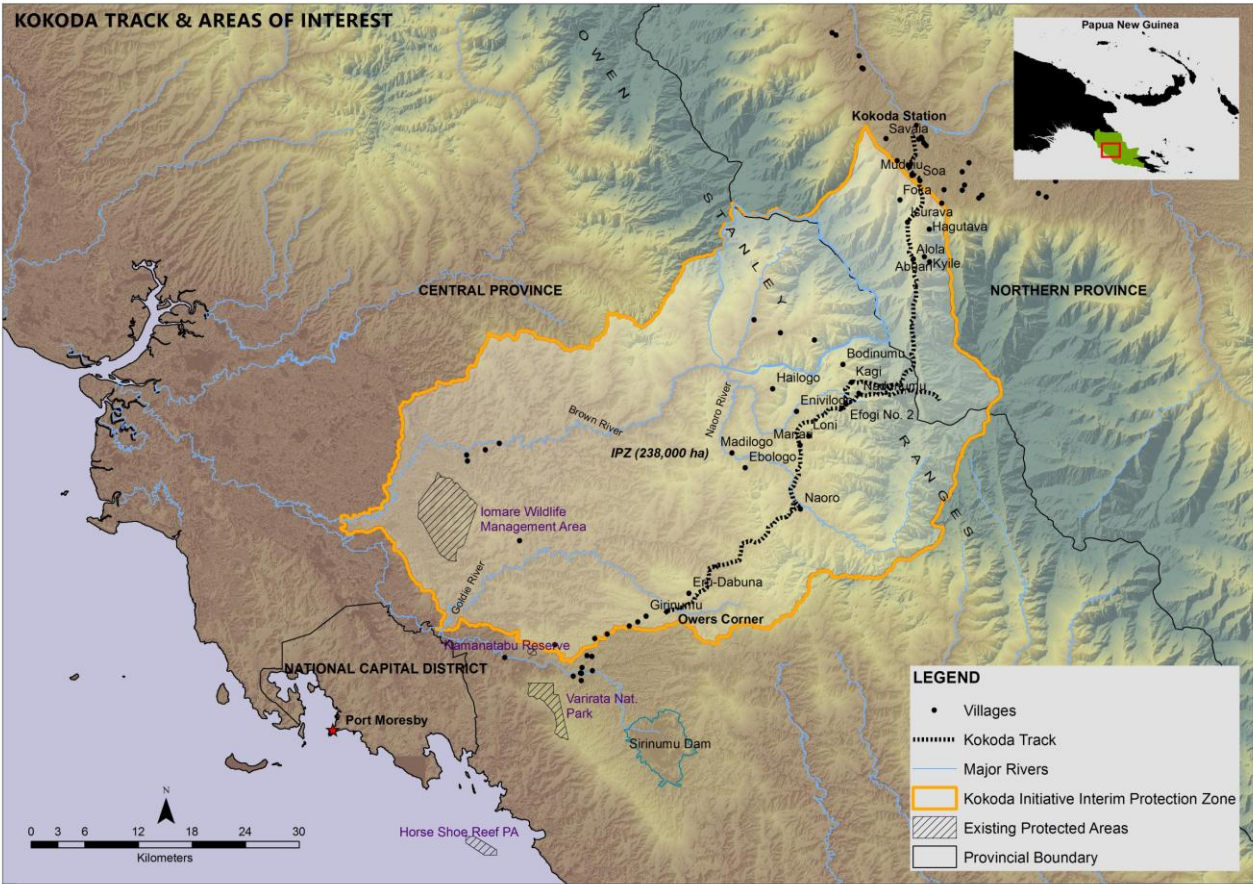
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARF	(DFAT / AusAID) Adviser Remuneration Framework
AusAID	Now incorporated into DFAT (Australian Aid)
CBM	Community based mentors
CEO	Chief executive officer
CEPA	Conservation and Environment Protection Authority;
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DEC	PNG Department of Environment and Conservation
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DoE	Australian Department of Environment
DSIP	District Services Improvement Program
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GoA	Government of Australia
GoPNG	Government of Papua New Guinea
IHS	International Heritage Section of DoE
IPZ	Interim protection zone
JU2	Second Joint Understanding (JU2) between Papua New Guinea and Australia on the Owen Stanley Ranges, Brown River Catchment and Kokoda Track Region 2010–2015.
KDP	Kokoda Development Program
KI	Kokoda Initiative
KIMC	Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee
KTA	Kokoda Track Authority
KTF	Kokoda Track Foundation
LLG	Local level government
MTR	Mid-term review
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NBIS	National Biodiversity Information System
NMAG	(PNG) National Museum and Art Gallery
NGO	Non-government organisations
OSR	Owen Stanley Ranges
PES	Payments for environmental services
PIP	Public Investment Program
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PLGP	Provincial and Local-level Governments Program
PMC	Program management committee
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist Church
SPA	Special purpose authority
The Track	The Kokoda Track
TEM	Terrestrial Ecosystems Management Branch of DEC
TPA	(PNG) Tourism Promotion Authority
TWG	Technical working group of KIMC

Map of Project Area



Executive Summary

The Government of Australia (GoA), in partnership with the Government of Papua New Guinea (GoPNG), has been funding a program of activities to implement the Second Joint Understanding (JU2) between Papua New Guinea and Australia on the Owen Stanley Ranges, Brown River Catchment and Kokoda Track Region 2010–2015. Preservation of the Kokoda Track region brings together Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Australia's national interests, promoting the economic and social development of Papua New Guinea while protecting the important natural, cultural and historic values of this region. The Kokoda Track symbolises the lasting bond of friendship and mutual understanding between the people of Papua New Guinea and Australia.

The 2010–2015 JU2 aims to achieve five concurrent and mutually reinforcing goals set out in Table 1 and discussed below. The Kokoda Initiative (or the Initiative) is delivered by both GoPNG and GoA agencies. The main implementing agencies in PNG are the GoPNG Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) through the Terrestrial Environment Management (TEM) Branch; the Kokoda Track Authority (KTA); the Tourism Promotion Authority (TPA); the National Museum and Art Gallery (NMAG); and the GoA Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Australian Aid which funds and manages the Kokoda Development Program¹ (KDP) through the Australian High Commission in Port Moresby. In Australia, the Department of Environment, International Heritage Section is responsible for managing all aspects of the Initiative except for the Kokoda Development Program activities managed by DFAT. In 2009, the GoPNG (through the Public Investment Program (PIP)) committed 21 million Kina for the Kokoda Initiative. The Australian Government contribution to the Kokoda Initiative between July 2008 and April 2013 was AU\$28.65 million with a further \$12.5 million allocated for activities to June 2016.

A Mid Term Review (MTR or the Review) was required under the JU2 by late 2013. The terms of reference are provided in Annex 1. The Review was to assess the success of the Kokoda Initiative / JU2 to date from both the PNG and Australian Governments' perspectives with sensitivity to the different cultural attitudes that define 'success', and consider the practical constraints of program delivery in remote areas of a developing country through multiple agencies. In addition, the Review would inform program delivery to the end of the JU2 period. The outcomes of the Review are expected to explore and inform any further mechanisms which may be agreed after the JU2 period that would allow the GoPNG and GoA to focus and strengthen their role in delivering on their mutual commitments to the preservation of the Owen Stanley Ranges, Brown River Catchment and Kokoda Track beyond 2015. A series of specific review questions are addressed in the report and summarised below. As requested, the Review has addressed the standard Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation questions including the likely impact of the Initiative. The impact relates to final outcomes achieved whereas success includes activities and outputs as well as outcomes.

The MTR team used a consultative process to consider the views of all stakeholders. The PNG based Program Management Committee (PMC) was the main evaluation partner with the members of the GoPNG and GoA taskforces being consulted during the meeting processes. The Kokoda Initiative Senior Adviser was responsible for managing the review process on behalf of partners. The review process drew on existing documentation and data such as agency business and annual work plans, the Kokoda Initiative Design Document, activity reports, annual reporting (including financial statements), monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities conducted to date and a 2009 Review of the first Joint Understanding. After initial meetings in Canberra, the review team² worked in-country from 28 February to 7 March 2014. Meetings and discussions were held with a range of stakeholders as set out in the listing of meetings provided in Annex 2. A field visit was made to Oro Province to meet the KTA chairman and provincial government officials. The draft findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons were discussed with members of the Kokoda Initiative PMC before the draft aide memoire was prepared. Due to the absence of some key stakeholders,

¹ Since the production of this report the term KDP is no longer used to describe the GoA support for service delivery. Instead the program is referred to as the KI DEvelopment program KIDP.

² Ian Teese, Team Leader / Evaluation Specialist and Rodney Kameata, Social Impact / Environment Consultant were assisted by the MTR team members in PNG. Ms Doreen Iga, DFAT, joined the mission for some meetings and travelled to Oro province with the MTR consultants providing insights on implementation of relevant DFAT / AusAID and NGO programs. Mark Nizette, DEC adviser, assisted in making the arrangements in PNG. The review was managed by Ms Susan Newling, IHS, DoE Canberra.

additional meetings were held in Port Moresby during March 2014. The inputs and contributions from all stakeholders are greatly appreciated by the MTR consultants. The findings, conclusions and any errors are the sole responsibility of the consultants.

Overall Assessment Including Impact

Goal 1: A safe and well managed track. The Track has remained open for all trekking seasons since the Initiative started. The KTA has processes to proactively assist in addressing likely constraints through routine maintenance programs, structured contacts with the communities, community contracts to maintain sections of the Track near each community and the ward development fund provides an annual allocation to all the wards along the Track. The Kokoda Initiative has funded enhancements made for safety of communities and trekkers along the Track including upgrading and maintaining airstrips along the track, particularly at Kokoda. Funds raised through the trekking fees are paid to communities for routine maintenance along the Track, through village maintenance agreements. Other fees are paid annually to local government wards in the region through the ward development committees. GoA funds maintenance of the road to Ower's Corner to the benefit of local communities and trekkers, and also major conservation and maintenance works including bridge maintenance and repairing damage caused by landslips, etc.

The stakeholder workshops and tour operator forums have provided opportunities for stakeholder contributions. There is good attendance at the tour operator forums in PNG but interest in Australia is declining, which could be partially addressed through improved communication of progress in addressing operator concerns raised at the fora.

Goal 2: Enhanced quality of life for landowners and communities (along the Track). The GoA funded KDP has provided materials for and assisted communities to construct village health centres and elementary schools along the Track. The KDP has been working on 19 school construction and/or rehabilitation activities with three reported as completed (Kokoda elementary school and primary school, and Kagi elementary school). The Kokoda Track Foundation (KTF) assisted communities complete some of the infrastructure. The KDP provided some limited training to complement the infrastructure construction. Training, mentoring activities have been provided for village health volunteers (VHV) and health workers who are also supported by regular patrols along the Track.

The Livelihoods activities implemented through KTA have had limited impact, partially due to minimal ongoing support. The community based mentors (CBM) have started to support micro and small enterprises in their communities, particularly guesthouses for trekkers. KTA has supported guesthouse and camping ground owners to improve their facilities and become accredited as having acceptable facilities.

The DEC TEM Branch, working with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) project, is developing the models to ensure income streams (such as power and water production fees) from new developments in the Interim Protection Zone (IPZ) based around the Brown River catchment are directed fairly back to the customary land owners and communities in the area.

The Initiative design highlighted the need to include all stakeholders and levels in the approach to sustainable development. This has not been achieved. The high level coordination and planning activities have possibly been too intensive leading to some stakeholders experiencing meeting overload and others have missed out.

Conversely, at the operational and community levels, there has been a lack of coordination and planning. Little attention has been given to engaging with relevant local or international non-government organisations (NGOs), including churches, with links to the Kokoda region. There are opportunities to access additional skills and resources from these NGOs which have strong links with Track communities.

The Kokoda Initiative does not have a comprehensive database of education and health infrastructure and supporting resources which would assist in planning and resourcing priority community issues. The KTF may have useful information to complement the KDP information.

Goal 3: Wise use and conservation of the Interim Protection Zone

The DEC team is developing the building blocks needed for the integrated land use plan for the Interim Protection Zone (IPZ). The spatial mapping of the area has been upgraded (to a 5 m x 5 m resolution), ground-truthed, including for assessment of primary or secondary forestry cover, and incorporated into DEC land management activities. This imagery from 2007 and 2010 has allowed assessment of land use changes but may now require updating. Staff from other sections in DEC have participated in the GIS training, building DEC capacity and providing back-up for the TEM specialist. A JICA forestry project is using the same imagery. Social mapping of the track area is progressing and a decision on whether to proceed with mapping for the whole track and an appropriate cost-effective methodology will be made by late 2014.

The values mapping activity is addressing biodiversity, cultural and archaeological aspects of the IPZ using national and international experts to guide implementation. Current work is leading to further development of the National Biodiversity Information System to provide a framework for recording all known species in the IPZ by the end of 2015 and a project is underway to curate PNG species currently held in overseas collections. These are important aspects needed to prepare for a possible World Heritage nomination.

The tools and processes being developed by the Kokoda Initiative in this area are being used by the Global Environment Fund (GEF) project covering New Britain and a larger section of the Owen Stanley Ranges.

The above activities are identifying the main natural and cultural values in the IPZ. New activities are starting to collect and document military heritage aspects of the Track. These will focus on heritage from the PNG side as well as the much better known Australian side. The first stage of the Oral History project managed by DEC should be finished by June 2014. The NMAG chairs the advisory committee for this project. Planning has started for an inventory of the Australian military heritage along the Track.

Goal 4: Building the national and international tourism potential of the Kokoda Track and OSR

The tourism marketing/promotion position in KTA (being recruited in March 2014) was planned to take a more proactive role in promotion of the Track and to progress the proposed strategic tourism plan and associated marketing activities. The major Kokoda Initiative grant recently made to TPA to undertake tourism training, and other tourism related activities along the Track should accelerate activities in this area.

The Kokoda Initiative work being undertaken by DEC TEM is building the case for a World Heritage nomination for the IPZ/ Track area and efforts should be made to build the capacity of the DEC unit responsible for managing the listing process.

Goal 5: Ensuring Kokoda Initiative activities are sustained into the future

Within a five year program working with new or under-resourced agencies, it is unrealistic to expect the activities to have become embedded in the PNG government processes and have access to ongoing GoPNG funding or be commercially sustainable. KTA is moving towards being financially viable³ for its core track regulation and management functions. A future focus should be to maximise the fees from trekkers that can be returned to the track communities and for track maintenance.

Good progress has been made in building the technical and operational capacity of the main counterpart agencies (DEC and KTA).

