



DFAT / NGO Committee for Development Cooperation

A joint committee of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Australian non-government organisations

Minutes of the 159th Committee for Development Cooperation (CDC)

Meeting held on Tuesday, 25 February 2020, 12:30-2:30pm

DFAT Dobson Room, R.G Casey Building, John McEwen Cres, Barton, Canberra
(hosted by DFAT)

DFAT CDC Representatives

Cheryl Johnson (Chair)
Tanya Pridannikoff (DFAT)
Tim Church (DFAT)
Simon Cann-Evans (DFAT)

NGO Representatives

Ellen Shipley (UnitingWorld)
John Morley (Plan International)
Andrew Hartwich (The Fred Hollows Foundation)
Jessica Waite (International Women's Development Agency)

CDC Secretariat

Rachelle Wood (DFAT)

ACFID Observers

Rebecca Hamilton (ACFID)
Jocelyn Condon (ACFID)

Apologies

Jon Burrough (DFAT)

Item 1. Welcome Remarks

In opening remarks, the Chair Cheryl Johnson:

- Paid respect to the traditional custodians of the land on which the meeting takes place.
- Welcomed interstate participants and Rachelle Wood, new to the Secretariat of the CDC and to DFAT's ANCP accreditation team.
- Acknowledged Sarah Dreese's departure and thanked her in absentia.
- Acknowledged apology from Jon Burrough and noted Tanya Pridannikoff was representing the NGO Programs Performance and Quality Section (NPQ).
- Introduced observers Heather Fitt and Majdie Hordern from DFAT to join later in the agenda.

Conflict of interest check:

- The Chair requested all meeting participants declare any conflicts of interest.
- No conflicts of interests of CDC members and observers were declared.

Item 2. Endorsement of the 158th session Minutes

Discussion: Mr Morley and Ms Shipley raised differences in the draft Minutes circulated by DFAT to CDC members as compared to the draft Minutes circulated by ACFID among NGO CDC members. The draft Minutes were not endorsed.



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Action: DFAT to circulate draft Minutes of the 158th CDC meeting for endorsement, with tracked changes added to ACFID's draft. In future, draft Minutes (by DFAT and by ACFID) are to indicate any changes to the initial draft in tracked changes.

Other Issues

Discussion: Ms Condon asked if the partnership definition had been defined for NGOs (i.e. how accreditation assessors refer to 'partners' and 'partnerships' in their reports).

Action: 'Partnerships' and 'auditors' to be removed from the action items, and DFAT and ACFID to discuss the definition of 'partnership' out of session.

Item 3. Conflict of Interest Paper

Discussion: The Chair thanked Mr Morley and Ms Shipley for providing a revised draft, and thanked Mr Church for providing comments. The Chair sought agreement on key propositions underpinning the Paper:

1. The Paper should have one definition of Conflict of Interest.
2. The Paper should not repeat what is in the CDC ToR.
3. Determining a Conflict of Interest, after a discussion among CDC members, ultimately rests with the Chair.
4. As agreed at 158th CDC meeting, the relevant CDC member should not be involved *for those parts* of the CDC discussion where a conflict has been identified.

The Chair also sought to confirm that CDC members – DFAT and NGO – read all accreditation reports (i.e. there should be no 'division of labour' between members.) CDC members confirmed this. The Chair also confirmed that the Minutes should record how any conflicts of interest are determined (as this information could be requested under Freedom of Information requirements).

Mr Morley noted it was difficult to remain a proactive CDC member when members are asked to leave the room during meetings. The Chair noted DFAT employees are mandated to declare and manage any conflict of interest. All CDC members should similarly adhere to these practises. The Chair noted it was important to understand the Department carried the risks of any non-disclosure and not the individual members. Mr Church noted that DFAT policy no longer refers to 'potential' when defining conflicts of interest. He also noted that the definition of a 'real' conflict may have also been changed recently in the DFAT Conduct and Ethics manual. Mr Hartwich noted that the Paper should reference a review date.



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Action: CDC members endorsed the 'shorter' Paper that was circulated. DFAT is to finalise the Paper to (i) ensure the definition of 'real' conflict reflects that of the DFAT Conduct and Ethics manual; (ii) remove from the third paragraph the words 'known' and 'possible' and to replace these with 'real' and 'apparent' (in line with the DFAT manual); and (iii) include a date when this Paper will be reviewed.

