

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON THE DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION

AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
AND THE STATES AND TERRITORIES, BEING:
THE STATE OF NEW SOUTH WALES
THE STATE OF VICTORIA
THE STATE OF QUEENSLAND
THE STATE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
THE STATE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
THE STATE OF TASMANIA
THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
THE NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

This National Partnership Agreement ('the Agreement') is designed to contribute sustainable and meaningful change to teaching and learning in Australian schools to prepare students for further education, training and to live and work in a digital world. Successful implementation of this Agreement will be critical to the achievement of the aspirations, objectives and outcomes set out in the National Education Agreement.

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PRELIMINARIES

PREAMBLE

Australian Governments share the objective of raising overall attainment so that all Australian school students acquire the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in society.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has identified the achievement of the following five high-level outcomes as key to boosting Australia's participation and productivity:

- All children are engaged in and benefiting from schooling;
- Young people are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement are improving;
- Schooling promotes social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of children, especially indigenous children;
- Australian students excel by international standards;
- Young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study.

COAG has established the National Education Agreement (NEA) to pursue this agenda.

This National Partnership Agreement contributes to achieving the objectives, outcomes and targets for schooling under the COAG participation and productivity agenda, the NEA, and the proposed new Goals of Schooling for Young Australians.

This National Partnership Multilateral Agreement has been established to facilitate the implementation of the Digital Education Revolution (DER). The DER is a \$2.207 billion investment by the Commonwealth Government over six years which aims to contribute sustainable and meaningful change to teaching and learning in Australian schools to prepare students for further education, training, jobs of the future and to live and work in a digital world.

The elements of the DER are:

- the National Secondary School Computer Fund (the Fund) to assist schools to provide for new or upgraded information and communications technology (ICT) for secondary students in years 9 – 12 (\$1.19 billion plus \$807 million for on-costs);

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- the Fibre Connections to Schools initiative, a contribution of up to \$100 million to support the development of fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) broadband connections to Australian schools;
- collaboration with states and territories and Deans of Education to ensure new and continuing teachers have access to training in the use of ICT that enables them to enrich student learning;
- \$32.6 million to develop online curriculum resources to promote useability and accessibility of high quality digital content for teaching and learning;
- the development of online learning and access that will enable parents to participate in their child's education; and
- \$10 million to develop support mechanisms to provide vital assistance for schools in the deployment of ICT provided through the Fund.
- project funding of \$71 million to support the implementation of the DER and to address the four strands of change identified in the Strategic Plan, including professional development for teachers.

The DER National Partnership (NP) aims to deliver system-wide reforms in education to ensure that students are equipped for learning in a digital environment and enable schools to better access the benefits of technology for their students.

This agreement is informed by, and complements the following documents:

- The Digital Education Strategic Plan (Attachment 1);
- Digital Education Revolution Implementation Roadmap (Attachment 2);
- Schedule A The Digital Education Revolution – National Secondary School Computer Fund: Additional Funding for On-Costs of the NEA;
- Funding Agreements between the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and education authorities for Round One, Round Two and Round 2.1 of the Fund.

The Digital Education Strategic Plan was endorsed by the Productivity Agenda Working Group in September 2008. All state and territory governments have agreed to a national, coordinated and collaborative partnership approach to developing and implementing the DER. The Strategic Plan sets out the vision for ICT enabled learning in our schools. The Digital Education Revolution Implementation Roadmap identifies the fundamentals of the DER implementation.

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In November 2008 the Commonwealth Government announced additional funding of \$807 million for education authorities to contribute to the installation and maintenance of computers provided under the Fund. The terms and conditions of this funding are outlined in “Schedule A The Digital Education Revolution – National Secondary School Computer Fund: Additional Funding for On-Costs” of the NEA, agreed by COAG in November 2008. This funding will be paid in 2008-09 as a one off payment for costs incurred by education authorities to date and for future additional computers purchased.