1.2 Key MTR Questions

(a) Achievement of JU2 goals and objectives

As summarized above, the Initiative has made significant progress to the (ambitious/aspirational) high level goals set out in the JU2 agreement. There is high level commitment to the JU2 vision and the Kokoda Initiative has made good progress towards bringing together Papua New Guinea and Australian national interests, particular in the Kokoda Track area. With some changes to implementation as proposed below and with an increased focus on achieving agreed key outcomes, the Kokoda Initiative should contribute to

³ See Table 3 and Section 5.3.

significant improvements in community well-being and protection and enhancement of the natural, cultural and military heritage environment in the IPZ.

(b) Alignment of Kokoda Initiative activities with JU2 goals and objectives

The Kokoda Initiative activities align quite well with the JU2 goals and objectives. The main challenge is in the degree of attention and resourcing provided to some areas. The main areas where this is weak is in the areas of managing the development opportunities and income streams, and in developing the alliances between the government, commercial and NGO stakeholders to provide consistent and cost-effective community development and infrastructure planning and implementation support to communities.

(c) Enablers and constraints to Kokoda Initiative implementation and impact on achieving JU2 goals and objectives

Enablers:

- High level commitment to the special relationship between PNG and Australia
- Resources from GoA and GoPNG
- Capacity developed (formally and informally) in DEC and KTA, but there are opportunities for further capacity development.
- Access to specialist skills, knowledge and resources from both DoE and the KDP.

Constraints:

- A complex design incorporating aspirational high level goals which have not been linked back to achievable measureable outcomes for the five year program period.
- Lack of understanding of overall Kokoda Initiative program amongst some stakeholders.
- Limited in-country administration and organisational support for in-country coordination and planning activities.
- Less than satisfactory coordination between Kokoda Initiative and KDP activities.
- Limited success in accessing GoPNG budget resources (Public Investment Program (PIP) and District Services Improvement Program (DSIP) for the Track communities.

(d) Governance structures for JU2

The Kokoda Initiative / JU2 design emphasised the need for effective coordination and planning at all levels of the Initiative. The Senior Advisor position has facilitated links between high level stakeholders. The Minister for Environment and Conservation has provided valuable leadership including formation of the Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee to strengthen GoPNG engagement with the Initiative. Provincial governments are now taking up their mandated roles in the governance groups to strengthen the links to GoPNG budgeting, planning and implementation processes.

The program management committee (PMC) is functioning largely as planned as the working committee for the Initiative but could be strengthened through a formal reporting process back to the DoE project director.

At local-level government and community level, the governance structures are much less developed with limited structured participation and support to the planning, coordination and implementation processes. A disappointing weakness in the governance arrangements is the low level of participation of Australian tour operators in the consultative process through the tour operator forums.

(e) Longer term sustainability of changes facilitated through the Kokoda Initiative

The Kokoda Initiative is facilitating and funding an integrated package of interventions designed to address specific constraints and issues. The GoPNG is committed to strengthening management and community benefits from protected areas across the country including the Kokoda Initiative supported IPZ activities. Sustainability of the changes will depend on the level of benefits from protected areas, including the Kokoda Track trekking operations, and how efficiently these benefits are returned to communities.

The KTA is already close to financial viability to undertake its core mandated functions. As such, and provided that trekker fees and numbers are managed appropriately, and the organisation's management and operational capacity continues to develop, KTA can fund a significant proportion of its core operations.

The changes to DEC will prove more challenging as the GoPNG has indicated that the new CEPA is to become self-funding in a relatively short period. The challenge will be ensuring that CEPA has adequate funding and staff resourcing to implement Kokoda Initiative related activities as it makes the transition to being a self-funding organisation. GoPNG funding for Kokoda Initiative related activities may be made through PIP or other appropriations.

Key Findings and Conclusions (These are numbered as in the main report)

General

1. The Kokoda Initiative is regarded as an important element of the relationship between PNG and Australia.
2. The formation of the Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee (KIMC), initiated by Minister Pundari, is an important step forward in highlighting this importance.
4. The Initiative has made good progress in implementation of most planned activities but both sides have had lags in scheduled activities.
5. The Kokoda Track is a major draw card for most Australian tourists to PNG and provides some flow-on benefits to communities along the Track. These visits may not lead to significant flow-on benefits to other parts of the PNG tourism industry.

Department of Environment and Conservation;

7. The new externally funded and run project through the GEF, managed by the UNDP, working closely with DEC, is linking closely with the Kokoda Initiative activities and using them as the model for GEF implementation across New Britain and wider sections of the Owen Stanley Ranges.
9. The recent legislation to support formation of a Conservation and Environment Protection Authority (CEPA) will lead to a period of change as the current DEC resources are transferred to CEPA.
11. The Review team noted that DEC had another high level adviser⁴ to the Minister and DEC/CEPA.

Kokoda Track Authority

12. The KTA is fulfilling its mandate of keeping the Track open and managing funds collected from trekking operations to pay villages to undertake track maintenance and providing ward development grants to the communities along the track. The livelihood activities have been less successful.
13. The KTA has an enthusiastic group of young staff led by the CEO who is supported by the DoE business systems adviser. Formal staff and board capacity building activities have recently commenced but structured further inputs are required.
15. A continued focus on improving the efficiency of KTA business systems and operations will maximise the funds that can be returned to communities along the Track.
18. KTA is the best known 'face' of the Kokoda Initiative and also has the closest interaction with the trekking companies regularly using the Track and the Track communities. It is sometimes wrongly linked with issues with other Kokoda Initiative activities and other issues in the area that are unrelated to the Kokoda Initiative. ;
19. The planned trek information / booking website has not been completed but GoPNG resources have been committed for the work. Trekking operators and other stakeholders view this as a priority.

⁴ The MTR team has been advised that, since the MTR visit, this person has left DEC employment and returned to Australia.

21. The twice yearly tour operator forums have been a valuable communication tool with the trekking industry, particularly in PNG. Improved communication of follow-up on recurrent issues may improve attendance by Australian based operators.
22. A published consolidated annual operational and financial report to the GoPNG, Kokoda Initiative partners and stakeholders such as the tour operators may address some KTA criticism.
23. The KTA Livelihoods Project Scoping Study undertaken in late 2013 identified some areas where there were opportunities for improvement. Also the Economic Significance of Trekking on the Kokoda Track in 2012 made a start on quantifying the benefits of the trekking industry to communities along the Track, however, these studies do not provide a consolidated summary of the economic benefits of the trekking industry and distribution and quantum of benefits.

Kokoda Development Program:

26. The KDP has delivered required health and education infrastructure along the Track with some supporting capacity building. Health activities had been given greater emphasis.
28. Planning, management and coordination of the KDP activities has been less than satisfactory. Management arrangements for KDP under the Provincial and Local-Level Governments Program (PLGP) have been revised and are being monitored.
29. An integrated database of education, health, other community facilities and trekking support resources along the Track to support planning of priorities and future activities by all government and NGO stakeholders is not in place (a KT Public Assets database).

Other Agencies (Tourist Promotion Authority, National Museum and Art Gallery)

30. These agencies are undertaking agreed Kokoda Initiative activities. TPA is satisfied with its engagement and has commenced implementing agreed activities under a direct contract with DoE.

Coordination and Management

31. The Kokoda Initiative design provides for structured coordination and planning processes at several levels with greater inputs to higher level engagement. The MTR team was concerned to find some higher level officials who, despite participating in these higher level activities, still did not fully understand the Kokoda Initiative concept and implementation plans.
34. Compared to other programs reviewed by MTR members, the Kokoda Initiative appears to have a high proportion of funds allocated to activity management. The MTR team accepts that the more complex Kokoda Initiative design and range of stakeholders and implementing agencies requires a greater level of coordination.
35. At field level in the Kokoda Initiative area, there is a lack of coordination between the two main implementing agencies (KTA and KDP) and NGOs working in the area.
37. Opportunities to link with other GoPNG (PIP and DSIP funding) and NGO partners (such as KTF) have not been developed. The Initiative is largely using GoA development funds.
38. There may have been more coordination and planning activities than necessary at the higher levels of management contrasting to inadequate inputs to coordination and management at community and local government levels.

Capacity Issues

39. At provincial and local government levels, funding (through PIP, DSIP and other sources) is available, but each local government administrations has different capacity (staff and/or skills) to undertake the consultation/planning and implementation/monitoring functions needed to design and manage community-level activities.

Gender

42. These issues were addressed by the Gender consultant with her draft report delivered in late May 2014.

Monitoring and Evaluation

43. For both Kokoda Initiative and KDP, the M&E processes are weak and the proposed M&E plans for the overall Initiative may be too complex. As with Gender, M&E activities were not built into the design and have not been mainstreamed in implementation. The complexity of the program design is reflected in the complexity of the Kokoda Initiative M&E plan. The program implementing agencies do not have the resources at present needed to implement the proposed M&E plan.

Recommendations for Remainder of JU2

These recommendations are proposed to improve the cost-effectiveness and impact of the remaining two years of the JU2.

DEC / CEPA

1. The Kokoda Initiative should support the transition of DEC to the new CEPA. During the transition phase, there should be limited changes to the current level of engagement with Kokoda Initiative activities.
3. The focus of the long term DEC adviser activities should be reassessed in relation to the need for ongoing high level technical environmental management skills or if the adviser profile may change to only mentoring the TEM team and providing high level strategic advice and support to the Minister and new CEPA executive.
4. As DEC transitions to the newly created CEPA, DEC / CEPA seek to make use of funds from the unused part of GoPNG funding committed at the start of JU2 (an estimated K6 million) for Kokoda Initiative activities.

Kokoda Track Authority

5. KTA should focus on its core business of regulating use of the Track and maximising the proportion of trekker fees used for basic track maintenance and contributions to communities along the Track.
6. The proposed appointment of a tourism promotion and marketing officer⁵ should be reassessed. If KTA adopts a narrow business focus on Track management, the proposed position is not appropriate.
7. The current Livelihoods activities should be wound down while the proposal under Community Engagement below is developed and implemented. Uncommitted funds allocated to livelihoods activities could be directed into identified priority community activities or non-government organisation(s) that are already implementing complementary community development activities along the Track.
8. Completion and commissioning of the trekking reservation and management website should be a high priority.
9. The tour operator forum approach and implementation should be reviewed and refreshed to make it more attractive for operators to participate. Part of this process should include ensuring that issues raised by and agreed to by operator participants are addressed and reported back to all operators.
10. KTA should publish and circulate an annual report detailing key information on track operations and improvements, trekker numbers and, transparent and detailed financial reports.
12. KTA should develop and implement a process to develop the skills and understanding of governance and business management issues for board members.

⁵ The KTA Board has advised the MTR team that this position will be called the Business Development Officer / Manager.

13. As part of preparing for a future activity, building on the Kokoda Initiative, a study(/s) be commissioned on the sustainable trekking load the Track and its communities can support and also the drivers of and future demand for Kokoda Track treks and other use by PNG communities. These studies will facilitate assessment of the long term sustainability / financial viability of the KTA.
14. If resources and funding are available, the 2012 study on the economic benefits of the trekking industry should be updated with a more comprehensive analysis of the flow and quantum of benefits (cash and kind) to the communities and, local and Australian based trekking companies.
15. The relationship between KTA and the trekking companies needs to be strengthened with greatly increased cooperation (and tolerance) – it will be a major challenge to achieve it but would be a very worthwhile use of GoA funds to achieve sustainability. This task could be part of the tourism officer's role but will require ongoing support from senior GoA and GoPNG officials.

Community Engagement and Planning

16. Kokoda Initiative develop and implement a systematic and coordinated approach to community engagement that aligns with GoPNG processes at the national and sub national levels and ensures women and disadvantaged groups are included in the planning and fund allocation processes. This approach will need support with skills and resources not available in Kokoda Initiative implementing agencies.
18. DFAT (with DoE support) facilitates formation of a Kokoda Track development working group comprising the provincial governments, representatives of the Ministerial Committee, KTA, the KDP (or its successor), relevant NGOs (KTF, etc.) and tour companies. The newly established technical working group (TWG) of the KIMC may be able to fill this role with additional organisations co-opted as required.
19. The proposed Kokoda Initiative M&E plans be reviewed by the PLGP M&E specialist to simplify and operationalize the Kokoda Initiative draft M&E plan. KDP/PLGP resources could be made available to assist in refining and implementing the simplified M&E activities across the Initiative.
20. Additional Kokoda Initiative resources will need to be added (M&E position to act as a focal point, data collection/collation resources) to support the Initiative M&E processes.

Coordination and Planning

21. Kokoda Initiative starts a process to improve coordination / linkages at provincial and local levels. This should also improve linkages to other GoPNG funding streams (such as PIP and DSIP).
22. Kokoda Initiative needs to rebuild and/or develop relationships with other NGO stakeholders contributing to development of communities along the Track. The DFAT component of the KI (previously the KDP) needs to work more closely with other relevant NGOs including the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Anglican Church, KTF and Network Kokoda.

Lessons Learned

1. The planning processes for a program to address high level government relationships and priorities require adequate time for the planning and consultation process to consider options and reach consensus. Preparatory activities for a new Joint Understanding should commence at least 18 months before the current JU2 is completed to support a smooth transition and to ensure that funding from both parties is available.
2. For multi-agency programs, the design should have 3-4 clear high level outcomes that can be quantified and measured, and be designed with individual components that are largely implemented by one agency.
3. Planning and coordination issues at community and local government level are just as important as higher level coordination activities, are more time-consuming and resource intensive but are an essential element of sustainability. Resources are needed to ensure these community-level planning issues include all community members.

4. The Kokoda Initiative can strengthen the coordination and impact of government and NGO funded activities along the Track through encouraging and supporting linkages to the government system and ensuring that service delivery actors on the Track implement activities to the relevant GoPNG standards (for example in education and health).
5. Cross cutting issues such as gender and M&E need to be highlighted and embedded in the agreed design and the planned activities. Early awareness raising and practical capacity building in these areas is needed to focus early attention on how inclusion of these activities will strengthen program implementation, outcomes and sustainability.
6. The program design process needs to take account of the appropriate information requirements for an effective M&E system relevant to the reporting requirements of the partner governments to make the M&E activities relevant to the implementing agencies.
7. A multi-agency and sector program such as the Kokoda Initiative, providing capacity building and specialised technical support, requires high levels of administrative, management and technical support services. Based on the experience of other Australian Aid programs in PNG and the Review team's experience of similar programs in other countries, a core support/secretariat group staffed by experienced national staff can provide cost-effective support to implementing agencies and service the M&E, reporting and management requirements of the funding agencies.

Kokoda Initiative JU2 Mid-term Review

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Government of Australia (GoA), in partnership with the Government of Papua New Guinea (GoPNG), has been funding a program of activities to implement the JU2 between Papua New Guinea and Australia on the Owen Stanley Ranges, Brown River Catchment and Kokoda Track Region 2010–2015.

Preservation of the Kokoda Track region brings together Papua New Guinea and Australia's national interests, promoting the economic and social development of Papua New Guinea while protecting the important natural, cultural and historic values of this region. The Kokoda Track symbolises the lasting bond of friendship and mutual understanding between the people of Papua New Guinea and Australia.

