

2011 Humanitarian Action Policy Implementation Plan

Final

23 August 2012

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Introduction

Australia's 2011 Humanitarian Action Policy (HAP) makes a number of commitments to deliver appropriate and effective humanitarian action. This is defined in the HAP as humanitarian action that:

1. Meets the needs of and is accountable to affected populations
2. Supports partner governments and local capacities, including with disaster preparedness
3. Protects the safety, dignity and rights of affected populations
4. Is timely and coordinated
5. Integrates recovery as part of humanitarian action to support longer-term development.

A number of commitments made in the HAP reflect current and ongoing practice that AusAID will continue. As they are ongoing, they are not allocated to years for implementation. Nonetheless, AusAID's success in meeting these commitments will be considered in the review and evaluation of the HAP's implementation.

This Implementation Plan prioritises new or additional work required to deliver the commitments in the HAP. It does not attempt to explain in detail how these commitments will be delivered. This will be decided by the Humanitarian and Stabilisation Division in annual work planning processes.

The Plan adopts a “phasing” model, emphasising different commitments in each financial year. Most of these commitments will require ongoing work throughout the duration of the HAP implementation. However, the “phasing” model determines a year of focus to ensure that AusAID will meet the requirements of each commitment. Progress against implementation will be reviewed every two years.

This plan is in support of the following results Australia has committed to deliver under the HAP, to:

- respond appropriately within 48 hours of a developing country's request for assistance;
- provide life-saving assistance to more than 30 million people in crisis situations by 2016, through effective disaster risk reduction, mine action, conflict prevention and humanitarian action;
- respond effectively to simultaneous disasters; and
- participate in more than 20 exercises and simulations with regional partners.

Summary

Overview of 2011 Humanitarian Action Policy commitments

There are two types of commitments in the 2011 HAP: ongoing commitments and new commitment focal areas. The Implementation Plan will prioritise the new commitment focal areas of the 2011 HAP.

Ongoing commitments

Ongoing commitment focal areas

There are a number of commitments in the 2011 HAP that reflect some of the ongoing, core work required to deliver appropriate and effective humanitarian action. Each of these commitments is detailed at the end of this Implementation Plan, and will be maintained throughout implementation of the 2011 HAP. Broadly, they include:

Preparation for response

Australia is committed to support our near neighbours in the Pacific and Asia to prepare for and respond to crises. We will maintain stand-by mechanisms to enable timely response to crises. Australia will continue to participate in disaster response simulations and exercises, and engage in preparedness exercises that include military and civilian representatives.

Delivery of humanitarian action

AusAID will maintain its leadership role in target areas, and coordinate Australia's humanitarian response. AusAID will respond in support of partner government and affected community priorities. We will provide humanitarian action on the basis of need and respect our partners' adherence to humanitarian principles. We will be informed by international guidelines, including when working with the military, and use military logistical capabilities when this is the best response to the challenge.

Protection

Australia will support protection activities that align with internationally accepted guidelines, and those that address gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health. We will prioritise the safety and dignity of affected populations.

Early recovery

Australia's humanitarian action takes a holistic approach to longer-term recovery and building resilience.

Learning and accountability

Australia will continually improve our own humanitarian action procedures.

Australia's capacity

The delivery of the HAP will draw on and be coordinated with other relevant Australian Government partners.

New commitments

Level of focus:	1 (year of priority)	2	3	4			
Commitment focal area		FY11/12	FY12/13	FY13/14	FY14/15	FY15/16	FY16/17
Planning for implementation, monitoring and evaluation	1						
Protection p23, 40, 47¹	4	1	2	2	3	4	
Accountability to affected communities p26, 38, 49	4	1	2	2	3	4	
Ability to respond effectively to simultaneous disasters p2, 36	4	1	2	2	3	4	
Humanitarian reform p22, 46	4	1	2	2	3	4	
AusAID staff capacity / Support for AusAID country programs p52	4	1	2	2	3	4	
Increased participation of Australian government agencies	4	1	2	2	3	4	
Gender, including sex and age disaggregated data p11, 26, 40, 49	4	2	1	2	3	4	
Early recovery p41	4	2	1	2	3	4	
Advocate for, and earmark funding to protection p23, 40, 47	4	2	1	2	3	4	
2 year review at end of 2013, report and discussion with partners p54, 55	4	2	1	2	3	4	
Whole-of-government capacity p6, 52	4	2	1	2	3	4	
Increased engagement of more countries in international humanitarian dialogue p51	4	2	1	2	3	4	
Research for innovation p46		3	2	1	2	3	
People living with a disability p26, 49		3	2	1	2	3	
Partners deliver appropriate and effective humanitarian action p38		3	2	1	2	3	
Evaluation of Australia's response, jointly where possible p54		3	2	1	2	3	
Investigate new funding mechanisms for different types of crisis p37		3	2	1	2	3	
Support Asian and Pacific regional organisations to shape/lead improved humanitarian action p26, 34		3	2	1	2	3	