The National Secondary School Computer Fund commenced in early 2008 and to date, three rounds of funding have been undertaken, providing funding for 292,969 computers in almost 2,700 schools. DEEWR has established Funding Agreements for Rounds One, Two and 2.1 with State and Territory education authorities and with Block Grant Authorities for the non-government sector. Funding has been provided to bring secondary schools to a computer to student ratio of 1:2. Funding agreements have a two year life from the date of signing and these agreements will run in parallel with the NP. Education authorities are required to continue to meet the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreements as specified.

At the commencement of the Fund, State and Territory Governments were already investing in ICT in their schools. At the time of the audit, it was estimated that nationally 30 per cent of the computer fleet required to reach a computer to student ratio of 1:1 was already in existence. The Commonwealth would be required to fund the remaining 70 per cent of investment to reach the 1:1 ratio and to maintain it into the future. It is expected that State and Territory government maintain their investment for ICT into the future.

PART 1 – FORMALITIES

Parties to this Agreement

- 1 In entering this Agreement, the Commonwealth and the States and Territories (‘the States’) recognise that they have a mutual interest and shared responsibility in implementing the DER and supporting reforms to achieve those outcomes.
- 2 The Commonwealth will establish separate funding agreements with the non-government authorities.

Term of the Agreement

- 3 This Agreement will commence as soon as the Commonwealth and one other Party signs the agreement. The Agreement will expire on 30 June 2013, or earlier, as agreed in writing by all the contracting Parties.

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- 4 Bilateral Agreements between the Commonwealth and participating authorities will commence as soon as they are signed, or at a date to be agreed in writing by the Parties.

Purpose of the Agreement

- 5 This Agreement provides a framework for the DER NP.
- a) This framework sets out the NP's objectives, desired outcomes, and reporting, financial and governance arrangements. It also provides guidance for the development by participating States of Implementation Plans. These Plans will be agreed with the Commonwealth and will be part of the Bilateral Agreements.

Delegations

- 6 The Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is authorised to:
- a) agree to the Bilateral Agreements on behalf of the Commonwealth; and
- b) certify that payments may be made to the States.
- 7 Ministers for Education are authorised to agree to the Bilateral Agreements on behalf of their State or Territory.

Interpretation

- 8 Unless otherwise specified, the following terms and definitions are used throughout this Agreement:
- a) 'Agreement' means Digital Education Revolution National Partnership Agreement;
- b) 'Bilateral Agreement' means the Agreement negotiated bilaterally between the Commonwealth and each State and Territory;
- c) 'Implementation Plan' means State and Territory specific Implementation Plans.

PART 2 – OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

Objectives

- 9 This Agreement supports the implementation of the DER Strategic Plan and Implementation Roadmap to achieve technology enriched learning environments to assist students to achieve high quality learning outcomes and productively contribute to our society and economy.
- 10 The objectives and outcomes of this Agreement will be achieved through cooperative strategies employed by the Commonwealth and states and territories.

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- 11 Through this Agreement, the Parties commit to addressing the four strands of change identified in the Strategic Plan to guide the implementation of the DER initiative and related initiatives for joint national action:
- a) Leadership – that ensures schools have a coordinated plan for the provision of infrastructure, learning resources and teacher capability to address the educational challenges of the 21st Century;
 - b) Infrastructure – access to digital teaching and learning resources and tools for processing information, building knowledge and for communication and collaboration;
 - c) Learning Resources – that stimulate, challenge and assist students in achieving desired learning outcomes. These include collaborative and interactive activities as well as instructional and reference materials; and
 - d) Teacher Capability – teachers have the skills and tools to design and deliver programs that meet students’ needs and harness the benefits and resources of the digital revolution.
- 12 Through this Agreement, the Parties commit to achieving the following output – for secondary schools with students in Years 9-12, achieving a 1:1 ratio of computers to students by 31 December 2011.