The Kokoda Initiative (the Initiative) connects Papua New Guinea and Australian stakeholders, including all levels of government, local communities and landowners, the tourism industry and non-government organisations to support the vision of the sustainable development of the Owen Stanley Ranges, Brown River Catchment and Kokoda Track Region and protection of its special natural, cultural and historic values.

This diversity of partners and stakeholders reflects the broad range of objectives of the Kokoda Initiative, which include promotion and celebration of military heritage, a safe, accessible and 'authentic' trekking experience, improved delivery of basic services and opportunities to generate income from trekking, supporting the wise use and economic development of the region, identifying and conserving the key heritage values of the region and building the tourism potential of the region, including through a possible World Heritage nomination. The Initiative also seeks to strengthen the bilateral relationship between Australia and PNG, through working methods that are inclusive, consultative and complement and strengthen existing processes and capacity.

1.2 The Kokoda Initiative Second Joint Understanding

1.2.1 Goals and Objectives

The Kokoda Initiative has been implemented under two joint understandings between the Governments of Australia and Papua New Guinea (2008–2010 and 2010–2015). The 2010–2015 JU2 aims to achieve five concurrent and mutually reinforcing goals (as presented in the MTR terms of reference (ToR) and other Kokoda Initiative documentation) and set out in Table 1.

Table 1 Goals and Objectives of Kokoda Initiative Second Joint Understanding

Goal	Objectives
1. A safe and well-managed Kokoda Track, which honours its wartime historical significance and protects and promotes its special values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further supporting and enhancing the Kokoda Track Authority's management of the track and trekking operations. • Working with local communities and tourism operators to improve the trekking experience and track facilities. • Working with regulatory authorities to improve safety for local communities living along the track and tourists visiting the region.
2. Enhanced quality of life for landowners and communities through improved delivery of basic services, income generation and community development activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to sustainably improve the standard of health, education, water, sanitation and infrastructure services for communities along the Track. • Facilitating access to benefit streams, income generation and other community development projects for communities in the interim protection zone, including potential opportunities through development of renewable resources particularly hydropower and water, forest carbon and tourism. • Enabling communities and landowners to manage development opportunities and income streams generated through this Initiative. • Nurturing the alliance between all levels of government, tourism operators and not-for-profit organisations to provide strong and coordinated support for the sustainable development of the region and the well-being of its people.
3. The wise use and conservation of the catchment protection area,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an integrated land use plan for the catchment protection area in partnership with key National, Provincial and Local Government stakeholders which provides an effective balance between environment conservation and development.

Goal	Objectives
including the Kokoda Track and its natural and cultural resources and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and conserving the key natural, cultural and historic values of the Owen Stanley Ranges for heritage conservation, protection and tourism development purposes.
4. Building national and international tourism potential of the Owen Stanley Ranges and Kokoda Track Region, supported by a possible future World Heritage nomination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting the natural, cultural and historic military values of the Track. Developing a strategic tourism plan and associated marketing activities. Exploring the heritage conservation values and conducting a feasibility study for possible World Heritage nomination, consistent with its inclusion in the PNG Government World Heritage Tentative List (2006).
5. Working with communities, landowners, industry and all levels of government to ensure that activities established under the Kokoda Initiative are sustained into the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximising the delivery and maintenance of services and activities through the responsible PNG provincial and local level governments. Building capacity within key PNG and Australian Government agencies to ensure the goals of this initiative can be delivered and are sustainable.

1.2.2 Organisation Structure

The Kokoda Initiative was to be coordinated through two taskforces. The PNG National Taskforce, chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Conservation), leads implementation of the Kokoda Initiative. An Australian Kokoda Taskforce, chaired by the First Assistant Secretary, Wildlife, Heritage and Marine Division (Department of the Environment (DoE)) is the counterpart in the governance structure.

In late 2013 the PNG Government established the Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee (KIMC) to oversee delivery of the Initiative and to coordinate the priorities and resources of the various levels of government involved in the Initiative. The KIMC is chaired by the PNG Minister for Environment and Conservation. A technical working group supports the KIMC.

The PNG Program Management Committee (PMC), chaired by DEC, and the DoE International Heritage Section (IHS) are responsible for day-to-day implementation of the Initiative and coordinating the activities of partners.

In PNG, several partners assist in implementing the Kokoda Initiative including:

- Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) (currently being reorganised to be the Conservation and Environment Protection Authority (CEPA),
- Kokoda Track Authority (KTA),
- Tourism Promotion Authority (TPA),
- DFAT's Kokoda Development Program (KDP),
- National Museum and Art Gallery (NMAG)
- Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs,
- Department of National Planning and Monitoring,
- Northern and Central Provincial Governments.

The Australian Taskforce agencies consist of:

- Department of the Environment (DoE),
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) (including its function to deliver Australian aid through the KDP),
- Department of Veterans' Affairs, and
- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- Tourism functions are represented by the DFAT.

Other stakeholders include the communities along the Kokoda track (the Track), tour operators using the Track, military heritage groups and non-government groups (NGOs) supporting the communities and environmental activities in the Kokoda Initiative area.

The DoE contracts a Senior Adviser, Mr Bill Farmer AO, to facilitate high level engagement with Kokoda Initiative partner agencies, the PNG Government and other key stakeholders, and to provide the DoE advice on the outcomes.

The Kokoda Initiative (or the Initiative) is delivered by both GoPNG and GoA agencies. The main implementing agencies in PNG are the GoPNG Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)

through the Terrestrial Environment Management (TEM) Branch; the Kokoda Track Authority (KTA), the Tourism Promotion Authority (TPA); the National Museum and Art Gallery (NMAG); and the GoA Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Australian Aid which funds and manages the Kokoda Development Program⁶ (KDP) through the Australian High Commission in Port Moresby. In 2009, the GoPNG (through the Public Investment Program (PIP)) committed 21 million Kina for the Kokoda Initiative. The Australian Government contribution⁷ to the Kokoda Initiative between July 2008 and April 2013 was AU\$28.65 million with a further \$12.5 million allocated for activities to June 2016.

1.3 The Mid Term Review

A Mid Term Review (MTR or the Review) was required under the JU2 by late 2013. The terms of reference are provided in Annex 1. The Review was to assess the success of the Kokoda Initiative JU2 to date from both the PNG and the Australian Government perspectives with sensitivity to the different cultural attitudes that define 'success', and consider the practical constraints of program delivery in remote areas of a developing country through multiple agencies. In addition, the Review would inform program delivery to the end of the JU2 period.

1.3.1 Review Objectives

As described in the terms of reference for this study (see Annex 1), *'the review will focus on Kokoda Initiative activities undertaken since the JU2 came into effect in 2010.'*

- (i) *The aim of the Review is to assess the progress of the Initiative to date from the PNG and the Australian Government perspectives with sensitivity to the different cultural attitudes that define success and the complexity of the objectives of the Initiative;*
- (ii) *The Review should also consider the practical constraints of program delivery in remote areas of a developing country through multiple agencies, in addition;*
- (iii) *The Review will inform program delivery to the end of the JU2 period by making recommendations on what additional actions, timing or resources may be necessary to achieve the objectives of the JU2.'*

The outcomes of the Review are expected to explore and inform any further mechanisms after the JU2 period that could enable the Australian Government and the Papua New Guinea Governments to focus and strengthen their role in delivering on their mutual commitments to the preservation of the Owen Stanley Ranges, Brown River Catchment and Kokoda Track in the longer term.

1.3.2 Specific Review Questions

The Review ToR set out a number of areas to assess the performance of the Kokoda Initiative since the commencement of the JU2 by reference to:

- (i) the achievement, or likely achievement, of JU2 goals and objectives within the given timeframes and current resourcing;
- (ii) the past, current and planned activities of the JU2 and whether they are consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the JU2;
- (iii) the identification of major enablers and constraints of the Initiative and their influence on achieving the goals and objectives of the JU2;
- (iv) the governance structure set in place to manage the Initiative in each country including the Taskforces, PNG PMC, stakeholder and tour operator fora and the Joint Planning Meetings; and,
- (v) the longer term sustainability of change that has already occurred under the Initiative.

⁶ Since the production of this report the term KDP is no longer used to describe the GoA support for service delivery. Instead the program is referred to as the DFAT component of the KI.

⁷ Early payments (2008) were administered by DoE and not DFAT/ODA.

As requested, the Review has also addressed the standard DAC⁸ evaluation questions, which are elaborated in the ToR provided in Annex 1:

1. Relevance. To what extent are the goals and objectives of the Initiative still valid for both Governments and for the intended beneficiaries?
2. Effectiveness. Have planned component outcomes been achieved, what are the enablers and constraints for progress, what are the options for overcoming the constraints?
3. Efficiency. What is the cost-effectiveness of the implementation model?
4. Sustainability. What should be considered in developing future strategies?

The Review has also considered the likely impact of the Initiative. Impact relates to final outcomes whereas success includes activities and outputs as well as outcomes.

1.3.3 Review Implementation

The MTR team used a consultative process to consider the views of all stakeholders. The PNG PMC group was the main evaluation partner with the members of the GoPNG and GoA taskforces being consulted during the meeting processes. The Kokoda Initiative Senior Adviser was responsible for managing the review process on behalf of partners. The review process drew on existing documentation and data such as agency business and annual work plans, the Kokoda Initiative Design Document, activity reports, annual reporting (including financial statements), monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities conducted to date and a 2009 Review of the first Joint Understanding.

After the team leader held initial meetings in Canberra, the review team⁹ worked in-country from 28 February to 7 March 2014. Meetings and discussions were held with a range of stakeholders as set out in the listing of meetings provided in Annex 2. The MTR team formed for the Review provided guidance and inputs to the Review interview program and contributed to formulating the findings, conclusions and recommendations. A field visit was made to Oro Province to meet the KTA chairman of and provincial government officials. The Kokoda Initiative advisers and MTR team¹⁰ members assisted in arranging meetings. The draft findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons were discussed with members of the Kokoda Initiative PMC before the draft aide memoire was prepared. Due to the absence of some key stakeholders, additional meetings were held in Port Moresby during March 2014. The inputs and contributions from all stakeholders are greatly appreciated by the MTR consultants. The findings, conclusions and any errors are the sole responsibility of the consultants.

2 Relevance

2.1 Objectives

The objectives set out in Table 1 are broad-ranging and ambitious. The MTR team agrees that the goals and supporting objectives will contribute to achieving the overall Joint Understanding vision that: *Sustainable development of the Owen Stanley Ranges, Brown River Catchment and Kokoda Track Region and protection of its special natural, cultural and historic values.*

The MTR team finds that the vision has been appropriate (although more complex to implement) as described in the JU2 that *This vision brings together Papua New Guinea and Australia's national interests, promoting the economic and social development of Papua New Guinea while protecting the important natural, cultural and historic values of this region. This vision reflects the objectives of the Papua New*

⁸ OECD Development Assistance Committee – Principles for Evaluation of Development Programmes.

⁹ Ian Teese, Team Leader / Evaluation Specialist and Rodney Kameata, Social Impact / Environment Consultant were assisted by the MTR team members in PNG. Ms Doreen Iga, DFAT, joined the mission for some meetings and travelled to Oro province with the MTR consultants providing insights on implementation of relevant DFAT / AusAID and NGO programs. Mark Nizette, DEC adviser, assisted in making the arrangements in PNG. The review was managed by Ms Susan Newling, IHS, DoE Canberra.

¹⁰ The planned MTR evaluation team did not function as envisaged in the terms of reference due to a misunderstanding in the initial meetings in PNG and other team members not being available.

*Guinea Development Strategic Plan 2010–2030 (March 2010) and is consistent with the principles of the Partnership for Development between the Government of Australia and the Government of Papua New Guinea of 20 August 2008*¹¹.

The relevance of the broad Kokoda Initiative concept and the importance attached to it by the GoPNG and GoA has been confirmed by the recent high level ministerial agreement to explore options beyond the JU2.

2.2 Kokoda Initiative Design

The goals and objectives set out in the JU2 are individually quite straight forward but are very broad which has led to issues describing the project outputs and outcomes in more detail. The tasks allocated to each agency (DEC – TEM, KTA and TPA) are within the mandates of each agency but the agencies had not actually undertaken some of the tasks. The delegation of the proposed community infrastructure activities along the Track to the KDP which was undertaking similar activities in other parts of PNG appeared appropriate.

However, the JU2 did not describe targets for the objectives that had been defined in the agreement under the section: *Key areas for cooperation*¹². An implied target was that the Track would remain open at all times.

The other objectives were described in broad terms without setting targets to be achieved by the end of the JU2 period in 2015. Establishing targets would have been made simpler if there had been some indication/agreement in the JU2 on what the outputs from the Understanding would have been. These outputs would have then guided agreement on the targets.

This lack of clear (and agreed) targets made development of a M&E plan much more difficult as the indicators to be measured / reported on had to be retrospectively fitted to objectives that may not have been clearly or appropriately defined.

The design issues were complicated by the implementation of the activity by DoE which needed to meet its internal design and project management requirements as well as aligning with those of the then AusAID (now DFAT Australian Aid). The challenges of aligning the two design processes were reflected in the time needed to reach an agreed budget and implementation plan.

2.3 Other Factors

The Kokoda Track is a major draw card for most Australian tourists to PNG and provides some flow-on benefits to communities along the Track. These visits may not lead to significant flow-on benefits to other parts of the PNG tourism industry. While overall tourist numbers to PNG have been increasing consistently for several years (41,380 in 2013), from a peak of close to 5,800 trekkers in 2008, numbers have declined sharply to a low of 2,800 trekkers in 2010¹³. Trekking numbers have slowly picked up (3,353 in 2013), making up about 8% of the total tourist visits to PNG in 2013.

The Kokoda Track is one of the shortest foot tracks across the Owen Stanley Ranges so is used by some low income travellers from other parts of PNG to travel to Port Moresby. This creates some law and order issues, both for communities along the Track and for foreign trekkers. Oro province has established a police post on the Oro side of the Track to allow monitoring of travellers using the Track.

3 Effectiveness

As described above, the agreed design document / plan took a long period to develop after the commencement of JU2. During the interim period (2010/11 to mid-2013), activities continued. In mid-2012, the expatriate adviser acting as chief executive officer (CEO) of the KTA was replaced with the current CEO, James Enage with an overlap period. There was a gap until the current business systems adviser commenced in early 2013. In DEC, an initial long term adviser was followed by the current long term

¹¹ Second Joint Understanding 2010-2015. July 2010.

¹² Page 4. Ibid.

¹³ Due to a number of factors including the Global Financial Crisis, the fatal plane crash near Kokoda and were later affected by the Black Cat track attack.

management adviser. DoE staff manage and support the program from Canberra with short term inputs in PNG as required to support the long term advisers¹⁴.