¹ Numbers refer to page numbers of the 2011 Humanitarian Action Policy where the commitment is discussed

Civil-military understanding p28, 51	4	4	3	2	1	2
4 year review/evaluation at end of 2015, report and discussion with partners				2	1	
Draft new Humanitarian Action Policy				2	1	
Launch new Humanitarian Action Policy 2016						1

2011-2016 New Commitments

Financial Year 2012-13

New Commitments

Protection:

- Australia will develop a protection framework, in cooperation with partners, to guide Australia's protection work.
- Australia will continue to support mandated protection agencies and increase engagement with NGOs to improve protection.

Accountability to communities:

- Australia will support humanitarian action that builds on the existing skills and capacities of the affected community and involves them in the planning, delivering and evaluating humanitarian action.
- Australia will support agencies that improve the accountability and inclusivity of humanitarian action
- Australia will support efforts to improve accountability to affected populations.

Responding to simultaneous disasters:

- Australia will strengthen its ability to respond effectively to simultaneous disasters.

Humanitarian reform:

- Australia will continue to support humanitarian reform efforts to improve the cluster system, leadership, financing and partnerships.
- Australia will advocate at international forums and donor support group meetings for continuous improvement and accountability of the humanitarian system.

Australia's capacity (AusAID):

- Build the capacity of AusAID staff to develop, deliver and monitor programs that prepare for, respond to and recover from crises in line with the HAP
- Increase support provided to AusAID country programs in addressing humanitarian policy issues and promote understanding of the linkages with other relevant AusAID policies and guidance.

Australia's capacity (whole of government):

- Increase the participation of the Australian Government, including state and territory government agencies, in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

How new commitments will be implemented for 2012 – 2013

Roles

Humanitarian Emergency Response sections focus on *operations*: operational preparedness, capacity building AusAID for rapid response, responding to emergencies, and partnerships with other Australian government agencies, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the Australian Red Cross and other Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and non-government organisations.

The Humanitarian Policy and Partnerships section focuses on *policy*: developing and advising on policy, advocacy, partnerships with multilaterals and specialised agencies to achieve policy objectives.

The Multilateral Posts (Geneva, New York and Rome) represent AusAID at relevant humanitarian forums, are the front line for our multilateral and specialised partnerships, inform Canberra of humanitarian dialogue at Post and advise Canberra on policy issues.

Protection

The strategic focus on protection is new to AusAID. AusAID's work on protection in humanitarian action will be informed by the development of a protection framework.

AusAID will develop this framework in cooperation with partners in 2012-13, starting with consultations on a concept paper which will inform finalisation of the framework. AusAID will consult whole-of-government partners, non-government organisations through the protection working group of the humanitarian reference group and multilateral partners. This work has already begun. Throughout 2012-13, we will continue to support mandated protection agencies and increase engagement with NGOs to improve protection. The Humanitarian Policy and Partnerships section of AusAID will lead this work.

Accountability to Communities

As outlined in the 2011 Humanitarian Action Policy, being accountable to crisis-affected communities in developing countries is very important to effective and appropriate humanitarian action – and also very challenging. In the first year of implementation, AusAID will focus on building preparedness capacity at the community level, and working with partners to improve the accountability and inclusivity of humanitarian action. This includes continuing to fund organisations that focus on improved accountability. We will advocate with our partners to improve accountability to humanitarian action and explore options for the best way to support them in this endeavour. We also plan to build the capacity of AusAID itself to understand and monitor accountability to communities in humanitarian action.

Accountability to communities has strong links to many other aspects of our humanitarian action. For example, it may form a part of the protection framework (as accountability to communities is essential to inform humanitarian action that is able to protect communities), and humanitarian reform will improve the accountability of the humanitarian system to communities.