Outcomes

- 13 The Agreement will contribute to the following outcomes:
- a) There will be a sustained and meaningful change in the way teaching and learning are delivered in Australian secondary schools in relation to the key themes in the DER Strategic Plan;
 - b) Every secondary school in Australia has provision for each student in Years 9-12 to have access to ICT to enable students to engage with educational tools of the 21st Century and provide equity of access;
 - c) Access to educational tools of the 21st Century will enable the effective delivery of an online nationally consistent curriculum as well as providing stimulating and challenging learning resources for students; and
 - d) The teacher workforce will be equipped through pre-service and in-service training to effectively utilise ICT in the classroom.
- 14 Implementation Plans will describe how education authorities will achieve these objectives at an individual and collective level and also include any additional agreed outcomes, outputs and performance indicators.

Outputs

- 15 The Agreement will contribute to the following outputs:

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- a) All secondary schools will have achieved a 1:1 computer to student ratio for students in Years 9-12 by 31 December 2011;
- b) Deployment of high speed affordable broadband connections to schools;
- c) Increased access to online content;
- d) Enhanced teacher capability to design and deliver programs that meet students' needs and harness the benefits and resources of the digital revolution;
- e) The development of online learning and access that will enable parents to participate in their child's education; and
- f) Interoperation of ICT systems and shared services.

PART 3 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH PARTY

- 16 The roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth and States for school education are outlined in the NEA.
- 17 To realise the objectives and commitments in this Agreement, each Party has specific roles and responsibilities, as outlined below.

Shared Roles of the Commonwealth and States and Territories

- 18 The DER Strategic Plan states that coherent and coordinated action is required, not only with regard to ICT, but also in respect of approaches to learning and teaching, staff development, administrative processes, resource management and relationships to the broader community.
- 19 The Strategic Plan identifies four strands of change, in particular, that may be appropriate for joint national action in association with the DER - Leadership; Infrastructure; Learning Resources and Teacher Capability.
- 20 Elements that require joint effort from the Commonwealth and States and Territories will be progressed and monitored by the Australian Information and Communications Technology in Education (AICTEC), the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) (or its successor body) and COAG.
- 21 AICTEC will provide strategic policy advice on implementation of the DER and in this context, facilitate national consultation, collaboration and coordination as appropriate.
- 22 In accordance with the shared responsibilities outlined in Section 17 of the NEA, the Commonwealth and the States and Territories will share responsibility for:
 - a) implementing initiatives to support MCEETYA and COAG goals for improving learning outcomes and Australia's skills base;

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- b) implementing strategies to produce the best outcomes both within and across the DER elements and also over the life of each initiative;
 - c) in conjunction with the non-government school, VET and higher education sectors, developing a variety of models to manage their contribution and participation, to be agreed with the Commonwealth Government;
 - d) ensuring strong and ongoing communication between the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, the Catholic and independent schools sectors, school communities and their representative bodies, the VET and higher education sectors of education and training, bodies charged with responsibility for implementing other elements of the wider Education Revolution agenda and the wider community;
 - e) committing to national ICT infrastructure including access to broadband bandwidth, digital learning resources and activities, national curriculum and continuing professional development for teaching staff in best practice utilisation of technologies to improve learning and teaching outcomes;
 - f) developing Implementation Plans which include, but are not limited to, the proposed implementation approach, budget, timeline, and milestones, and are balanced and sustainable at the school and sector levels; and
 - g) monitoring achievements against Implementation Plans.
- 23 These shared roles and responsibilities of the DER and those of the NEA are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Role of the Commonwealth

- 24 The Commonwealth's role will be consistent with that specified in Section 18 of the NEA.
- 25 The Commonwealth will have responsibility for:
- a) allocating funding, as set out in Part 5 of this Agreement and elaborated in Bilateral Agreements;
 - b) funding an interim evaluation of the Agreement and joint evaluations of specific reforms as agreed;
 - c) agreed complementary interventions at a national level that might be appropriate to support this Agreement, State Implementation Plans and Bilateral Agreements (this could be the Broadband activity/online curriculum/digital architecture); and
 - d) making provision for secretariat support for AICTEC.