Annex 3 provides a summary of Kokoda Initiative activities, outputs and achievements under each of the goal areas. This summary is based on information from the annual reports, reports to DFAT and information collected during the short MTR visit to PNG. The time needed to collate this information was increased by the lack of an operational M&E system in which activity and output information was being systematically collected and collated for reporting¹⁵.

3.1 Achievement of Kokoda Initiative Objectives

The Kokoda Initiative has made progress to achieving the Kokoda Initiative objectives. As some time-bound outputs and outcomes have only been defined in the M&E plan, it is not possible to objectively assess this progress. Table 2 summarizes progress to date against the objectives.

Table 2 Kokoda Initiative - Progress

Goal 1: A safe and well managed Kokoda Track, which honours its wartime historical significance and protects and promotes its special values	
Further supporting and enhancing the Kokoda Track Authority's management of the track and trekking operations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kokoda Track has not been closed for any reason since the start of JU2. The broad KTA governance structure is in place. KTA is subsidized by GoA for some of its activities. Number of trekkers has been increasing slowly from 2,871 in 2010 to 2,954 in 2013. In 2012, 3,597 trekkers visited the Track (probably due to 70th anniversary of original battles). 	
Working with local communities and tourism operators to improve the trekking experience and track facilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track conservation work provided under community track maintenance agreements with 24 villages / communities along the Track. Each ward receives payments for track maintenance plus each ward is allocated an amount for investment in agreed community infrastructure. All 96 km of Track has been worked on. Constructed major cane bridge across Eora Creek Guesthouse certification process underway for guesthouses along the Track with 45 recommended for accreditation by an independent auditor Tour Operator fora held twice per year. PNG based fora working effectively with 30 attending PNG fora. Less interest (5 operators for spring 2013) in Australia 	
Working with regulatory authorities to improve safety for local communities living along the track and tourists visiting the region	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kokoda and other airstrips being maintained by local community under supervision of KTA Radio network base in Port Moresby at KTA used for regular communications with Track communities. Additional radios supplied for Isurava War Memorial Park and Madilogo. Compliance and enforcement systems reviewed and report followed up with inputs in February/March 2014. Road maintenance on Sogeri to Ower's Corner road currently managed by KTA and funded by GoA under grant funding arrangements. 	
Goal 2: Enhanced quality of life for landowners and communities through improved delivery of basic services, income generation and community development activities	
Continuing to sustainably improve the standard of health, education, water, sanitation and infrastructure services for communities along the Track	
Activities undertaken under the Kokoda Development Project have included:	
Health	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six health facilities built, renovated or upgraded (Kokoda, Abuari, Kebara, Naduri, Manari and Sogeri). Improvements included six staff houses renovated, toilets, water system and wait house for expectant mothers constructed. (completed) An additional 14 VHV trained and joined the VHV program. Continued support was provided for the delivery of integrated outreach every six weeks through overnight patrols. These support immunization, maternal and child health, access to early treatment and provide general health promotion and education. Ongoing upgrading and skill development opportunities for health professional and volunteers working in Track health facilities. 	

¹⁴ These short term support inputs may become more difficult to schedule and implement under the recently revised GoA travel guidelines.

¹⁵ The MTR team notes that the DoE staff responsible for preparing the comprehensive annual report had to contact individual Kokoda Initiative team members in PNG to obtain the information required.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HIV prevention awareness work continued.
<p>School infrastructure development: follows a community-based process (as used in other parts of PNG) where the KDP delivers building materials to the site and the community takes responsibility for construction. Infrastructure work included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials for school construction at Alola Elementary School, Depo Elementary school. Efogi SDA Primary school. Efogi SDA Elementary school, Envilogo, Isurava Kavovo Primary. Kokoda Primary School. Kokoda skills vocational training centre. Kokoda Elementary School. Kovelu Primary School. Manari Elementary school. Naduri. Naoro 2 Elementary school (limited progress) Vesulogo Elementary school. In several cases, the Kokoda Track Foundation (KTF) has assisted the communities to build the schools with the supplied materials. Education related training was delivered to support teachers throughout the Kokoda region have included: Supported 24 elementary teachers to obtain their 'Certificate in Elementary Teaching/Trainer Directed Training;' 11 teachers a refresher course in 'Diploma in Primary Education'; and 63 school boards members completed 'Roles and Responsibility' training.
Facilitating access to benefit streams, income generation and other community development projects for communities in the interim protection zone.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 community based mentors (CBM) provide advice on basic business management, bookkeeping and business opportunities. Twenty-five participants undertook refresher training in basic physiotherapy to provide services to trekkers. 87 guesthouse audits were conducted to ensure an appropriate standard of accommodation to trekkers. The TPA will manage the certification process. A simple timber milling activity has been introduced with necessary environmental guidelines, etc. A pilot drying room has been constructed to establish a clothes and equipment drying service for trekkers. It will be operational during the 2014 trekker season.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture based livelihood activities introduced in the first years of JU2 were not successful due to a lack of ongoing technical support. DEC continued with a social mapping process to develop an understanding of the genealogical make-up and land ownership systems. This is to better understand the communities and their environment in order to guide an effective consultative process in the Kokoda Initiative for delivery of the JU2. A social mapping workshop in June 2013 addressed different methodologies used by practitioners of social mapping in scenarios across PNG. Participants in the workshop included prominent practitioners from both PNG and Australia. The project will now compare the cost effectiveness of the two approaches.
Enabling communities and landowners to manage development opportunities and income streams generated through this Initiative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KTA has provided some assistance to local trekking companies and village guesthouse entrepreneurs. Basic first aid training (121 participants) and wilderness first aid training (58 participants) for porters and guides Guesthouse and campground management training (58 participants) Basic financial management training (74 participants from 6 villages) Limited success to date in establishing new income generating activities.
Nurturing the alliance between all levels of government, tourism operators and not-for-profit organisations to provide strong and coordinated support for the sustainable development of the region and the well-being of its people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Ministerial Committee has reintroduced provincial governments as major stakeholders and designated implementing agencies (under PNG decentralization policies). The degree of high level consultation and coordination has not been matched at provincial, district and ward level. Apart from inclusion in Ministerial Committee, participation in regular planning meetings and seats on board of KTA, limited capacity building of implementing level resources (provincial, district, ward) has been undertaken to date. The planned run-of-river hydro-electric development in the Brown River catchment close to the Track is making slow progress through the development planning phase.
Goal 3: The wise use and conservation of the catchment protection area, including Kokoda Track and its natural and cultural resources and values
Developing an integrated land use plan (management plan) for the catchment protection area including the Kokoda Track, in partnership with key stakeholders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEC continued to work closely with the Australian Cooperative Research Centre for Spatial Information (CRC-SI) through capacity building to support and improve the technical skills of DEC officers. The spatial mapping of the area has been upgraded (to a 5 m x 5 m resolution), ground-truthed, including for assessment of primary or secondary forestry cover, and incorporated into DEC land management activities. This imagery from 2007 and 2010 has allowed assessment of land use changes but may now require updating. Staff from other sections in DEC have participated in the GIS training, building DEC capacity and providing back-up for the TEM specialist. A JICA forestry project (and also the GEF4 project) is using the same imagery. A consultant will assist DEC continue to update the spatial information management system biodiversity database. In 2012 DEC released a discussion paper for a policy guiding a national protected areas system in Papua New Guinea. This provides valuable guidance for Initiative programs and ensuring more sustainable protection of diverse areas including the Owen Stanley Ranges, Brown River catchment and Kokoda Track region. In May 2013 a draft policy was

<p>circulated for discussion, and a further options paper on a national protected area system prepared in December 2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A biodiversity workshop held in Goroka, PNG, in April 2013 followed by a meeting in Cairns in July 2013 to develop standardized methodologies in biodiversity surveys, data analysis and species information management for application in PNG. After review by DoE specialists the report and recommendations have been accepted. • A Biodiversity Expert Reference group has been formed to advise on technical matters and its first meeting is due in early 2014. • Social mapping processes have been addressed and have identified different approaches. Some social mapping has been completed and further mapping will be undertaken in mid-2013.
<p>Identifying and conserving the key natural, cultural and historic values of the Owen Stanley Ranges for heritage conservation, protection and tourism development.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work continues on identification of cultural, historic and natural values in the IPZ in advance of developing a sustainable development management plan. Contracts let for Madilogo rapid biodiversity site survey and archaeological survey, and an exotic species survey along the Track • Current work is leading to further development of the National biodiversity Information System (NBIS)) to provide a framework for assessing all species in the IPZ by the end of 2015. These are important aspects needed to prepare for a possible World Heritage nomination. • The tools and processes being developed under the Kokoda Initiative in this area are being further enhanced for use by the GEF project which covers the whole of New Britain and a larger section of the Owen Stanley Ranges. • A biodiversity gap analysis of the OSR is being undertaken by the Bishop University. • Contracts have been let for cultural heritage management plans for Blamey's Garden and the 'Lost' Battlefields. • A biodiversity data capture pilot project is currently underway, aiming to scope and trial the acquisition and electronic databasing of biodiversity data (taxonomic, spatial, ecological, etc.) from plant specimens held in the Australian National Herbarium in Canberra and its repatriation to Papua New Guinean institutions. • The above activities are identifying the main natural and cultural values in the IPZ. New activities are starting to collect and document military heritage aspects of the Track. These will focus on heritage from the PNG side as well as the much better known Australian side. The first stage of the Oral History project, managed by DoE for the advisory committee chaired by the NMAG should be finished by June 2014. • Activities being discussed include an inventory of military heritage features along the Track which could be documented in (separate) databases for future reference and a military heritage assessment of the Track.
<p>Goal 4: Building national and international tourism potential of the OSR and KTR, supported by a possible future World Heritage nomination</p>
<p>Promoting the natural, cultural and historic military (NCHM) values of the Track</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Heritage Interpretation working group formed to provide guidance on interpretation planning. • TPA funded by GoA for activities including guesthouse accreditation, tourism training, bird watching training (to broaden Track trekking experiences) and interpretive signage (including on the northern beaches). • The TPA agreed to include Kokoda guesthouses and campsites in the National Accommodation Accreditation System. • The TPA convened the Sustainable Cultural Tourism Conference in Kokopo, PNG, in October 2012. : • TPA and KTA supported Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels' Day as a nationally gazetted holiday in Papua New Guinea to commemorate the 50,000 Papua New Guineans who aided Australian troops during World War II.
<p>Developing a strategic tourism plan and associated marketing activities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Kokoda marketing strategy has been developed and in process of being rolled out by TPA. • The KTA and TPA developed a Kokoda Track Region Action Plan yet to be tabled at the PMC. • The TPA became a member of the Central Province Economic Sector Coordination Monitoring Committee to ensure that tourism has a voice in provincial development, particularly in relation to the Owen Stanley Ranges. • The Sustainable Cultural Tourism conference was held in October 2012 in partnership by the PNG Tourism Promotion Authority and the Kokoda Initiative. The conference brought together fifty participants from Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands to share experiences and discuss the success and challenges of cultural tourism in Melanesia.
<p>Exploring the heritage conservation values and conducting a feasibility study for a possible World Heritage nomination.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Owen Stanley Ranges and Kokoda Track region was initially nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Tentative Listing by DEC in conjunction with the World Wide Fund for Nature in 2006. • A World Heritage nomination road map and implementation plan was to be developed by the DEC World Heritage secretariat. The secretariat will now develop the terms of reference for consultants to undertake the work.
<p>Goal 5: Working with communities, landowners, industry and all levels of government to ensure that activities established under the Kokoda Initiative are sustained into the future</p>
<p>This is the project management function so is assessed through the overall implementation of the Initiative.</p>

3.2 Capacity building

The Initiative has provided resources for capacity building in the two main implementing agencies (DEC TEM and KTA). In KTA, an early task for the new business systems adviser was to undertake a capacity building

needs assessment and implementation plan. After 12 months, the draft plan has recently been accepted by the KTA Management Committee and the formal capacity building should start to support the on-the-job training support currently being provided and short-term training and awareness visits made to Australia by the KTA CEO, operations manager and the financial and administration manager. KTA's compliance and enforcement processes have been reviewed and a number of actions have been implemented or are underway to improve their operations in this area.

Within the DEC TEM Branch, four staff (out of 10 designated positions), except for the manager were new graduates / trainees¹⁶ when JU2 started. These staff have developed their capacity and skills under the guidance of their DEC manager supported by the long term adviser. The MTR team has been informed that no formal capacity building assessment or plan has been developed for the DEC TEM group with on-the-job training provided by the long-term adviser as required. The MTR team has been advised that planning has commenced to undertake the capacity building assessment and develop the capacity building plan. However, this should have been undertaken as an early activity of the DEC adviser. Two of the spatial planning group have visited Australia for specialised short-term GIS courses and were able to interact with the specialist groups. These GIS specialists provide support to all DEC sections for spatial mapping services. Another TEM specialist had a month training activity in Japan developing their leadership capacity.

A group of six DEC staff and one officer from the PNG Forestry Research Institute visited Australia and spent time with CSIRO, the Australian National University, the Australian National Botanical Gardens, the Atlas of Living Australia and other agencies including within DoE to further understand the biodiversity collections held in Australian agencies, spatial mapping capabilities and other opportunities. Short-term DoE specialist staff¹⁷ have assisted the DEC TEM team with development of the SDMP and World Heritage roadmaps and delivered a communications workshop for DEC, KTA and TPA staff in 2012.

Partly due to the emphasis on delivering results on the ground and also because of the initial focus on high level coordination and planning, the Initiative has not yet provided significant capacity building for GoPNG implementation agencies working with the Initiative at provincial, district and ward level. The KDP has delivered significant capacity building in the primary health and basic education levels to complement the infrastructure development activities. These KDP activities have been supplemented by significant capacity building activities implemented through the KTF.

Limited capacity building opportunities have been provided to the KTA board or PMC. The KTA board has now been in place for several years and is largely selected on a representative basis with the two provincial governments and the district governments having representatives on the board. Consideration could be given to commencing a process to strengthen the KTA board's operations.

Until the inputs from the M&E specialist designing the M&E activities, no attempts had been made to monitor the inputs or evaluate the outcomes from the capacity building activities.

3.3 Benefits

The additional resources provided through the Initiative have improved the safety and experience of the Kokoda Track trek. The funds allocated to airstrip and access road upgrades also improves access for communities along the Track.

The inputs from the KDP¹⁸, complemented by the KTF health and education activities, have contributed to health and education services being improved.

The Initiative activities in DEC TEM are providing valuable experience and tools for the larger Global Environment Fund (GEF) project¹⁹ working across New Britain and the wider Owen Stanley Ranges area. The DEC TEM Branch supports delivery and shares office space with the Initiative team. Several of the

¹⁶ A more experienced and qualified national land use specialist was recruited in 2012 but moved to another project in late 2013.