The Humanitarian Policy and Partnerships section will lead international advocacy and specialised programming on accountability, while the Humanitarian Emergency Response sections will lead engagement with the International Federation of the Red Cross and NGOs.

Ability to respond effectively to simultaneous disasters

The Humanitarian Emergency Response sections will lead improvements in AusAID capacity to ensure we are able to respond effectively to simultaneous disasters. In 2012-13, this will include streamlining relevant AusAID corporate systems, improving the surge capacity of AusAID's rapid response team, developing and implementing a logistics framework, enhancing our facilities for rapid response, strengthening our stand-by mechanisms and relationships with our response programs and partners, and working with whole of government and other international partners in building international response capability. AusAID will also look to build the capacity of country programs and its senior executive in humanitarian response as part of effective and appropriate humanitarian action. We will also continue to exercise our systems for readiness, including with whole of government, regional organisations and other partners.

Humanitarian Reform

The Humanitarian Policy and Partnerships section will lead policy and partnership engagement on humanitarian reform, together with our multilateral posts. The Emergency Response sections will work with partners on humanitarian reform at an operational level. In 2012-13, AusAID will engage in global advocacy on humanitarian reform, through international forums, dialogue and high-level meetings with multilateral partners. We will work closely with country programs in Canberra and at Post to identify and advocate for real progress on humanitarian reform at country and regional levels, and will assess our partners through AusAID's annual multilateral scorecard assessment process. Earmarked funding will be considered for appropriate initiatives. Strong links exists between humanitarian reform and the Australian government's priority on effective aid and saving lives.

AusAID Staff and Country Capacity

AusAID will build internal capacity on humanitarian action. In 2012-13 this will include training and guidance on a broader range of humanitarian issues, and for a broader range of internal participants. There will be an increased focus on developing the capacity of country program staff, and providing targeted and consistent technical advice across the agency. Humanitarian monitoring and evaluation will be a key theme. In line with the agency focus on results reporting, AusAID will develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to support the performance assessment framework in the HAP and AusAID annual reporting under the Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework.

Increased participation of other Australian government agencies

At the strategic level, AusAID will continue to improve its engagement with Government partners on relevant issues, particularly through such mechanisms as the AusASSISTPLAN and the Australian Government Deployment Working Group. At the operational level,

AusAID will seek additional opportunities to work with Government partners through desktop exercises and provide humanitarian leadership in whole of government partner activities. These may include exercises conducted by the Australian Defence Force, health training and deployments, and rapid response training.

Financial Year 2013-14

New Commitment

Gender (and age):

- Australia is committed to gender equality in humanitarian action.
- Australia will promote humanitarian action that equally meets the needs of women, girls, boys and men and includes their active participation in its planning and implementation.
- Australia will increase disaggregation of data by sex so we can better plan for and understand the impacts of humanitarian action.
- Data will be collected from implementing partners that articulates how assistance is provided by sex and age.

Early recovery:

- Australia supports early recovery activities through advocacy, funding and programming.
- We work to ensure DRR informs decision making in recovery efforts to improve a country's resilience to future disasters.

Protection:

- Australia will continue to be a strong advocate for protection internationally. Australia will promote respect for international humanitarian, refugee and human rights law.
- Australia will earmark funding to strengthen protection in crises where this is substantially underfunded

Learning and accountability:

- Australia will measure implementation of the Humanitarian Action Policy every two years and publish a summary report on AusAID's website.
- Australia will discuss the biennial summary report of Australia's humanitarian action with partners to inform improvement.
- Australia will identify improvements and update the policy's Implementation Plan based on the summary report, discussions with partners and AusAID priorities.

Australia's capacity:

- Australia will promote awareness and understanding of the Humanitarian Action Policy to improve coordination and policy coherence between AusAID and other Australian Government agencies.
- An important aim of this policy is effective coordination and policy coherence between AusAID and whole-of-government partners.

Increased engagement of more countries:

- Australia will encourage more countries to engage in international discussion on humanitarian issues.
- Australia will support our partners to work with a broader range of countries in dialogue on humanitarian policy and operational issues.

Financial Year 2014-2015

New Commitment

People living with disability:

- Australia also promotes the need for access and inclusion of people living with a disability in humanitarian action.
- Australia advocates for the protection and inclusion of people living with a disability, including those with mental disorder.

