

**AFRICA PROGRAM REPORT**  
**JOINT REVIEW OF ADVISER POSITIONS FUNDED BY THE AUSTRALIAN AID PROGRAM**

## Overview

[A Joint Adviser Review Report](#) was released on 15 February 2011, which provided a synthesis of the findings and key recommendations from individual country reviews, including country specific adviser figures and narrative.

Australia worked bilaterally with a large number of partner country governments to review each adviser position. While the underlying Review methodology and the core content of country-specific reports is consistent across programs, in each case the final country-specific Review Report reflects decisions made by the joint Review teams as appropriate for the specific cultural and language context. As a result there are some presentational differences between reports.

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the joint Review process undertaken between the relevant Governments of Africa and Australia. This Report has been amended to ensure AusAID does not breach its privacy obligations related to individuals and/or relative to information considered sensitive to bilateral relationships.

It is important to note that the Review process involved an assessment of the value and effectiveness of each adviser position – not the performance of individuals in those positions. The Review focused on the role of each position in meeting agreed country program objectives and development outcomes. On the basis of this assessment, the continued funding of adviser positions by AusAID was jointly considered and agreed with partner governments.

## 1. Executive Summary

In AusAID's Africa Program, four (4) advisers met the criteria for review as part of this report. In all cases, the positions are deemed important, and defensible, and the Program's recommendation is that they be continued.

Africa is an emerging program, with a number of initiatives either in design or early stages of implementation. The use of advisers to this point has been limited, however it is envisaged that as the aid program in Africa develops and matures, there is likely to be an increasing demand for advisers from our partners. The key mechanism for deploying technical assistance (including advisers) in Africa is the newly established Australia Africa Partnerships Facility. The Facility design includes processes for considering all technical assistance options, not just advisers, before deciding on the most effective and value for money approach to achieve agreed nationally-focused outcomes.

## 2. Background and the Africa Program Context

The use of advisers in the Africa Program over the last three years has been limited. Where advisers have been contracted, their services have generally been short-term in nature, and therefore not included in the Review.

The Program's experience with the few long-term advisers that it has contracted to date has largely been positive, and the adviser positions have generated goodwill in partner countries.

In some instances (for example, in the Seychelles) an advisory position represents the most important component of Australia's ODA engagement with a country and fulfils an important role in these countries. Terminating such positions would not go unnoticed.

A focus for the Africa Program is its responsiveness. The majority of adviser positions, both long and short-term, have been created in direct or indirect response to requests from partners. Alternate forms of assistance have been, and will continue to be, considered when formulating responses to future requests. It is expected, however, that in some circumstances advisers will continue to represent the most appropriate response.

In undertaking this review, there has been no systematic consultation with governments. Many African countries receive development or humanitarian assistance from Australia. No single African country has more than one long-term adviser in it at the current time. In such circumstances, it would not be practicable, nor would it make good sense, to undertake consultations with all of these countries. Rather, the program has consulted with partner governments where the focus of the advisor has been on a single country.

### 3. Review Findings

#### 3.1. Current use of Advisers in the Africa Program

Four advisers meet the criteria and have been reviewed as part of this report:

- One adviser is based in Zimbabwe to provide technical expertise and advice to the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA). The position supports critical reforms being undertaken by the Zimbabwe Finance Ministry and overseen by the Hon Tendai Biti, Minister of Finance in Zimbabwe's Inclusive Government. Funded under the Zimbabwe Country Program, the ZIMRA Assistance Program has been established in response to a direct request from ZIMRA and the Ministry of Finance.
- One adviser is based in Sierra Leone to undertake detailed assessments and provide reporting on peace-building efforts in the country. The position is in support of Australia's one-year term (2010) on the UN Peacebuilding Commission and the peace-building assistance that Australia has committed to Sierra Leone.
- One adviser, a public servant on secondment to AusAID, is based in the Seychelles and is working in-line with the Seychelles Ministry of Finance on an IMF Reform Package. The position was established in response to a direct request from the Seychelles Government.
- One adviser is based in South Africa, and is engaged as Team Leader for the contractor managing the Australia Awards for Africa Program. The position provides leadership and oversight for the delivery of the program across a range of African countries

### 4. Recommendations

#### 4.1. Commitment to adviser positions

Seychelles: *The advisory position should remain in place, as planned, until November 2011.*

The advisory position in Seychelles was created to strengthen the Ministry of Finance's capacities in public financial management and control and analysis, particularly in relation to taxation. The advisory position was initially forecasted to last 12-months, however following a request from the (then) Seychelles Minister of Finance, the advisory position was recently extended, as agreed by (then) Foreign Minister, Mr Smith. The position is scheduled to finish in November 2011.

The IMF, the Government of Seychelles and DFAT Port Louis have confirmed to AusAID, in positive terms, the usefulness of the position and the positive impacts it is having on the Seychelles' Ministry of Finance. The IMF noted the 'remarkable improvement in Seychelles' macroeconomic and revenue forecasting capacity' resulting from the Australian assistance. It views the extension as a good investment for the aid program. The Seychelles Government has provided, in writing, detailed information on the impacts of the assistance provided so far through the advisory position.

By extending the position until November 2011 the parties agree that long-term sustainability can be assured. It will also allow for knowledge-sharing with other African countries.