¹⁷ DoE ERIN team staff have also provided training to DEC staff in PNG.

¹⁸ These KDP inputs are largely under the same conditions and guidelines as other GoA funded activities to upgrade basic community health and school infrastructure across other rural parts of PNG. These guidelines are designed to lift the standard of this community infrastructure to the same

¹⁹ The Community-based Forest and Coastal Conservation and Resource Management project – GEF4.

approaches and tools such as social mapping and biodiversity mapping are being upscaled by the GEF project. The Kokoda Initiative was described as ‘testing/ developing and trailblazing the techniques that will be used in the GEF project’²⁰.

The KTA Livelihoods Project Scoping Study undertaken in late 2013 identified some areas where there were opportunities for improvement. Also the Economic Significance of Trekking on the Kokoda Track in 2012 made a start on quantifying the benefits of the trekking industry to communities along the Track

4 Efficiency

4.1 Timeliness and Appropriateness

The conversion of the JU2 document into an agreed project design took much longer than would be expected for a development project of this nature. The latest version of the project plan available to the Review team was dated October 2013²¹. Final budgets for DoE implementation activities for the JU2 are set out in two activity schedules to the Record of Understanding between DFAT and DoE (37602). The first activity schedule (number 22) was signed in 2011, and allocated \$4.491m to implement the JU2. The second schedule (number 26) dated April 2013, was for \$9.345m to further progress the work. Project activities continued over this period as reported in annual reports, with budgets and work plans reviewed annually and work plans updated on a six monthly basis. The approaches used – a balance of long term advisers, technical assistance, operational support and institutional development were, and are, still appropriate. The process of using Imprest accounts and multi-schedule funding agreements updated with deeds of amendments to manage grants for delivery of specified activities by the implementing agencies have worked effectively although with some time delays.

4.2 Implementation

As noted above, long term adviser arrangements²² changed in the first two years which meant that some activities were slowed down. A major constraint to implementation of the DEC TEM program was when the DEC agency was forced to leave its main office on very short notice due to building issues and relocate the whole agency to a new building. A major effect of this was that the computer server that serviced the spatial mapping resources was unavailable for more than six months greatly constraining work in this area. It is reported that there are still problems²³ with information technology support to DEC TEM.

A challenge in any project embedded in agencies with long term advisers is the balance of adviser responsibilities between supporting the agency and undertaking the work. This has not been a major issue in DEC or KTA although long term advisers can assume that on-the-job training is the main form of capacity building, whereas it should only be one of a number of approaches used in systematic agency development. The new KTA capacity building plan should provide a more structured and focused approach. A similar approach may be useful for DEC TEM.

As shown in the following table summarizing the project budgets, the Kokoda Initiative is different to most development projects in that the managing contractor (DoE) has a high proportion of its resources based in Australia rather than in-country²⁴. Many of these resources are skilled in highly relevant technical areas but need to provide some of their inputs from Canberra rather than visiting²⁵ and working in Port Moresby. This is an unusual balance where technical skills and knowledge need to be transferred to the local staff and agencies.

²⁰ Ms Emily Fajardo, Technical Specialist GEF4 Project.

²¹ An updated version was approved in late June 2014 (23/6/14).

²² An initial DEC – TEM long term adviser was replaced after a short time in their role.

²³ An ongoing constraint in DEC is the lack of a server (at all) and limited internet/email access, with staff having to pay for their own wireless dongles and very poor access within the current building. The GEF project is investigating options for a wireless router for the Branch / DEC is promising to install a server and provide email access some time.

²⁴ DoE advise that DoE staff do regularly travel to PNG (1-2 officers approximately every 2-3 months, for a period of 1-3 weeks) for time in each of DEC and KTA. This augments the capacity of the long-term advisors and assists to both continue to progress key work outputs (project contracting and management etc.) while developing capacity of partner agency staff to progress these activities in absence of Canberra staff

²⁵ This will possibly become more difficult with the increased constraints placed on public service travel by GoA.

An issue impacting on the KDP implemented community infrastructure and services activities is the overlap between the capacity building activities in the health and education sectors undertaken by KDP and those undertaken through the KTF activities. Currently there does not seem to be a structured approach to avoiding overlap (or gaps) between the activities undertaken by the two implementing groups but increased efforts have been put into meeting more regularly to discuss common issues/approaches. There are also other NGOs²⁶ providing support to communities along the Track who are not included in coordination activities.

4.3 Coordination and Management

Planning and coordination

The Initiative design placed a high priority on high level planning and coordination. Regular (each 6-8 months) high level planning and coordination meetings are held alternating between PNG and Australia. These meetings are well documented. Feedback was received from some provincial representatives who had attended high level coordination meetings that they were still not clear on the Initiative goals and objectives and how it related to provincial activities. This situation appears to be improving with improved communication and participation,

In each country, taskforces were to be established of the main stakeholder agencies represented by senior managers to facilitate the planning and coordination functions. These taskforces have not worked as planned as more junior staff were sent and their roles and functions in addition to the high level planning activities were not clear. Issues to be addressed could be dealt with informally. In PNG, the Minister for Environment and Conservation has initiated the KIMC to focus on Kokoda Initiative issues and the related relationship between PNG and Australia. The initial meetings have been well attended and have provided a focus for future developments. The supporting technical working group (TWG) should also strengthen coordination and implementation.

Day to day coordination and management is through the PMC which meets regularly (monthly where possible) and has representatives of all the main implementing agencies, the long term advisers plus a representative from DFAT and the PNG Department of National Planning and Monitoring. Feedback from members was that the PMC was operating effectively and the PMC provided several members as an MTR group to support the MTR team. However, there is not a formal reporting process back to the Project Director in Canberra.

The area where planning and coordination is much weaker is at provincial, district and ward level. With the decentralisation of responsibility for implementation to provincial level, the provincial governments with the supporting district and ward level local government structures have a much greater role in the operations and maintenance of community infrastructure and services at local government levels. There was feedback from the provincial governments that they had not been included²⁷ in the planning of new infrastructure (schools, health, transport) for which the provincial government would be responsible for ongoing operations and maintenance. This applies particularly along the Kokoda Track where new infrastructure and supporting services can be in two provinces.

There appears to have been little systematic cooperation²⁸ between the KTA, KDP and KTF even though each organisation has its own staff working on similar types of infrastructure along the Track. With changes²⁹ in the management and supervision of the KDP activities, this could be a good opportunity³⁰ to establish stronger, more formal, planning and coordination processes at provincial and local government level.

Links with Trekking Companies

²⁶ Including the Seventh Day Adventist church (SDA) and Network Kokoda who have interests in providing services along the Track. The SDA staff members who met the MTR team in Popondetta expressed interest in providing management and technical support to the Kokoda Station hospital.

²⁷ This included investments by the Kokoda Initiative and also by NGOs such as the KTF.

²⁸ Anecdotal feedback suggests that personality issues may have created some of the issues.

²⁹ Also possibly, greater NGO awareness of the importance of aligning with GoPNG planning and implementation processes.

³⁰ This could be assisted by inputs from the GoA funded Provincial and Local Level Government Project which is designed to assist in improving provincial planning processes.

KTA is the best known 'face' of the Kokoda Initiative and also has the closest interaction with the tour companies regularly using the Track. It is sometimes wrongly linked with issues associated with other Kokoda Initiative activities, complicating relationships with its main stakeholders (communities and the tour industry).

The PNG and Australian based tour companies are major stakeholders in the Initiative as they are the interface between Track activities and their local and foreign (mostly Australian) trekking clients. Some tour operators were more closely involved in the initial phase of the KTA³¹. An experienced Australian manager with relevant experience was then contracted as CEO during the early stages of the Kokoda Initiative together with other expatriate support. The current CEO who has very close links to communities along the Track then was appointed and has been supported with the DoE business systems adviser. The current senior management team in the KTA does not have close links to the Australian trekking industry.

The initial documentation proposed for the KTA board structure had included a representative from the tour industry (non-voting). However, this position has not been filled. Feedback during the MTR indicated a range of tour company views on the role and activities of the KTA. As the larger tour companies regularly have staff (both as trek leaders and guides/porters) travelling along the track they believe they have a good knowledge of the track communities.

The tour operator fora organised by the KTA and TPA at the start and end of each trekking season provide an opportunity for tour companies to provide feedback to the KTA on issues impacting on the Track and the tour businesses. The fora in Australia have been attracting less participation as feedback to the MTR indicated that participants felt that their recurrent concerns were not being addressed³².

Feedback to the MTR team from operators was that there was a lack of trust between some operators which is supported by the apparent inability of some tour companies to work cooperatively with the KTA for mutual advantage. In most other industries, commercial competitors work together on high level industry issues while competing strongly commercially. This does not appear to be occurring in the Kokoda Track trekking industry which greatly complicates KTA's role in acting as the coordination / management and regulatory organisation for the Track. The high level goodwill and cooperation underpinning the Kokoda Initiative concept is being undermined by some tour operators^{33 34}.

Development of a tour Industry forum including all tour organisations which then represents the industry in discussions with the KTA and Kokoda Initiative would be a major step forward.

Initiative Management

The project is being managed from DoE in Canberra with a DoE Section Director³⁵ as project director³⁶. The budget documents show nine³⁷ full time DoE staff positions allocated to managing the project and assisting with implementation. Two of the staff are based full-time in Port Moresby as long term advisers to DEC TEM and KTA respectively, based in the organisations they advise. Unlike other GoA funded programs such as the Provincial and Local Level Governments Program (PLGP) or the Law and Justice Sector Program where management contractors are contracted by GoA to support the long term advisers and manage other inputs, the DoE advisers have limited direct support in-country³⁸. These DFAT management contractors³⁹ also are able to provide M&E and other support services such as procurement to the advisers they support.

³¹ The initial expatriate KTA CEO had close connections to the trekking industry.

³² These issues included unlicensed operators taking groups through, not all trekkers being registered, licenced operators not having required public liability insurance, this issue has been raised by several operators (and noted by KTA) as a constraint. At least two local trekking companies advised the MTR team that they could access public liability insurance cover through PNG insurance brokers.

³³ This could be summed up as not operating in the 'spirit of Kokoda'.

³⁴ Several local observers commented on the aspect that during trekking group rest breaks along the Track, the local porters and guides from the two groups would mix while sometimes the expatriate trek leaders did not mix with other groups,

³⁵ Dr Kate Feros, Director, IHS. DoE. Canberra.

³⁶ Although the project director has overall responsibility for the project, as they are working within a public service structure they do not have the authority to manage project resources in the same way as a managing contractor who will recruit consultants under the DFAT adviser remuneration framework (ARF) which determines fee level and conditions and also performance standards.

³⁷ For 2013/14 financial year. This drops to 8 for 2014/15, 5 into 2015/16, to 2 for final 6 months 15/16 as per page 106 of the design document.

³⁸ Within DEC TEM, there is a finance/administration position funded by DoE but this position is vacant until April 2014.

4.4 Value for Money

The following table provides a breakdown of the different types of costs incurred by Australia under the Initiative. The data is based on actual figures to date and projections from the latest project plan.

The data shows that, in the three years (2011/12, 12/13 and 2013/14) between 32 % and 42 % of DoE project expenditure (excluding KDP costs) went towards Australian based costs. This is a high proportion of the total costs and is unusual in development projects. Part of these additional costs could be attributed to the unusual nature of the Kokoda Initiative with its high level political objectives. However, much of the extra costs of the political aspects of the project should have been incurred in-country. If the costs of the two long-term advisers in-country are excluded, the proportion allocated to DoE operating costs increase to between 40 % and 62 %. These are very high proportions of the project budget.

Table 3 Kokoda Initiative Actual and Projected Expenditure (A\$)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14 ¹	2014-15 ²	2015-16 ³
KTA support	1,298,784	1,409,410	452,500	625,000	250,000	150,000
KTA CB and adviser support	0	270,352	565,123	500,000	593,399	348,339
KTA income generation support	0	0	122,500	102,620	89,906	42,299
Grants to DEC	600,000	150,000	145,000	761,509	140,000	30,000
DEC CB and adviser support ⁴	0	537,712	500,000	502,512	600,000	130,000
Other KI project expenditure ⁵	410,765	571,428	198,451	346,167	241,500	196,000
Total KI activities managed by DoE	2,309,549	2,938,902	1,983,574	2,837,808	1,914,805	896,638
KDP implementation funds	0	740,028	825,667) 1,200,000)1,200,000	
KDP staff and management costs (DFAT) ⁶		525,094	408,385))	
Total Implementation Funds	2,309,549	4,204,024	3,217,626	4,037,808	3,114,805	896,638
DoE Operating Budget ⁷	1,228,851	1,423,516	1,432,253	1,433,207	1,183,777	601,693
Total Kokoda Initiative Budget	3,538,400	5,627,540	4,649,879	5,471,015	4,298,582	1,498,331
% DoE admin. of DoE KI costs ⁸	34.7 %	32.6%	41.9%	33.6%	38.2%	40.2%
% DoE admin. of DoE KI costs excluding in-country advisers		40.0%	60.9%	43.8%	62.1%	59.0%
DoE ASL inputs (full time equiv.)		9	9	9	7.8	4.8
% KDP in staff and admin costs ⁹		41 %	33 %			
KTA revenue from trekking fees		407,691	429,923			
% KTA revenue to KI support to KTA		24.7 %	42.3 %			
KI / KTA Cost per Trekker		\$585	\$298			

Source: Kokoda Initiative annual reports

- Notes:
1. 2013/14 approved budget
 2. From Kokoda Initiative Plan V2.1 15.10.2013
 3. 2015-16 activities are completed by December 2015 with last six months used for evaluation and review.
 4. Adviser costs assumed to be major part of this component as no capacity building plan has been articulated.
 5. Includes Stakeholder engagement, tourism support, twinning arrangements and other non-specific cost allocations.
 6. As defined in KDP expenditure breakdowns
 7. As defined in expenditure breakdowns. Assumed to be largely Australian based and short-term PNG based inputs.
 8. Only Kokoda Initiative budget managed by DoE.
 9. Based on cost allocations as defined above.

Analysis of the KDP staff and management costs indicates that between 33% and 40 % of budgeted costs are allocated to these areas.

³⁹ Almost all of these management contractors employ local staff to undertake the accounting and administration roles with more local staff also being employed in technical roles to support a small number of highly experienced expatriate advisers.

5 Sustainability

5.1 Institutional Capacity

The project has already made some impact on the capacity of the agencies delivering Kokoda Initiative activities in PNG. KTA is able to manage its core activities of managing trekker use of the Track and ensuring that communities along the Track are included as stakeholders in Track planning and coordination activities.