Partners deliver appropriate and effective humanitarian action:

- AusAID will work with our partners to ensure that they deliver appropriate, effective, coordinated and accountable humanitarian action.

Learning and accountability:

- Australia commits to using its performance reviews to continuously improve the way we deliver humanitarian action.
- Australia will share lessons with other donors and humanitarian partners.
- Australia will evaluate its humanitarian response, jointly where possible.
- The quality of Australia's humanitarian response to specific emergencies will also be assessed, through a humanitarian monitoring and evaluation framework.
- Independent evaluations of Australia's humanitarian response will be considered for major disasters.

Investigate new funding mechanisms for different types of crisis:

- Australia will provide funding appropriate to the crisis: -
 - contribute responsibly to well-managed joint funds,
 - fund slow-onset crises early and
 - support multi-year funding to protracted crises.
- Predictable and flexible funding in line with GHD

Regional organisations:

- Australia will support Asian and Pacific regional organisations to shape, and where possible lead, improved international humanitarian action.

Research and innovation:

- Australia will support research into innovative approaches to strengthen humanitarian action.

Financial Year 2015-2016

New Commitment

Civil-military interaction:

- Australia will support initiatives that strengthen understanding between humanitarian organisations, the military and police, both in Australia and overseas.
- Australia will advocate for strengthened civil-military understanding in regional and global forums.

Learning and accountability:

- Australia will measure implementation of the Humanitarian Action Policy every two years and publish a summary report on AusAID's website.
- Australia will discuss the biennial summary report of Australia's humanitarian action with partners to inform improvement.

Draft new Humanitarian Action Policy

2011-2016 Ongoing Commitments

Ongoing commitments

Delivery of humanitarian action

- AusAID will lead and coordinate Australian Government humanitarian response in developing countries to ensure our activities provide appropriate and effective relief
- AusAID will coordinate Australia's humanitarian response with key humanitarian actors, including the national government, civil society and international humanitarian partners.
- Australia provides humanitarian action on the basis of need and respects the independence, impartiality and neutrality of our humanitarian partners.
- When working with the military, Australia's response is informed by international guidelines on humanitarian civil military interaction. We use the logistical capabilities of the ADF when this is the best response to the challenge. In determining whether to use civilian or military capabilities in response, Australia assesses which will provide the best outcomes. Our first preference is to respond using our purpose trained, dedicated civilian capability or to support humanitarian partners on the ground.
- Australia supports coordinated humanitarian action that complements the efforts of partner governments aiming to protect and help their citizens. AusAID will respond in support of partner government and community priorities. Where a government lacks the capacity and/or the political will to support affected populations Australia may work with partners to meet the affected population's needs.

Protection

- Australia will support protection activities that align with internationally accepted guidelines
- Australia will support initiatives addressing gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health in humanitarian crises
- Australia will prioritise the safety and dignity of affected populations. Australia's humanitarian action has, at its core, protecting the safety, dignity and rights of the most vulnerable. Australia has a long-standing commitment to the protection of people affected by conflict or natural disasters.
- The Australian Government, led by the Department of Defence, works closely with organisations such as the United Nations and African Union to protect civilians through peacekeeping operations.
- Australia is a supporter of the responsibility to protect concept.
- Australia also supports social protection measure

Early recovery

- Australia's humanitarian action takes a holistic approach to longer-term recovery and building resilience.

Preparation for response

- Australia is committed to support our near neighbours in the Pacific and Asia to prepare for and respond to crises.
- Australia will maintain stand-by mechanisms to enable timely response to crises. AusAID maintains standing agreements with Australian NGOs and the Australian Red Cross so we are prepared to quickly fund humanitarian response activities.
- Australia will continue to participate in disaster response simulations and exercises with humanitarian partners and the ADF.

Learning and accountability

- Australia will continually improve our own humanitarian action procedures. Australia will engage in disaster preparedness exercises that include military and civilian representatives.

Australia's capacity

- The delivery of the Humanitarian Action Policy will be coordinated with relevant Australian Government partners and policies. An important aim of this policy is effective coordination and policy coherence between AusAID and whole-of-government partners.