Item 4. Update from DFAT

Terrorism Resourcing

Discussion: Ms Hordern provided a brief update on terrorism resourcing, noting that the Environment Safeguards, Public Finance Management and Aid Risk Section (SRS) remain the DFAT lead. SRS have developed a short video for suppliers (NGOs and others) that provides basic risk management information principles for managing terrorism resourcing risk. The video would be published to the DFAT website and NPQ would share the link with all ANCP NGOs via email and at upcoming ANCP information sessions. SRS advised they intend to develop additional support materials to accompany the existing statement on the DFAT website.

Action: DFAT agreed to circulate the link to the video on managing terrorism resourcing risk to NGOs and CDC members once available.

ANCP Spot Checks

Discussion: Ms Hordern thanked CDC members for their feedback on the ToR for the planned spot checks and acknowledged the short time frame for feedback. She noted that differentiation between accreditation and spot checks remains a priority. Ms Hordern noted the accreditation process checks systems, policies and processes and is not a financial audit process. The spot checks are intended to ensure those systems are in use and that adequate records are maintained. The scope of the risk management check was amended following the NGO CDC representatives' feedback. Ms Hordern confirmed that NPQ's decision to include various safeguards in the spot checks' scope was based on expert advice from DFAT's Audit Branch. Successful contractors performing the spot checks would be briefed by NPQ and DFAT safeguard teams on relevant DFAT policies prior to the commencing spot checks. Following completion of the two planned spot checks, NPQ would share any summary, de-identified findings with the CDC that are relevant to areas where NGOs need additional training or support. Ms Hordern confirmed that NPQ will manage the contract for the spot checks.

Ms Shipley noted that 'audits' and 'spot checks' are not the same. Ms Shipley stated that she had expected to see the next draft of the ToR but understood that it was now final. Mr Church said generally 'audits' assess the processes within an organisation, and that a 'spot check' confirms that a stated process is being used. Ms Hordern confirmed that the spot check process as described by Mr Church is what is intended.



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Action: As part of the spot-check process, DFAT is to note trends over time and feed this information back to the CDC.

DFAT M&E and Program Logic

Discussion: Ms Fitt informed CDC members that the program logic for ANCP had been updated following November 2019 Annual Reflections and was approved at the early 2020 by the new First Assistant Secretary James Gilling. The program logic would soon be published on the DFAT website. On 26 February 2020, DFAT was holding an Indicators working group and would seek volunteers to action/lead on an indicator including SDG indicators. She noted that sector experts within DFAT were consulted during this process.

Mr Morley commended Ms Fitt on the program logic. He noted it provides a clear justification of the ANCP's activities, captures the ANCP's key priorities, values and diversity.

Update on upcoming re-accreditations

Discussion: Ms Pridannikoff provided an update and circulated a schedule of upcoming re-accreditations.

Item 5. Other Issues tabled by NGO Representatives

Discussion: Ms Condon asked if ACFID could contact the re-accrediting to seek NGOs' agreement for ACFID to participate as observers for upcoming ORs. Ms Pridannikoff requested that ACFID notify DFAT following ACFID's approach. Ms Condon said ACFID would approach larger NGOs. The Chair asked Ms Condon to be mindful of the number of observers that could be present during ORs. The Chair noted that it would be important that accrediting and re-accrediting NGOs understand and are comfortable with ACFID participating as an observer in addition to the DFAT observer.

Mr Morley and Ms Waite raised concerns that DFAT had adopted a 'blanket approach' and shared OR reports – with potential commercial in confidence information – without NGO consent. ACFID had asked its members for their views on this issue. NGO members responded that while most NGOs were comfortable with their OR reports being shared, they requested that the ANCP team always seek an ANGO's prior approval. The Chair confirmed the ANCP team did not adopt a blanket approach and it was up to each ANGO whether their OR report was shared.

Item 6. Confirm next CDC Date

Discussion: The Chair advised the next CDC would be held in April 2020. The CDC members agreed the next meeting should be held between 28-30 April 2020.

Action: DFAT will revert back to the CDC members to advice of the next meeting date.