DEC TEM was operating with unfilled positions (4 vacant out of 10 allocated to unit, as reported in early March 2014) and also has to support other DEC priority activities including the GEF project. Considering the workload and other agency responsibilities of the DEC TEM Branch, the group should be classed as capable. The complicating factor for the DEC TEM group is that some of the objectives of the Initiative, particularly the World Heritage listing activities, require inputs from a separate group in DEC which is not directly involved and has not benefitted directly from Kokoda Initiative capacity building support. This could be a major constraint to finalising the documentation required to support a World Heritage listing after the Initiative activities have prepared all the support material.

The planned trek information / booking website has still not been developed. Trekking operators and other stakeholders view this as a priority activity. The request for tender (RFT) for its development has been prepared and funding committed.

KTA has a range of reporting mechanisms to its key stakeholders – communities along the Track, the provincial governments, the tour operators and the Kokoda Initiative which provides some support. However a published consolidated annual operational and financial report to the GoPNG responsible ministers or agencies, Kokoda Initiative partners or stakeholders such as the trek operators could address some of the criticisms from stakeholders not participating in Initiative fora or planning processes. As the KTA manages both trekker fees and public funds, public transparency on business activities and financial management will assist in reassuring stakeholders of KTA's management performance.

5.2 Community Links

The KTA CEO, supported by the KTA chairman, has emphasised regular communications with Track communities so a strong relationship has been developed with communities by KTA. However, as described earlier, there may be some misunderstanding because of the different Kokoda Initiative and NGO groups working in the communities in similar activities. These differences even come down to which community groups are working with the organisations providing support to the community. For example, KTA will be arranging track maintenance with one group while the KDP and NGOs such as the KTF may be organising construction and operations activities with other sub-groups within the community. The GoPNG planning system is based on bottom-up planning from the Ward with a ward development plan.

A weakness in the Initiative design is that a systematic process for interactions with local governments and communities has not been established, emphasised by the interaction of these groups with a number of different service providers and stakeholders. As the KDP inputs, complemented by other support from KTF and other NGOs, has now lifted the standard of community infrastructure and operational support capacity, a challenge for the remainder of JU2 and a possible future joint understanding will be planning and assessing appropriate community infrastructure investments. This also applies to the KTA livelihoods activity which has an annual budget over about \$100,000.

Improving the coordination and planning of community infrastructure requires close involvement of the provincial and local governments as they are responsible for the ongoing operating costs and staffing of new infrastructure. The Initiative could consider supporting a structured coordination approach that aligns with GoPNG planning and funding processes.

Feedback to the Review from NGOs, such as the Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA), KTF and Enterprise Kokoda, and the KTA CEO indicated that more effort needed to be placed on supporting development of income generating activities for communities along the Track. These income generating activities need to

focus on two broad streams: increased access to direct trekking related activities (porter/guide inputs⁴⁰, supplies to trekking groups and small supplementary sightseeing or cultural activities) for trekkers staying in or passing through a village. Other activities could be directed building on existing income generating activities in villages such as vegetable growing or handicrafts that can then be exported out of the community. This would require additional, competitively priced air transport resources (and support),

5.3 Recurrent Costs

The KTA earned about \$430,000 in 2012/13 from trekking revenue (about 3,400 trekkers). The balance of its operating⁴¹ and maintenance budget was supported by the Kokoda Initiative (more than \$625,000 plus the cost of the long term adviser). Based on the trekking fees being increased by 10 % per year and if trekker numbers return to the high levels of 5,621 achieved in 2008, the trekking fees would only generate \$700,000 to \$800,000 per year which is still less than the estimated \$430,000 from trekkers' fees plus the \$625,000⁴² allocated to KTA funding in the 2013/14 Initiative budget (total of \$1,055,000). It is understood that the KIMC is considering a proposals for GoPNG funding support for the KTA. Proposals for additional funding by GoPNG and GoA should be part of an overall review of KTA's mandate and necessary ongoing resourcing.

Anecdotal feedback is that the KTA has not received GoPNG public investment program (PIP) funds since 2010. GoPNG funding for road maintenance funding for the Ower's Corner road would reduce the supplementary GoA funding needed from the Initiative but is unlikely to cover all the costs. These issues highlight the need for a study by KTA of the sustainable trekking capacity of the Track and the ongoing maintenance and track development needed to sustain this trekking load. This information would then allow the ongoing financial viability of the KTA to be assessed.

A challenge for the KTA is to manage costs and maximise profits so they can be returned to the Track communities as ward development grants (currently K 10,000 per ward across the 14 wards along the Track with about 50 villages).

Funding of recurrent costs in DEC TEM reflect the priorities of DEC senior management. Anecdotal information suggests that some of the PIP funding allocated for Kokoda Initiative related activities may not have been made available⁴³.

6 Crosscutting Issues

6.1 Gender and Disadvantaged Groups

DoE had commissioned a Gender Snapshot to guide assessment of gender issues. The MTR team had brief discussions with the consultant who submitted the draft report in late May 2014.

Based on discussions and observations during the field work, the Initiative is addressing gender and disadvantaged group issues. There could be opportunities for improvement in the area of community consultations, particularly in ensuring the consultations include representatives (direct or proxy) for the women's and/or disadvantaged groups. This should be part of the process raised earlier (Section 5.2) to ensure there is a consistent inclusive approach to community engagement and planning.

The draft M&E framework does not include a discussion on how gender and other cross-cutting issues will be assessed within the framework. The questionnaires for individual interviews did ask for the gender of the respondent and the selection processes for interviewees did specify gender balance.

⁴⁰ Feedback from several sources indicated that some of the porters and guides did not live in the communities (although some came from Track communities) so not all the porter and guide fees went back into the Track communities.

⁴¹ KTA local staffing support from GoA includes Finance Manager (50%), Finance/Admin Assistant (50%), Project Manager (100%), Communications Officer (50%) and Livelihoods Officer (100%). The total estimated cost of this support is \$160,000.

⁴² \$250,000 of this allocation is to pay for maintenance on the Sogeri – Ower's Corner Road which possible should be covered under GoPNG National Roads funding.

⁴³ A proposed reconciliation of the PIP funds allocated to JU1 – an estimated K21 million has not been provided.

The PLGP which houses the KDP has reviewed and developed its Gender issue approaches to mainstream them into all PLGP activities including KDP. The PLGP M&E framework incorporates gender disaggregated and gender specific indicators.

6.2 Environmental Issues

As the project is largely focused on environmental issues and based in DEC, environmental issues are being highlighted and generally addressed well. Feedback on several KTA activities (track maintenance, bridge construction, track guidelines and operations of the portable timer mills) indicates that environmental issues are being mainstreamed into KTA activities.

The underlying Track related environmental issue to be considered is the sustainable capacity of the Track, taking account of the stated need of some tour operators that they do not want to see the historic context of the Track (conditions?) compromised for trekkers. This issue is discussed in the following section.

The larger environmental issue being addressed by the Initiative is the sustainable development in the IPZ in addition to the Track related issues.

6.3 Military Heritage

The MTR had discussions with several military heritage stakeholders who expressed a range of views on military heritage aspects of the Kokoda Initiative activities. Even within the tour companies there was a range of views on the importance of the military heritage aspects to the trekking experience without understating the importance of the Kokoda experience in Australian military history and now, as an iconic Australian cultural activity.

As would be expected in the severe climatic conditions along the Track much of the military infrastructure has weathered and deteriorated. This has led to a greater need for on-the-track interpretation of the military aspects, supported by existing digital and hard reference material on the Australian military history of the Track area. Some trek leaders with a strong military background place a high priority on being able to describe and relate this history in detail to their trekking groups. In some cases, they downplay the local experience of local trek masters and leaders who may not have as much detailed knowledge of the military heritage aspects but have a much greater knowledge and understanding of the local natural and cultural heritage. With structured training activities and access to Smart pad⁴⁴ technology which can store and recall structured information, maps and photographs, it is possible for all motivated trek leaders and guides to provide a medium level of military history context and knowledge to all trekking groups (or conversely, for the natural and cultural heritage).

The stakeholders with a professional interest in military history also highlighted the importance of other aspects of the PNG military campaign in World War 2. They highlighted the military importance (and losses suffered) during the battles on the way to and at the Northern Beaches. This is also highlighted by the Oro Provincial governor and the KTF which is placing increased amounts of resources into activities to support communities along the Northern Beaches (Buna and other battlefields).

The trade-off between historic authenticity, track capacity and environmental sustainability is an area that will require ongoing discussions and consultations between the stakeholders – villages aspiring to some aspects of a more modern life style⁴⁵, the GoPNG and provincial government community development departments assisting the communities improve their livelihoods, trekkers on what they are seeking from their trekking experience and the trek operators who want to deliver the appropriate trekking experience. The KTA provides the forum for community and GoPNG inputs to the process but a single trekker representative entity/organisation, as discussed in an earlier section to represent the trekkers and the support organisations, would greatly facilitate this process.

⁴⁴ This opportunity was raised by Dr Karl James, historian at the Australian National War Memorial.

⁴⁵ Feedback from the Livelihoods scoping stud interviews was that some communities did not wanted to have mobile telephone towers installed to provide reliable mobile phone reception. This probably coincides with the views of some Australian based trekking operators who want to retain the 'original feel' of the Track.

7 Monitoring and Evaluation

A significant weakness in the project design and implementation has been the delayed linking of the Kokoda Initiative design to an M&E system and then the design and operation of an M&E system to guide implementation and provide information on outputs, outcomes and impacts. The annual work planning and reporting processes now used by DoE are providing detailed information on activities and inputs being made to the Initiative and the targets and planned completion dates to be achieved.

7.1 Kokoda Initiative M&E

A contractor was deployed in early 2013 (two years after the start of the JU2) to prepare and document an M&E framework. The process has taken close to 12 months and a final M&E system had not been finalised during the MTR visit in late February 2014. As discussed under Relevance, part of the issue was that the JU2 document proposed the five goals and supporting objectives without providing measurable benchmarks or targets or taking account of the practicality of the proposed objectives. The M&E specialist has prepared a very comprehensive M&E framework providing 48 indicators of progress to the specified objectives. Even in a fully resourced M&E unit with full time staff, 48 indicators are too many to practically manage⁴⁶. In the lightly management support resourced Initiative agencies which are having difficulty implementing their own work plans, it is unrealistic to expect the proposed M&E system to operate as planned⁴⁷. In the M&E framework description, no reference is made to the resources that will be needed to collect, collate and report on the information collected.

An early decision will be needed on how to proceed with the Kokoda Initiative M&E system with options being: (i) add staff resources (1 full-time person plus a part-time M&E specialist); or, (ii) greatly reduce the information collected and rely on an in-depth completion evaluation to assess outcomes and impact. The DFAT Senior Program Manager, Governance, has indicated that PLGP resources could be available to support M&E activities in the short term.

7.2 Kokoda Development Program

The KDP M&E system has provided limited information on progress and outcomes from the community planning and infrastructure activities⁴⁸ along the Track. PLGP management has undertaken a review of the M&E processes for the KDP and developed a new set of M&E reporting formats and guidelines. The MTR team has reviewed the revised documentation and believes that, if implemented as documented, the M&E system will provide relevant information on assessing activities, outputs and outcomes as defined in the KDP goal as improved access.

Based on available information from the KDP and KTF, the MTR team understands there is no comprehensive database of community school and health infrastructure, equipment and staff resources for this infrastructure in the Track villages and communities. Without a comprehensive database of this information, future planning and prioritising of inputs required to deliver services to the agreed national standards, will be difficult and increases the risk of misallocation of limited GoPNG, GoA and NGO sourced funds.

⁴⁶ The MTR team leader has designed, implemented and advised on M&E processes for a range of development projects and programmes including for high level government planning and investment agencies.

⁴⁷ KTA is making slow progress in designing, building and implementing its own trekker management database which is relatively simple compared to the database needed to store and collate the planned M&E surveys. The DEC TEM group are under-resourced for their own technical work without attempting to implement an M&E database,

⁴⁸ The limited reporting had led to issues between the KDP and KTF on which health clinics and school buildings had been completed with which organisations support.

8 Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned

8.1 Overall Assessment Including Impact

Goal 1: A safe and well managed track

The Track has remained open for all trekking seasons since the Initiative started. The KTA has processes to proactively assist in addressing likely constraints through routine maintenance programs, structured contacts with the communities, community contracts to maintain sections of the Track near each community and the ward development fund provides an annual allocation to all the wards along the Track.

The Kokoda Initiative has funded enhancements made for safety of communities and trekkers along the Track including upgrading and maintaining airstrips along the track, particularly at Kokoda.

The KTA office in Port Moresby provides a focal point for communities along the track and the radio network based there provides immediate contact for the Track communities. The office has a group of enthusiastic young staff that has benefited from the mentoring of the DoE business adviser. KTA has implemented livelihoods and trekking company liaison forums, however these forums challenge the capacity of the organisation.

Funds raised through the trekking fees are paid to communities for routine maintenance along the Track, through village maintenance agreements. GoA funds maintenance of the road to Ower's Corner to the benefit of local communities and trekkers, and also major conservation and maintenance works including bridge maintenance and repairing damage caused by landslips, etc.

There is some uncertainty on the level of enforcement of requirements for trek operators including public liability insurance coverage and the need for all trekkers to register and pay track fees.

The stakeholder workshops and tour operator forums have provided opportunities for stakeholder contributions. There is good attendance at the tour operator forums in PNG but interest in Australia could be improved through increased communication of progress in addressing recurrent operator concerns raised at the fora.

Goal 2: Enhanced quality of life for landowners and communities (along the Track)

The GoA funded KDP has provided materials for and assisted communities to construct village health centres and elementary schools along the Track. The KDP has been working on 19 school construction and/or rehabilitation activities with three reported as completed (Kokoda elementary school and primary school, and Kagi elementary school). The KTF assisted communities complete some of the infrastructure. The KDP provided some limited training to complement the infrastructure construction.

Training, mentoring activities have been provided for village health volunteers (VHV) and health workers who are also supported by regular patrols along the Track.

The community based mentors (CBM) implemented through KTA under the Livelihoods project have started to support micro and small enterprises (MSE) in their communities particularly guesthouses for trekkers. KTA has managed a program of supporting guesthouse and camping ground owners improve their facilities and become accredited. This accreditation process will align with the national accreditation scheme managed by the Tourism Promotion Authority (TPA), another Kokoda Initiative partner. Income generation / nutrition improvement activities require ongoing technical support.

The DEC TEM Section working with the GEF project in DEC is developing the processes to ensure income streams (power and water production fees) from new developments in the Interim Protection Zone (IPZ) based around the Brown River catchment are directed fairly back to the customary land owners and communities in the area.

The Kokoda Initiative has not made significant progress in developing community capacity to identify, plan and implement development / income generation activities and manage the income streams. A systematic approach to community driven consultation / planning / implementation processes has not been introduced

although models are available from other parts of PNG. Limited attention has been given to linking the Initiative activities to the GoPNG development planning processes, particularly at provincial level to ensure that operating and maintenance funds are able to support the infrastructure that has been constructed.

