

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 20 OCTOBER 2009

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(19) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Barnett (L&CA 55) asked:

In relation to the Pacific Seasonal Labour Scheme, provide a copy of the terms of reference for the forthcoming trial.

Answer:

An independent evaluation formed part of the Government's 17 August 2008 announcement of the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme (the Pilot).

The evaluation will assess the performance of the Pilot against its broad domestic objective to examine whether a seasonal worker scheme could assist Australian horticulture growers with unmet demand for seasonal labour. Also of note is the World Bank's evaluation of the development impact of the Pilot. This includes examination of changes in household income, expenditure, health and wellbeing in the four Pacific Island nations participating.

The Contract for the domestic evaluation is being managed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and will examine evidence from a range of sources and activities. Consultations will be conducted with key informants from a range of stakeholder groups including: Pacific workers, growers, labour hire companies, local advisory bodies and local community groups within the areas where Pacific workers are placed; unions; horticultural industry organisations; and other relevant stakeholders.

Interim and Final reports are key requirements of the evaluation and will be used to inform fine-tuning of the Pilot as appropriate and be considered by Government in determining whether to adopt a longer-term seasonal worker scheme – whether or not they are released publicly is a matter for Government.

Evaluation terms of reference

As advised by DEEWR, the following requirements and deliverables were included in the request for quotation and form part of the contract terms for the successful provider, TNS Social Research.

1. General requirements

The consultant will be required to develop a comprehensive understanding of the research issues prior to commencing the evaluation project and provide advice on issues and concepts to be explored in the research in consultation with DEEWR.

The consultant should ensure that appropriate documentation relating to the evaluation project is kept and should have a comprehensive strategy for dealing with their staff turnover.

2. Detailed requirements for the Evaluation project

The consultant will be required to:

- develop strategies for the collection of relevant data;
- develop all required discussion guides and/or survey instruments in close consultation and negotiation with DEEWR;
- complete focus groups, in depth interviews and possibly surveys in some of the regions where Pacific seasonal workers are located;
- ensure the evaluation covers all four sending countries;
- use shared data collected overseas by other parties where available (the purpose is to gather information on the experiences and satisfaction of Pacific islander workers with the Pilot and to assess their skills acquisition and economic advancement);
- bear all travel costs associated with the evaluation; and
- develop an effective approach for dealing with gender, cultural and linguistic issues that may affect data collection (in particular, interviews or focus groups with the Pacific island seasonal workers may be hampered by the English language skills of Pacific islanders or cultural aspects such as a tendency to defer to the senior person present rather than stating a personal opinion).

The evaluation will consist of several stages:

Stage 1 – Establishment of Evaluation Framework

In establishing the Evaluation Framework, the consultant must:

- conduct targeted consultations with key stakeholders as directed by the Commonwealth;
- provide a process/methodology for selecting appropriate sites/individuals/bodies to participate in the evaluation;
- identify ways to measure the impacts of the Pilot, including ways to form and measure control groups/sites;
- propose analytical methodologies;
- define the primary evaluation questions to be answered over the term of the evaluation, taking into account the key issues identified in the Evaluation Strategy;
- facilitate the identification of best practice;
- provide a robust evaluation methodology which is adaptable to varying sites and service models and involves a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods;
- suggest methods for addressing potential measurement issues;
- consult with DEEWR, no less than monthly; and

- plan the evaluation activities, including indicative timeline, costs, resources and expertise involved in Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Preparation of an Interim Evaluation Report due in July 2010

Stage 2 will revolve around preparation of the Interim Evaluation Report and ongoing data collection in advance of stage 3.

It is anticipated that relatively little data on workers who have returned to their own country after seven months of working in Australia or who have commenced a second period of work in Australia will be available in time for the Interim Evaluation Report, so evaluation issues that cannot be properly addressed without data from such individuals will not be dealt with until Stage 3.

The Interim Evaluation Report will focus on:

- preliminary results on the issues to be addressed by the evaluation, excluding those for which there is not yet sufficient data;

The consultant will be required, within the agreed timeframes, and in consultation with DEEWR, to:

- submit the Interim Evaluation Report;
- develop and submit a budget detailing how the evaluation will be implemented in Stage 3;
- talk to other Commonwealth departments about problems encountered and lessons learned;
- consult with DEEWR, no less than monthly; and
- plan the evaluation activities, including indicative timeline, costs, resources and expertise involved in Stage 3.

Stage 3 – Preparation of a Final Report due in August 2011

Stage 3 will focus on preparation of the Final Evaluation Report.

The consultant will be required, within the times set out in 'Key deliverables and due dates' below, and in consultation with DEEWR, to:

- complete data collection and analysis for the evaluation;
- develop and submit for approval a Final Evaluation Report which will cover:
 - final results and conclusions concerning issues addressed in the Interim Evaluation report;
 - Australian impacts (including labour market impacts, impact on the host communities, displacement of workers, alleviation of horticultural labour shortages and economic impacts)
 - rate of worker returns in succeeding years;
 - impacts on Pacific seasonal workers; and
 - other input from Pacific island countries or AusAID consultancy as appropriate.

Aside from the Interim Evaluation Report and Final Evaluation Report, the consultant will be required to provide regular progress reports on the evaluation to DEEWR as requested.

At the end of each stage of the evaluation the consultant will be required to provide an oral briefing to DEEWR on the findings from each stage, as well as recommendations for moving forward.

The consultant will also provide:

- draft versions of all discussion guidelines/survey instruments intended for focus groups and interviews, for comments and input from DEEWR;
- a final version of such discussion guidelines/survey instruments and copies of any written training notes provided to interviewers;
- informal written and oral briefings to DEEWR on the progress of the evaluation as required;
- recordings of focus groups and in depth interviews where applicable;

3. Summary of core deliverables

The consultant will be required to:

- provide draft and final versions of the discussion guidelines/survey instruments;
- submit the Evaluation Framework;
- supply copies of the written training notes provided to interviewers for the qualitative and quantitative components of the evaluation project;
- provide oral and electronic progress reports monthly or as requested;
- provide the Interim Evaluation Report;
- provide the Final Evaluation Report.

Key deliverables and due dates

Component	Deliverable/s	Due Date
Initial evaluation project meeting	Project establishment meeting	August 2009 - Completed
Stage 1: Evaluation Framework developed and accepted by DEEWR	Evaluation framework	September 2009 - Completed
Stage 2: Interim Evaluation Report completed and accepted by DEEWR	Finalisation of fieldwork	31 Mar 2010
	Interim Evaluation Report submitted to DEEWR	01 Jul 2010
Stage 3: Final Evaluation Report completed and	Finalisation of fieldwork	31 Mar 2011
	Final Evaluation Report submitted to DEEWR	29 Jul 2011

Component	Deliverable/s	Due Date
accepted by DEEWR		