Additional Commitments: Mine Action and Disaster Risk Reduction

The delivery of the HAP is coordinated with other Australian Government policies. Among these, two have particular links with the HAP and are delivered by key sections within the Humanitarian Preparedness and Response Branch:

- “Mine Action Strategy for the Australian aid program: Towards a world free from landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war (2010-2014)”, which covers Australia’s commitment and approach to mine action
- “Investing in a Safer Future: a Disaster Risk Reduction policy for the Australian aid program (2009)”, which covers Australia’s commitment and approach to the prevention and mitigation of disaster risk;

Mine Action and Disaster Risk Reduction units in the Disaster Prevention and Risk Reduction Section deliver on these policies respectively.

This section outlines the key objectives of these policies, and the actions that are being undertaken to achieve them.

Implementation of Australia's Mine Action Program

Australia is a strong supporter of mine action and is currently ranked as the sixth largest mine action donor globally. Australia's Mine Action Strategy guides mine action support for the Australian Aid Program 2010-2014. In support of the strategy, Australia pledged \$100 million over the five years from 2010 to 2014 to work towards a world free from landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. This brings Australia's support for mine action to over \$275 million since signing the Mine Ban Convention in 1997.

Australia's goal – to reduce the threat and socio-economic impact of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war – is being achieved by targeting the following four outcomes:

- improved quality of life for victims – including survivors and their affected families and communities
- reduced number of deaths and injuries
- enhanced capacity of countries to manage their mine action programs
- effective leadership and advocacy by Australia on mine action.

The strategy continues Australia's focus on assisting heavily-affected countries in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as priority countries in the Middle East and Africa, with flexibility to respond to emerging priorities. Australia's mine action is delivered primarily through bilateral aid programs and targets partner government mine action priorities and contributes to other development priorities including the Millennium Development Goals. Australia also contributes to the work of multilateral bodies, such as the United Nations, and of Australian and international non-government organisations engaged in mine action at country, regional and international levels.

Australia is currently the Chair of the Mine Action Support Group, the peak donor mine action group for the two-year period 2011 to 2013. As Chair, Australia is working to enhance donor coordination and assistance in mine action.

A Mid-Term Review of Australia's Mine Action Strategy (June 2012) found the Strategy is being successfully implemented and that the Strategy remains relevant and consistent with Australia's overall aid priorities and approach. The Review made seventeen recommendations that AusAID has accepted and will implement through the remainder of the Strategy period.

Implementation of Australia's Disaster Risk Reduction Policy

Disaster events over the past decade have claimed over a million lives, affected more than 2.5 billion people and caused economic loss totalling over \$1 trillion. Australia is committed to reducing the burden of disasters on developing countries, and is a leading donor on disaster risk reduction. Australia takes a holistic approach to longer-term recovery and building resilience, working to ensure DRR informs decision making in recovery efforts to improve a country's resilience to future disasters. Australia's disaster risk reduction (DRR) policy, *Investing in a Safer Future*, commits the Australian aid program to integrating disaster risk considerations into its projects in developing countries that are prone to natural hazards. The goal of the DRR policy is reduced vulnerability and enhanced resilience of countries and communities to disasters, which is being achieved by targeting four outcomes:

- integration of disaster risk reduction into the Australian aid program
- strengthening of the capacity of partner countries to reduce disaster risks in-line with the Hyogo Framework for Action
- supporting and enhancing leadership and advocacy on disaster risk reduction
- developing coherent and coordinated policies and programming for disaster risk reduction

Australia's disaster risk reduction expenditure has grown considerably in recent years, to over \$100m in 2010-11. Key country partners include Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Pacific Island countries. Australia has deepened engagement in policy development with the main international actors in DRR and is among top donors to both of the main global players in disaster risk reduction. Currently we are the 7th largest bilateral and 9th largest overall donor to the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR); and the 3rd largest bilateral and 4th largest overall donor to the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR).

In support of the policy, Australia pledged \$100 million over the five years from 2012 to 2017 to assist countries to reduce their vulnerability to disasters. This funding will assist regional institutions and national governments to implement their priorities for disaster risk reduction.

A recent internal review of Australia's DRR policy found that Australia is tracking well to achieving the goals of its DRR policy. Noteworthy recent achievements include: Australia's prominence at the 2011 Global Platform for DRR; co-chairing of the GFDRR through 2011; co-chairing of the Friends of DRR group at the UN in New York ; and Australia being one of few countries to be represented on UNISDR's advisory panel on the post 2015 international framework for DRR.