The Initiative design highlighted the need to include all stakeholders and levels in the approach to sustainable development. This has not been achieved. The high level coordination and planning activities have possibly been too intensive leading to some stakeholders experiencing meeting overload. The complex design of the Kokoda Initiative has made it difficult for some stakeholders, even those who have participated in the higher level meetings, to understand or appreciate the Kokoda Initiative concept and their agency's role in the Initiative.

Conversely, at the operational and community levels, there has been a lack of coordination and planning. Little attention has been given to engaging with relevant local or international non-government organisations (NGOs), including churches, with links to the Kokoda region. There are opportunities to access additional skills and resources from these NGOs which have strong links with Track communities.

The Kokoda Initiative does not keep a comprehensive database of education and health infrastructure and supporting resources which would assist in planning and resourcing priority community issues. The KTF may have useful information to complement the KDP information.

Goal 3: Wise use and conservation of the Interim Protection Zone

The DEC team is developing the building blocks needed for the integrated land use plan for the Interim Protection Zone. The spatial mapping of the area has been upgraded (to a 5 m x 5 m resolution), ground-truthed, including for assessment of primary or secondary forestry cover, and incorporated into DEC land management activities. This imagery from 2007 and 2010 has allowed assessment of land use changes but may now require updating. Staff from other sections in DEC have participated in the GIS training, building DEC capacity and providing back-up for the TEM specialist. A JICA forestry project is using the same imagery. Social mapping of the track area is progressing and a decision on whether to proceed with mapping for the whole track and an appropriate cost-effective methodology will be made by late 2014.

The values mapping activity is addressing biodiversity, cultural and archaeological aspects of the IPZ using both national and international experts to guide implementation. Current work is leading to further development of the National Biodiversity Information System (NBIS) to provide a framework for recording all known species in the IPZ by the end of 2015 and a project is underway to curate PNG species currently held in overseas collections. These are important aspects needed to prepare for a possible World Heritage nomination.

The tools and processes being developed by the Kokoda Initiative in this area are being used by the GEF project which covers the whole of New Britain and a larger section of the Owen Stanley Ranges.

The above activities are identifying the main natural and cultural values in the IPZ. New activities are starting to collect and document military heritage aspects of the Track. These will focus on heritage from the PNG side as well as the much better known Australian side. The first stage of the Oral History project managed by the NMAG should be finished by October 2014. Planning has started for an inventory of Australian military heritage along the Track.

Goal 4: Building the national and international tourism potential of the Kokoda Track and OSR

The Initiative has supported the development of commemoration days for key participants in the military history of the Track (Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels Day, ANZAC Day, etc.). The tourism marketing/promotion position in KTA (currently being recruited) is planned to take a more pro-active role in promotion of the Track and to progress the proposed strategic tourism plan and associated marketing activities⁴⁹. The major GoA grant recently made to TPA to undertake tourism training, and other activities relating to tourism resources along the Track should accelerate activities in this area.

⁴⁹ The role may also include managing the KTA relationship with the PNG and Australian based trekking operators.

The Kokoda Initiative work being undertaken by DEC TEM is building the case for a World Heritage nomination for the IPZ / Track area. The military heritage aspects in a single area do not strengthen the nomination case but evidence is being developed of the cultural and natural significance of the area.

Goal 5: Ensuring Kokoda Initiative activities are sustained into the future

Within a five year program working with new or under-resourced agencies, it is unrealistic to expect the activities to have become embedded in the PNG government processes and have access to ongoing GoPNG funding or be commercially sustainable.

KTA is moving towards being financially viable for its core track regulation and management functions and a future focus should be to maximise the fees from trekkers that can be returned to the track communities or for track maintenance.

It is disappointing to find that DEC, the main Kokoda Initiative partner, has been able to fill only half the staff positions in the TEM group for Initiative activities and has used the Initiative developed skills and knowledge for other priority work within DEC.

Through the Initiative investments from GoA and GoPNG, good progress has been made in building the technical and operational capacity of the main counterpart agencies (DEC and KTA).

8.2 Key MTR Questions

(a) Achievement of JU2 goals and objectives

As summarized in Section 2, the Initiative has made significant progress to the (ambitious/aspirational) high level goals set out in the JU2 agreement. There is high level commitment to the JU2 vision and the Kokoda Initiative has made good progress towards bringing together Papua New Guinea and Australian national interests, particular in the Kokoda Track area. With some changes to implementation as proposed below and with an increased focus on achieving agreed key outcomes, the Kokoda Initiative should contribute to significant improvements in community well-being and, protection and enhancement of the natural, cultural and military heritage environment in the IPZ.

(b) Alignment of Kokoda Initiative activities with JU2 goals and objectives

The Kokoda Initiative activities align quite well with the JU2 goals and objectives. The main challenge is in the degree of attention and resourcing provided to some areas. The main areas where this is weak is in the areas of managing the development opportunities and income streams, and in developing the alliances between the government, commercial and NGO stakeholders to provide consistent and cost-effective community development and infrastructure planning and implementation support to communities.

(c) Enablers and constraints to Kokoda Initiative implementation and impact on achieving JU2 goals and objectives

Enablers:

- High level commitment to the special relationship between PNG and Australia
- Resources from GoA and GoPNG
- Flexibility in delivery modes
- Interest from PNG and Australian stakeholders in the Kokoda Track area
- Capacity developed (formally and informally) in DEC and KTA, but there are opportunities for further capacity development.
- Access to specialist skills, knowledge and resources from both DoE and the KDP.

Constraints:

- A complex design incorporating aspirational high level goals which have not been linked back to achievable measurable outcomes for the five year program period.
- Lack of understanding of overall Kokoda Initiative program amongst some stakeholders.

- Mixed feedback on the importance of the IPZ / Initiative activities in the future plans for CEPA (Clear support to the Kokoda Initiative was given during the final MTR team meeting with senior DEC staff).
- Organisational constraints in the implementing agencies which are outside the influence of the Initiative implementing group.
- Unfilled positions in the DEC TEM Branch placing a greater workload on the group leadership and core implementation team. Facilitation of the World Heritage nomination process is the responsibility of sections in DEC which may lack resources, capacity and commitment to support the nomination process.
- Limited in-country administration and organisational support for in-country coordination and planning activities.
- Less than satisfactory coordination between Kokoda Initiative and KDP activities.
- Cross-cutting issues such as gender and M&E did not receive early attention during JU2. This delay has possibly reduced the impact on potential beneficiaries at community level and implementation efficiency.
- Some budgeted GoPNG funds not flowing as planned.
- Limited success in accessing GoPNG budget resources (PIP and DSIP) in the Track communities and related agencies which would increase the resources available to build and improve community and Track facilities and support services.
- The (Kokoda Initiative and KDP) M&E systems have not yet provided substantial output and outcome information to support this review and the design of a possible further phase.
- Lack of clarity on the in-country working and reporting arrangements⁵⁰ between the long term advisers (and short term technical specialists) in the PNG agencies. Many of the issues have been addressed informally but an agreed structure would improve clarity for the PNG agencies and their staff.

(d) Governance structures for JU2

The Kokoda Initiative / JU2 design emphasised the need for effective coordination and planning at all levels of the Initiative. The Senior Advisor position has facilitated links between high level stakeholders. The Minister for Environment and Conservation has provided valuable leadership including formation of the Ministerial Committee to strengthen GoPNG engagement with the Initiative. Provincial governments are now taking up their mandated roles in the governance groups to strengthen the links to GoPNG budgeting, planning and implementation processes.

The governance groups created have had varying levels of participation and success. The planned higher level taskforces in both countries have not functioned as planned. This may be partly due to the tasks, meeting scheduling, required time inputs and planned outcomes not being managed to suit the interests and time commitments of the intended participants. There is little evidence that this lack of engagement has been a major factor impacting on project progress and effectively but engagement from the new Ministerial Committee will be important in formulating and reaching agreement on the design for the Third Joint Understanding.

The PMC is functioning largely as planned as the working committee for the Initiative and would be strengthened by formal reporting processes back to the Initiative project director in Canberra.

At local-level government and community level, the governance structures are much less developed with limited structured participation and support to the planning, coordination and implementation processes.

A disappointing weakness in the governance arrangements is the low level of participation of Australian tour operators in the consultative process through the tour operator forums. The lack of a single industry focal

⁵⁰ The Review team has not seen an organisation chart or description showing the working and/or reporting relationship between the DEC and KTA advisers.

point to represent the views of all the tour operators, particularly the Australian-based operators, in discussions with KTA, GoPNG and GoA, complicates the ability of these agencies to respond effectively to issues raised by operators.

(e) Longer term sustainability of changes facilitated through the Kokoda Initiative

The Kokoda Initiative is facilitating and funding an integrated package of interventions designed to address specific constraints and issues. The GoPNG is committed to strengthening management and community benefits from protected areas across the country such as the Kokoda Initiative supported IPZ activities. Including the KTA, the sustainability of the changes will depend on the level of, and how efficiently benefits from protected areas, including the Kokoda Track trekking operations, are returned to communities.

The capacity building elements of the Initiative activities are strengthening the ability of DEC and the KTA to implement their mandated functions. KTA is already close to financial viability to undertake its core mandated functions. As such, and provided that trekker fees and numbers are managed appropriately, and the organisation's management and operational capacity continues to develop, KTA can fund a significant proportion of its core operations⁵¹. Ongoing funding through GoPNG PIP or GoA funding would be needed for track development and maintenance of the Ower's Corner road and airstrips.

The changes to DEC will prove more challenging as the GoPNG has indicated that it wants CEPA to become self-funding in a relatively short period. The Initiative activities are supporting development of skills, knowledge and processes that will contribute to increasing benefits from protected areas and ensuring they flow to the appropriate land owners and communities in these areas. The sustainability of CEPA will depend on an enabling environment for CEPA to undertake its mandated functions, developed with the assistance from the Initiative. In the short term, the challenge will be ensuring that CEPA has adequate funding and capable staff resourcing, supported by GoPNG funding as it makes the transition to being a self-funding organisation.

8.3 Findings and Conclusions

1. The Kokoda Initiative is regarded as an important element of the relationship between PNG and Australia. However, some high level stakeholders do not have a clear understanding of its functions and the relationship between the different activities.
2. The formation of the Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee, initiated by Minister Pundari, is an important step forward in highlighting this importance. The Ministerial Committee was formed in response to weaknesses in the functioning of the National Taskforce in providing high level monitoring and guidance.
3. The design process took too long and the resulting design, based on the JU2 agreement, is complex.
4. The Initiative has made good progress in implementation of most planned activities but both sides have had lags in scheduled activities.
5. The Kokoda Track is a major draw card for most Australian tourists to PNG and provides some flow-on benefits to communities along the Track. These visits may not lead to significant flow-on benefits to other parts of the PNG tourism industry.
6. The Kokoda Track is one of the shortest foot tracks across the Owen Stanley Ranges so is used by some low income travellers from other parts of PNG to travel to Port Moresby.

Department of Environment and Conservation

7. The new externally funded and run project through the GEF and UNDP, working closely with DEC, is linking closely with the Kokoda Initiative activities and using them as the model for GEF implementation across New Britain and wider sections of the Owen Stanley Ranges.

⁵¹ The issue was raised in the DoE progress report for July-December 2014 to be addressed by the MTR.

8. The improved capacity of DEC TEM staff capacity is being used to deliver the GEF program and other activities within DEC. An ongoing challenge for DEC/CEPA and the Kokoda Initiative will be to retain these specialised skills within the Initiative activities.
9. The recent legislation to support formation of the CEPA will lead to a period of change as the current DEC resources are transferred to the new CEPA.
10. DEC based activities have been constrained by:
 - a. The dis/relocation of the DEC office in 2013, in particular the impact on the computer network.
 - b. Under resourcing of the DEC TEM Branch delivering the Kokoda Initiative (and other DEC) activities both in proposed PNG counterpart funding and in staffing resources.
11. The Review team noted that DEC had another high level adviser^{52, 53} to the Minister and DEC/CEPA.

Kokoda Track Authority

12. The KTA is fulfilling its mandate of keeping the Track open and managing funds collected from trekking operations for paying villages to undertake track maintenance and development payments to the communities along the track. The livelihood activities have been less successful.
13. The KTA has an enthusiastic group of young staff led by the CEO who is supported by the DoE business systems adviser. Formal staff and board capacity building activities have recently commenced⁵⁴, but structured further inputs are required.
14. Recent increases in trekking company licence fees supplemented by trekkers' fees provide a substantial level of income that can support the core KTA track regulatory and track management functions.
15. The KTA is a special purpose authority (SPA) managing trekker fees for the benefit of communities along the Track and maintenance of the Track. A continued focus on improving the efficiencies of business systems and operations will maximise the funds that can be returned to communities along the Track.
16. KTA has had extensive long and short term technical assistance and unstructured capacity building inputs⁵⁵ which have assisted in development of the current staff resources and management systems. The challenge now is to transition the organisation to a financially viable business model using cost-effective capacity building and support resources that can provide mentoring and specialised technical inputs as required. This may require a narrower range of focused activities.
17. To support the organisation development activities, the Board will need to develop its capacity to guide and support senior management. This will require a process to develop the skills and understanding of governance and business management issues of board members.
18. KTA is the best known 'face' of the Kokoda Initiative and also has the closest interaction with the trekking companies regularly using the Track and the Track communities. It is sometimes wrongly linked with issues with other Kokoda Initiative activities and other issues in the area unrelated to the Kokoda Initiative activities.
19. The planned trek information / booking website has not been developed but DEC and PIP resources have been committed for the work. Trekking operators and other stakeholders view this as a priority activity.
20. Some stakeholders interviewed expressed concern about the environmental impacts from the higher numbers of trekkers in the mid-2000s. The sustainable capacity of the Track for trekkers (and local

⁵² This position had been funded by GoA but was now being funded through GoPNG/DEC resources.

⁵³ This adviser has now left the position (July 2014).

⁵⁴ There has been formal training for rangers in 2014. In the early phase of the JU2 expatriate staff that were employed to manage the KTA provided mentoring and support for local staff. Some KTA staff have also attended conferences e.g. indigenous protected area conference, ecotourism conference. Operations staff and rangers have recently received training from experts in protected area management

⁵⁵ The capacity building has not been structured and possibly relied on on-the-job training.

non-trekkers) and opportunities to promote visits by more trekkers are important factors in the long term financial viability of the KTA.