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Role of the States and Territories

- 26 The role of the States and Territories will be consistent with that specified in Section 19 of the NEA.
- 27 The Bilateral Agreements will provide the detail of State responsibilities. States and Territories will be responsible for ensuring full and timely implementation of reforms as set out in these Agreements.
- 28 The States will have responsibility for:
 - a) providing data to enable assessment of achievement of a computer to student ratio of 1:1;
 - b) ensuring full and timely payment of funding to the non-government sector as set out in Bilateral Agreements, to be confirmed once funding is known;
 - c) ensuring the effective ongoing ICT planning processes in Your schools;
 - d) maintaining effort and investment in ICT to contribute to achieving a 1:1 student to computer ratio by 31 December 2011;
 - e) providing reports to the Commonwealth on progress in implementing the DER;
 - f) using the funding for the purpose of purchasing and effective deployment of computers and ICT equipment;
 - g) managing and acquitting the funds in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement and Conditions of Funding;
 - h) providing advice to DEEWR on the number of computers each school will receive on a six monthly basis;
 - i) expending all Funds for the Project within the Project Period;
 - j) providing to DEEWR electronic Reports at the times specified;
 - k) ensuring all schools within each jurisdiction comply with the Commonwealth Government's requirement for appropriate recognition of Commonwealth Government assistance, as stated in the Bilateral Agreements; and
 - l) advising DEEWR, whenever possible, a reasonable time beforehand the dates on which the ICT equipment will arrive and will be installed.

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PART 4 – PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS AND REPORTING

Performance Benchmarks and Indicators

Requirements	Indicative actions
Proof of funding used to support effective deployment of computers provided under the fund.	<p>Government schools are to provide up to date delivery and installation reports.</p> <p>Government authorities are to provide deployment plans and forward installation reports for government schools every six months as outlined in the bilateral agreements.</p>
Achieving a 1:1 ratio of computers by 31 December 2011	<p>The continuing installation reports will allow DEEWR to monitor progress and inform advice to schools.</p>
Addressing leadership in digital learning	<p>Schools have coordinated ICT deployment plans for the provision of infrastructure, learning resources and teacher capability.</p> <p>States and territories have jurisdictional plans for implementation of the DER such that technology can enhance teaching and learning in Australia.</p>
Addressing infrastructure	<p>Students have access to digital resources and networked computers.</p> <p>High speed, affordable network access for schools.</p> <p>National interoperability framework enabling sharing of systems and information between sectors and jurisdictions.</p>
Addressing learning resources	<p>Students undertake challenging and stimulating learning activities making use of e-learning resources and powerful tools for information processing, communication and collaboration.</p> <p>National collaboration across education and training jurisdictions and sectors to share</p>

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	<p>resources and expertise, and to leverage existing initiatives.</p> <p>National model for the supply of e-learning resources supported by interoperability frameworks, appropriate institutional and governance arrangements and commercial providers.</p>
Addressing teacher capability	<p>Teachers are progressively training to update or develop their professional knowledge in the educational use of ICT</p>

- 29 The States and Territories will develop Implementation Plans by 30 September 2009. The Implementation Plan should set out the jurisdictional approach to implementation of the DER, including how education authorities will deploy computers to reach the computer to student ratio of 1:1 by 31 December 2011.
- 30 The Implementation Plans will also describe how the States and Territories, in managing the rollout of the National Secondary School Computer Fund, will seek to facilitate the implementation of the other National Partnerships, particularly the Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities National Partnership, and how they will meet needs of schools in areas of growth and regional areas.
- 31 States and Territories will report to DEEWR on a six monthly basis on their progress towards:
- a) the use of this funding to support effective deployment of computers provided under the fund;
 - b) achieving a 1:1 ratio of computers by 31 December 2011;
 - c) addressing the four strands of change identified in the Strategic Plan to guide the implementation of the DER; and
 - d) collaborating with other States and Territories and the Commonwealth Government to support teacher development in ICT, the development of ICT curriculum tools and developing support mechanisms for schools.