Sierra Leone: *The advisory position should continue, and possibly be extended*

In July 2010, a Peacebuilding Adviser position was created in Sierra Leone for a period of nine months to undertake more detailed assessments and reporting on peace-building efforts in Sierra Leone. The position is in support of Australia's one-year term (2010) on the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the peace-building assistance that Australia has been committed to Sierra Leone.

DFAT Accra confirmed that the position has contributed positively to Australia's engagement in the work of the PBC.

DFAT UN New York has confirmed the usefulness of the position, and believes it constitutes an effective use of ODA. DFAT UN New York explained that having first-hand knowledge of the situation on the ground allows Australia to make informed judgements about how best to engage in peace-building efforts in Sierra Leone.

DFAT Accra and DFAT UN NY believe the position should continue to be based in Freetown. The benefit of having a presence on the ground in Freetown, and to be seen to be engaged in peace-building issues on a full-time basis in Freetown, cannot be underestimated.

An extension of the position would allow further detailed follow-up and negotiation on delivery of Australia's \$1.5 million peace-building commitment to Sierra Leone.

Zimbabwe: *The advisory position should remain in place*

The objectives of the position are to: help improve the efficiency, effectiveness and professionalism of Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA); and increase revenue collection through measures to stimulate greater voluntary compliance. The advisory position was created to: coordinate the day-to-day aspects of ZIMRA Assistance Program delivery; identify technical expertise; coordinate the activities of technical assistance personnel and trainers; and undertake specialist consultancy tasks.

The position is critical for delivery of a program responding directly to the needs of reform elements in Zimbabwe's Inclusive Government, and that it has strong support from DFAT Harare. Australia's technical assistance for taxation administration is being provided in response to an explicit request from the Office of the Minister of Finance, and is supporting increased revenue collection, a major priority for Zimbabwe's recovery after a decade of economic decline.

An independent review in November 2010 reported that all stakeholders in the ZIMRA Assistance Program had unanimously confirmed that: a) the program was effective and meeting the needs of all stakeholders; and b) it was mobilising technical resources appropriate to ZIMRA's needs. Continuation of the Operational Team Leader position is

recommended because it involves specialist expertise specifically requested by the Inclusive Government, which is beyond AusAID's own capacity to provide directly.

While the incumbent is completing his contract in December, AusAID will proceed to engage a new Operational Team Leader on a long-term basis to allow the ZIMRA Assistance Program to continue as designed, consistent with the recommendations of a recent review mission. The Commissioner General of ZIMRA has confirmed his support for a suitably qualified person to be Operational Team Leader and coordinate technical assistance under the ZIMRA Assistance Program.

Africa-Wide: *The advisory position should remain in place.*

The Pretoria-based Team Leader position with the managing contractor of the Australia Awards for Africa Program provides management and oversight of the day-to-day running of the Program.

The position is essential for running the Program, which currently offers Awards to 40 countries. The alternative would be for AusAID to utilise its own staff, which AusAID has neither the available resources nor necessary expertise to do.

As a result of a recent design of the expanded Australia Awards for Africa program, the Team Leader position was re-affirmed as an essential part for the delivery of the program. The design carefully considered resource needs for delivering a program across the African continent and identified key positions that would be necessary for the delivery of the program. A contract for delivery of the expanded program is yet to be signed; as such the new Team Leader position is not yet filled.

#### 4.2. Implications

Given that we recommend continuing with all four adviser positions, the findings of this investigation have limited implications for the Program and affirm the processes that have been undertaken by the program in deciding whether or not to use advisors.

The Adviser Review does have particular relevance for managers of the Australia Africa Partnerships Facility. The Facility has been designed as a responsive mechanism that provides focused, short-to-medium-term assistance (maximum two years). Capacity building through the provision of technical assistance is one of the ways support can be provided through the Facility.

The Facility design includes processes for considering all technical assistance options, not just advisers, before deciding on the most effective and value for money approach to achieve agreed nationally-focused outcomes. The contractor for the Facility and AusAID staff will maintain an awareness of the sensitivities around use of advisers and utilise alternate forms of assistance where most appropriate.

#### 4.3. Agreed mechanisms for discussing and managing future requests for advisers

A managing contractor will be taking over the day-to-day management of the Australia Africa Partnerships Facility in late-2010/early-2011. A tender process has been completed for the contractor but a contract is yet to be signed. Briefing of the contractor once the contract is signed will include discussions around the appropriate use of advisers.

Furthermore, the contractor for the Facility will need to ensure its own management structures are in-line with AusAID's adviser guidelines.

AusAID officers working on sectoral and country programs are also engaged on the need to limit the use of advisers going forward. Managers of the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Program, for example, have reviewed their future advisory needs. Emphasis will be placed on the use of in-house expertise, particularly the use of AusAID Health Advisers, where possible. As a result the program's advisory needs are not expected to be substantial.

Future requests for advisers in the Zimbabwe program will be discussed and managed by AusAID Harare Post in consultation with Canberra within the context of Australia's policy. Any further adviser deployments will continue to have regard to value-for-money and program resource constraints and best practice approaches to development in fragile states.

### 5. Next Steps

Given that the Africa Program is recommending that existing advisory positions continue, no specific next-steps ('Phase 2' activities) have been identified.

### 6. Lessons Learned

No instances of inappropriate use of advisers have been identified in this investigation, so "lessons learned" are non-specific. The exercise is a reminder to officers of the need for critical analysis with respect to contracting of advisers as the program scales up, but also affirms the processes that have been undertaken by the program to date in deciding whether or not to use advisers.