21. The twice yearly tour operator forums have been a valuable communication tool with the trekking industry, particularly in PNG. Improved communication of progress in addressing recurrent issues is needed.
22. A published consolidated annual operational and financial report to the Kokoda Initiative partners and stakeholders such as the tour operators may address criticisms of KTA from stakeholders. As the KTA manages both trekker fees and public funds, public transparency on business activities and financial management is needed. An annual report is also required under the GoPNG Local Level Government Act.
23. The KTA Livelihoods Project Scoping Study undertaken in late 2013 identified some areas where there were opportunities for improvement. Also the Economic Significance of Trekking on the Kokoda Track in 2012 made a start on quantifying the benefits of the trekking industry to communities along the Track, however, these studies do not provide a consolidated summary of the economic benefits of the trekking industry and an analysis of the distribution and quantum of benefits.
24. There is some uncertainty on the level of enforcement of requirements for trek operators including public liability insurance coverage and all trekkers registering and paying track fees. The coordination of trekker registration and monitoring process could be improved.
25. The status of the KTA as a special purpose authority under the Central and Oro provincial governments has not significantly limited the effectiveness of the organisation.

Kokoda Development Project;

26. The KDP has delivered required health and education infrastructure along the Track with some supporting capacity building which is appreciated by the communities and provincial and local level governments. Health activities had been given greater emphasis compared to school activities. Other possible KDP activities such as law and justice, and community development have not been implemented.
27. The KDP model for community driven construction of schools with materials provided by KDP has led to some schools not being built and in several other communities, other NGOs including the KTF assisted the communities to complete the building.
28. Planning, management and coordination of the KDP activities has been less than satisfactory. After an initial needs analysis of communities, the KDP has provided limited information on how infrastructure and support activities were planned. This has led to the other stakeholders responsible for equipping and staffing/operating the new facilities not being able or prepared to meet the required commitments or having to include them in other activities (eg. KTF). Management arrangements for KDP under the PLGP have been revised and are being monitored.
29. An integrated database of education, health, other community facilities and trekking support resources along the Track to support planning of priorities and future activities by all government and NGO stakeholders is not in place (a **KT Public Assets** database). This would complement other possible databases of significant cultural and heritage items along the Track.

Other Agencies (Tourist Promotion Authority, National Museum and Art Gallery)

30. These agencies are undertaking agreed Kokoda Initiative activities. TPA is satisfied with its engagement and has commenced implementing agreed activities under a direct contract with the DoE. NMAG is chairing the advisory committee for the oral history project currently in progress. The proposed tourism/marketing position in KTA will strengthen these linkages.

Coordination and Management

31. The Kokoda Initiative design provides for structured coordination and planning processes at several levels with greater inputs to higher level engagement. The MTR team was concerned to find some higher level officials who, despite participating in these higher level activities, still did not fully understand the Kokoda Initiative concept and implementation plans. This is largely an internal

communications issue accentuated by the delayed recruitment of communications resources in DEC after the initial communication officer stepped down.

32. The PNG National Taskforce did not operate effectively and has been upgraded to a more focused Ministerial Committee. In Australia, the proposed Taskforce has also had limited inputs.
33. The DoE Kokoda Initiative management and support team in Australia provide support to all the activity areas, apart from the KDP activities implemented through Australian Aid. The changes in financial and reporting arrangements between DoE and AusAID / DFAT may have increased the workload on DoE resources. As noted above, the Australian Aid funded KDP management performance has been less than satisfactory.
34. Compared to other programs reviewed by MTR members, the Kokoda Initiative appears to have a high proportion of funds allocated to activity management. The MTR team accepts that the more complex Kokoda Initiative design and range of stakeholders and implementing agencies requires a greater level of coordination. However, options to decentralise administration and support functions and reduce the level of Australian-based coordination and management costs should be explored.
35. At field level in the Kokoda Initiative area, there is a lack of coordination between the two main implementing agencies (KTA and the former KDP) and NGOs working in the area. The Kokoda Initiative field level activities do not have a structured and coordinated approach to interacting with village communities and their PNG-mandated governance structures as part of national bottom-up planning processes. This is leading to some duplication but, more importantly, has led to infrastructure activities not being finished and resourced to ensure they are fully utilised.
36. There is little evidence of formal linkages / MOUs with implementing partners and participating communities to clarify expected partner initial and ongoing inputs and outcomes expected.
37. Opportunities to link with other GoPNG (PIP and DSIP funding) and NGO partners (such as KTF) have not been developed. The Initiative is largely using GoA development funds.
38. In summary, there may have been more coordination and planning activities than necessary at the higher levels of management contrasting to inadequate inputs to coordination and management at community and local government levels.

Capacity Issues

39. At provincial and local government levels, funding (through PIP, DSIP and other sources) is available, but each of these administrations has different capacity⁵⁶ (staff and/or skills) to undertake the consultation/planning and implementation/monitoring functions needed to design and manage community-level activities.
40. The two long term advisers, supported by short term inputs from the Canberra-based support resources and technical specialists, are providing a range of services to both their agencies (DEC and KTA) and to the Kokoda Initiative in a range of roles. Part of their time is used for administrative and secretariat functions.

Communications

41. There have been delays in establishing an integrated communication approach due to changes in communications staff and delays in recruiting their replacements. The formation of a communications sub-committee / group led by the DEC communications officer will strengthen this function.

Gender

42. These issues were addressed by the Gender consultant with her draft report delivered in late May 2014. Initial feedback from the consultant was that Gender issues have not been addressed in the Program to date and the targeting of program outcome and benefits, particularly in Track communities. Studies that would inform the design of future livelihoods and income generating activities could include a more detailed assessment of the roles, needs and opportunities for women in Track

⁵⁶ For example, Central Province may have more capacity than Oro Province.

communities and also assessment of the benefits and other effects of trekking generated income on the Track communities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

43. For both Kokoda Initiative and KDP, the M&E processes are weak and the proposed M&E plans for the overall Initiative may be too complex. As with Gender, M&E activities were not built into the design and have not been mainstreamed in implementation. The complexity of the program design is reflected in the complexity of the Kokoda Initiative M&E plan. The program implementing agencies do not have the resources at present needed to implement the proposed M&E plan.

Sustainability

44. The JU2 design has a specific goal relating to sustainability. Within the JU2 timeframe (5 years), putting in place and institutionalising processes and funding for necessary ongoing activities and organisations was unrealistic. As outlined in the above sections, Kokoda Initiative has worked through the responsible PNG government agencies with good success at national level and more limited success at provincial and community level.

8.4 Recommendations for Remainder of JU2

These recommendations are proposed to improve the cost-effectiveness and impact of the remaining two years of the JU2.

DEC / CEPA

1. Kokoda Initiative should support the transition of DEC to the new CEPA. During the transition phase, there should be limited changes to the current level of engagement with Kokoda Initiative activities.
2. The transition of DEC's responsibilities to CEPA which is planned to be self-funding will be challenging and justifies ongoing support to the new agency in both institutional development and specialised technical areas such as funding sources (PES, biodiversity credits, etc.) for community and landowner payments.
3. The focus of the long term DEC adviser activities should be reassessed in relation to the need for ongoing high level technical environmental management skills or if the adviser profile should change to mentoring the TEM team and providing high level strategic advice and support to the Minister and new CEPA executive.
4. As DEC transitions to the newly created CEPA, DEC / CEPA seek to make use of funds from the unused part of GoPNG funding committed at the start of JU2 for Initiative activities (an estimated K6 million).

Kokoda Track Authority

5. KTA should focus on its core business of regulating use of the Track and maximising the proportion of trekker fees used for basic track maintenance and contributions to communities along the Track.

This should be possible within the trekker fees and trekking company fee resources already in place. The implementation modality for KTA and work plans continue as described currently, except the KTA livelihoods activities which should be reassessed. DoE should only consider additional short term resourcing (to that scheduled in the work plans) when requested by the agencies (not advisers) or if there is an emergency.
6. The proposed appointment of a tourism promotion and marketing officer⁵⁷ should be reassessed. If KTA adopts a business focus on core Track management, the proposed position may not be appropriate.

⁵⁷ The KTA Board has advised the MTR team that this position will be called the Business Development Officer / Manager.

7. The current Livelihoods activities should be wound down while the proposal under Community Engagement below is developed and implemented.

Uncommitted funds allocated to livelihoods activities could be directed into identified priority community activities such as completing the provision of solar lighting⁵⁸ for community assets such as the schools, health centres or other locations agreed by the communities. Or, subject to ensuring the ward development plans include the views all communities in the ward, disbursing these funds through the current ward development funds used to disburse trekker fees back to communities. Alternatively, or non-government organisation(s) (NGO) that are already implementing complementary community development activities along the Track could be supported.

8. Completion and commissioning of the trekking reservation and management website should be a high priority. Successful implementation of this website would contribute to rebuilding the KTA relationship with the Australian based trekking companies. Guesthouse / camping ground bookings should not be include in the initial website capabilities.
9. The tour operator forum approach and implementation should be reviewed and refreshed to make it more attractive for operators to participate. Part of this process should include ensuring that issues raised by and agreed to by operator participants are addressed and reported back to all operators.

The operator forum is a venue for providing capacity building and business development support to emerging local trekking companies.
10. KTA should publish and circulate an annual report detailing key information on track operations and improvements, trekker numbers and, transparent and detailed financial reports.
11. The draft KTA capacity building plan developed by the business systems adviser needs to reviewed and revised before implementation starts.
12. KTA should develop and implement a process to develop the skills and understanding of governance and business management issues for board members.
13. As part of preparing for a future activity, building on the Kokoda Initiative, a study(/s) be commissioned on the sustainable trekking load the Track and its communities can support and also the drivers of and future demand for Kokoda Track treks and other use by PNG communities. The study should have inputs from TPA on projected visits by trekkers to PNG and their interest in trekking the Kokoda Track.

These studies will facilitate assessment of the long term sustainability / financial viability of the KTA.
14. If resources and funding are available, the 2012 study on the economic benefits of the trekking industry should be updated with a more comprehensive analysis of the flow and quantum of benefits (cash and kind) to the communities and, local and Australian based trekking companies.
15. The relationship between KTA and the trekking companies needs to be strengthened with greatly increased cooperation (and tolerance) – it will be a major challenge to achieve it but would be a very worthwhile use of GoA funds to achieve sustainability. This could be part of the tourism officer's role but will require ongoing support from senior GoA and GoPNG officials.

Community Engagement and Planning

16. Kokoda Initiative develop and implement a systematic and coordinated approach to community engagement that aligns with GoPNG processes at the national and sub national levels and ensures women and disadvantaged groups are included in the planning and fund allocation processes. This approach will need support with skills and resources not available in Kokoda Initiative implementing agencies.
17. Kokoda Initiative strengthen its relationships with and understanding of other civil society organisations or NGOs supporting and investing in Track communities.

⁵⁸ The KTF has funded an extensive program providing solar lighting for public facilities along the Track,

18. DFAT (with DoE support) facilitates formation of a Kokoda Track development working group (KTDWG) comprising the provincial governments, representatives of the Ministerial Committee, KTA, the KDP (or its successor), relevant NGOs (KTF, etc.) and trekking companies. This aligns with a concept put forward at the recent Sogeri Ministerial meeting⁵⁹. The newly established technical working group (TWG) of the KIMC may be able to fill this role with additional organisations co-opted as required.

If the KTDWG is successfully formed, the working group could be tasked with assisting the provincial governments to coordinate (but possibly later in planning and supervising) resources into community infrastructure and livelihoods activities along the Track and down to the northern beaches, ie. the provinces lead the community development / livelihoods activities.

19. The proposed Kokoda Initiative M&E plans be reviewed by the PLGP M&E specialist to simplify and operationalize the Kokoda Initiative draft M&E plan.

The Australian Aid section of the Australian High Commission has indicated that M&E system design and implementation resources within the KDP/PLGP could be made available to assist in refining and implementing the simplified M&E activities across the Initiative. The KTA Livelihoods officer should be included in these activities.

20. Additional Kokoda Initiative resources will need to be added (M&E position to act as a focal point, data collection/collation resources) to support the Kokoda Initiative M&E processes after the initial proposed M&E support through the PLGP.

Coordination and Planning

21. Kokoda Initiative start a process to improve coordination / linkages at provincial and local levels. The new KIMC TWG should be able to lead this function. This should also improve linkages to other GoPNG funding streams (such as PIP, DSIP, etc.).
22. The PMC processes be reviewed and a formal reporting process be adopted to ensure that priority agreed activities are documented with action plans and timeframes, and the DoE project director and senior PNG agency managers are aware of these agreed actions.
23. Kokoda Initiative needs to rebuild and/or develop relationships with other NGO stakeholders contributing to development of communities along the Track. The DFAT component of the KI needs work more closely with other relevant NGOs, including the Seventh Day Adventist Church), the Anglican Church, the KTF and Network Kokoda.

8.5 Lessons Learned

1. The planning processes for a program to address high level government relationships and priorities require adequate time for the planning and consultation process to consider options and reach consensus. Preparatory activities for a new Joint Understanding should commence at least 18 months before the current JU2 is completed to support a smooth transition and to ensure that funding from both parties is available.
2. For multi-agency programs, the design should have 3-4 clear high level outcomes that can be quantified and measured, and be designed with individual components that are largely implemented by one agency.
3. Planning and coordination issues at community and local government level are just as important as higher level coordination activities, and are more time-consuming and resource intensive but are an essential element of sustainability. Resources are needed to ensure these community-level planning issues include all community members.

⁵⁹ The Senior Adviser has reported that 'The recent ministerial meeting at Sogeri agreed to set up a technical working group of PNG officials to identify PNG national and provincial priorities and liaise with Australian officials about where Australian development dollars for Kokoda should be spent'.

4. The Kokoda Initiative can strengthen the coordination and impact of government and NGO funded activities along the Track through encouraging and supporting linkages to the government system and ensuring that service delivery actors on the Track implement activities to the relevant GoPNG standards (for example in education and health). This coordination will also reduce duplication of activities within the same target groups, and allow activities and resources to be spread more equitably amongst the Kokoda Track communities.
5. Cross cutting issues such as gender and M&E need to be highlighted and embedded in the agreed design and the planned activities. Early awareness raising and practical capacity building in these areas is needed to focus early attention on how inclusion of these activities will strengthen program implementation, outcomes and sustainability.
6. The program design process needs to take account of the appropriate information requirements for an effective M&E system relevant to the reporting requirements of the partner governments to make the M&E activities relevant to the implementing agencies.
7. A multi-agency and sector program such as the Kokoda Initiative, providing capacity building and specialised technical support, requires high levels of administrative, management and technical support services. Based on the experience of other Australian Aid programs in PNG and the Review team's experience of similar programs in other countries, a core support/secretariat group staffed by experienced national staff can provide cost-effective support to a core group of implementation agencies and service the M&E, reporting and management requirements of the funding agencies.

For a future initiative similar to the Kokoda Initiative, this would provide resources for secretariat services to the coordination / planning groups and meetings used to support stakeholder inputs at each level and also provide a focal point for M&E activities. The independent support resources of a secretariat would facilitate transition of specialist full time advisers from full-time inputs in an agency to providing part-time mentoring and specialist technical support as required while supporting program activities in other agencies.

The secretariat would then source specialised high level technical and management support from Australia (and other locations) as required.