Bilateral Agreements

- 32 At a minimum, Bilateral Agreements will set out the agreed:
- a) Commonwealth payments;

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- b) Monitoring and reporting arrangements to track State implementation and milestones;
- c) Any auditing arrangements that Parties consider necessary to ensure the terms of Bilateral Agreements are being complied with.

Reporting

33 The States will each report to the Commonwealth against the performance benchmarks and timelines, as detailed in the Bilateral Agreements.

Evaluation

34 The Commonwealth will evaluate the progress of reforms implemented through this NP. The evaluation will support program management and monitoring efforts and will inform the MCEETYA (or successor body) on the success of the reforms and how best to sustain them.

35 The broad themes associated with the evaluation of this NP will be informed by advice from AICTEC, and will be guided by the themes for change in the Strategic Plan (see Attachment 3) and will cover:

- a) the ICT development of students;
- b) schools ability to demonstrate effective use of technologies in schools;
- c) evidence of an increased use of technologies by teachers in subject delivery and that the increase in ICT in schools has made an impact;
- d) evidence of changes to teaching practices and learning outcomes for students;
- e) teacher professional development; and
- f) online curriculum development.

PART 5 – FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Funding

36 The DER total funding envelope for this Agreement is set out below.

2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
100	400	300	200	200	200
<i>one to two</i>		<i>one to one</i>		<i>one to one</i>	
		807			
				<i>sustainment</i> →	

37 Funding will be provided under the Bilateral Agreements to education authorities on a per capita basis to reach a computer to student ratio of 1:1 by 31 December 2011.

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- 38 The 2007 Schools Census data will be used to determine the per capita allocation (in accordance with the Schedule to the NEA) with an opportunity for education authorities to provide updated information on an annual basis to DEEWR on school closures, new schools and significant changes to the 2007 Census data.
- 39 After the 1:1 ratio has been reached, funding will be provided to contribute to sustainment to replace additional computers purchased through the Fund after four years.
- 40 Funding for the Fibre Connections to Schools initiative, on-line curriculum and support mechanisms will be managed by DEEWR separately on a project basis and will not be allocated on a per capita basis.
- 41 The following table provides an annual breakdown for State and Territory Governments for the National Secondary School Computer Fund from 2008-09 to 2012-13. The figures are indicative and will be subject to change.

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	TOTAL
	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Profile DER NP Funding-Government Sector	124,100	122,039	63,000	126,000	126,000	561,139
<i>New South Wales</i>	39,638	38,980	20,122	40,245	40,245	179,229
<i>Victoria</i>	29,116	28,632	14,781	29,562	29,562	131,652
<i>Queensland</i>	26,762	26,317	13,586	27,171	27,171	121,007
<i>Western Australia</i>	12,539	12,331	6,365	12,731	12,731	56,696
<i>South Australia</i>	9,223	9,070	4,682	9,364	9,364	41,703
<i>Tasmania</i>	3,343	3,288	1,697	3,394	3,394	15,117
<i>Australian Capital Territory</i>	2,156	2,121	1,095	2,189	2,189	9,750
<i>Northern Territory</i>	1,324	1,302	672	1,344	1,344	5,985

- 42 Education authorities will be advised annually throughout the life of this Agreement on the funding allocation for that year through the Bilateral Agreements and Funding Agreements with the BGAs.

Payment Schedule

- 43 Payments will be authorised by the Commonwealth Treasurer on the advice of the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
- 44 Payments will be made in accordance with the Bilateral Agreements.

PART 6 – GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

- 45 The success of the DER is dependent on effective collaboration, cooperation and strategic partnerships among key stakeholders. Governance arrangements should support:

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- a) strong relationships that ensure ongoing commitment, goodwill and understanding of key expectations, roles and obligations of the parties involved;
 - b) prudent decision making and effective stewardship to achieve maximum benefit and outcomes from DER investment; and
 - c) transparency and accountability.
- 46 COAG has agreed that the Commonwealth Government will “work in partnership with State and Territory governments and education authorities and Catholic and Independent schools sectors, and cooperatively with the higher education and vocational and technical education sectors to implement the DER”. This is put into effect by the following arrangements:
- a) MCEETYA is advised by AICTEC on the implementation of the DER.
 - b) AICTEC provides advice both on cross sectoral issues so that investments in the DER can benefit education as a whole and on strategies to integrate investments in ICT with wider educational objectives. AICTEC will convene cross-sectoral advisory groups that include people with relevant expertise and call on others for advice, as required. It will ensure that its advice takes into account the views of stakeholders as well as work by COAG and MCEETYA on related aspects of the Education Revolution agenda.
 - i AICTEC’s membership covers all jurisdictions and school and educational sectors.
 - ii AICTEC’s role is primarily one of providing advice to MCEETYA, MCVTE, (or their successor bodies) COAG and relevant sub-groups. It will also provide advice to the Commonwealth Government on priorities for utilising the DER funding allocated to support online curriculum resources and digital architecture. AICTEC will liaise closely with MCEETYA and COAG sub-groups to facilitate complementary development of related initiatives.
 - iii AICTEC members proactively contribute to the development of AICTEC’s advice to ensure that the views and requirements of their constituencies have been taken into consideration. AICTEC members ensure that their nominating authority is appraised of the advice that AICTEC provides.
 - c) FLAG will work closely with AICTEC on issues relating to implementing the DER. FLAG’s role will include providing advice to MCVTE on DER implementation issues of relevance to the VET sector.
 - d) National decision making will continue to be the responsibility of COAG, MCEETYA, MCVTE and the Commonwealth Government, as appropriate.

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- e) Cross sectoral, sectoral and jurisdictional decision making continues to be the joint or separate responsibility of Commonwealth, state and territory governments, the Catholic and independent schools sectors and state and territory VET and university authorities, as appropriate.
- 47 Partnerships will also be progressed through ongoing, formal and informal liaison, allowing for variation where appropriate in the roles of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments in the implementation of the various elements of the policy.
- 48 Decisions on some issues, such as funding and procurement, will remain the responsibility of the relevant governments in accordance with agreements by COAG and its Ministerial Councils and may be addressed through individual jurisdictional and school system arrangements.

Dispute Resolution

- 49 Any Party may give notice to other Parties of a dispute under this Agreement.
- 50 The relevant delegates will attempt to resolve any dispute in the first instance.
- 51 If a dispute cannot be resolved between the relevant delegates, it may be referred to MCEETYA (or successor body) for consideration.
- 52 If a dispute cannot be resolved by this Working Group, it may be referred by a Party to COAG for consideration.

Review of the Agreement

- 53 The Parties recognise that given the ambitious nature of this Agreement's reforms, this Agreement will be reviewed in two years.
- 54 Evaluation of specific reforms may also take place by agreement.

Variation of the Agreement

- 55 The agreement may be amended at any time by agreement in writing by all the Parties and under terms and conditions as agreed by all the Parties.
- 56 A Party to the Agreement may terminate their participation in the Agreement at any time by notifying all the other Parties in writing.
- 57 Termination of a Party's participation in this Agreement will also terminate the Bilateral Agreements that the Party has concluded.
- 58 Specific legal governance matters are addressed in the Bilateral Agreements and Conditions of Funding (Section 7 of current Round Two Guidelines).

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Attachment 3: Indicative reporting format for reporting and evaluation

Strategic Plan themes	Strategies	Collaborative National activities	Commonwealth Government initiatives	Education authorities initiatives
Leadership				
Infrastructure				
Learning Resources				
Teacher Capability				