



# AID PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORTS (APPRs) - 2019 GOOD PRACTICE NOTE

## 1 OVERVIEW

Aid program performance reporting is the principal mechanism used in DFAT to assess the performance of country and regional aid programs. APPRs provide evidence-based assessments of progress against Australia's aid objectives as set out in Aid Investment Plans (AIPs) and are used to improve effectiveness and strengthen program management.

APPRs facilitate transparency and accountability at the country and regional program level and are an important tool for communicating aid program results to the Australian public. The reporting process also provides an opportunity to discuss program performance with partner governments. Reports should be balanced, covering both achievements and challenges, and have a strong evidence base.

APPRs cover all significant Australian official development assistance (ODA) to a country or region, not just DFAT administered ODA. A peer review of APPRs is required for all programs with total ODA of \$50 million and above. APPRs are to be published by **20 September 2019**.

The APPR process is an opportunity to build a shared team understanding of changes in context, evidence of progress against program objectives, and appropriate management actions. A well-facilitated APPR process is important for maximising management value out of the time invested and can assist staff to lift their gaze from the operational to the strategic; beyond the investment as an end in itself to the investment as a component of a larger strategy.

Where AIPs have been updated during the year under review, these changes should be noted in the APPR. Any questions can be directed to [qualityreports@dfat.gov.au](mailto:qualityreports@dfat.gov.au).

## 2 APPR REQUIREMENTS

APPR requirements are proportional to the size and risk profile of the country or region.

Programs with total ODA **below \$15 million** are exempt from producing an APPR unless the relevant First Assistant Secretary (FAS) requests that a summary APPR be produced.

Programs with total ODA of **\$15 -49 million** publish a [summary APPR](#) on the DFAT website.

Programs with total ODA **\$50 million and above** publish a [full APPR](#) on the DFAT website.

APPR requirements for country/regional programs are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: APPR Requirements for 2018-2019

Total Australian ODA by partner country and region	2018-19 Budget Estimate (AUDm)	APPR Requirements*
Papua New Guinea	578.0	<b>\$300m and above</b> Full APPR 25 page max
Indonesia	331.3	
Pacific Regional	278.6	<b>\$50m – \$299m</b> Full APPR 15 page max
Solomon Islands	198.3	
Sub-Saharan Africa	121.6	
Timor-Leste	95.7	
Bangladesh	90.6	
Myanmar	83.0	
Philippines	82.8	
Afghanistan	82.1	
Cambodia	79.7	
Vietnam	78.0	
Vanuatu	63.0	
Pakistan	52.0	
Fiji	51.0	
Laos	43.8	<b>\$15m - \$49m</b> Summary APPR 6 pages
Palestinian Territories	38.3	
Samoa	34.0	
ASEAN and Mekong	33.7	
Nepal	29.3	
Tonga	28.9	
Kiribati	27.4	
Sri Lanka	27.3	
Nauru	26.7	
Regional South and West Asia	24.3	
Mongolia	11.9	<b>Below \$15m</b> Exempt from APPR unless requested by relevant FAS
North Pacific	9.5	
Tuvalu	9.0	
Bhutan	7.1	
Niue and Tokelau	3.9	
Maldives	3.4	
Cook Islands	3.3	

\* Page limits exclude the cover page and annexes.

## 3 KEY STEPS IN PREPARING AN APPR

### DRAFTING

The focus when drafting APPRs is on assessing performance against program objectives as set out in Aid Investment Plans and setting out management actions to address significant issues/risks. In addition, there is considerable scope within the APPR peer review process and templates to discuss a broad range of issues relevant to performance. For example, the Key Messages and Progress against AIP Objectives sections of the APPR document can be used to highlight how programs have achieved influence.

In assessing progress against program objectives, APPRs should explicitly reference progress against the country and regional program's 2018-19 Performance Assessment Framework indicators and milestones, including performance benchmarks in AIPs. Where a 2018-19 PAF does not exist, the basis for measuring performance must be made clear (usually a combination of performance benchmarks and investment level monitoring and evaluation frameworks).

Aid objective progress ratings need adequate explanation and justification. This can be achieved by

- setting out clearly where expectations were met and where not
- directly referencing progress against Performance Benchmarks and other Performance Assessment Framework milestones/indicators that provide a credible basis for determining progress towards the achievement of the aid objective at the end of the AIP
- outlining achievements and challenges i.e. not just a listing of achievements
- ensuring that the progress assessment is informed by an evidence base that draws on a range of sources including independent evaluations (with footnotes being a useful way of indicating data sources)
- Identifying management actions to strengthen program effectiveness and management for the following 12 months is a requirement of APPRs. Management actions should be clearly linked to the progress against objectives ratings and narrative, particularly any objectives rated amber or red, and the identified risks to future progress. Management actions should be specific, time-bound and with clear responsibilities assigned for implementation.


All programs of \$50 million and above are required to include a Performance Assessment Framework that covers 2019-20 at Annex E of their APPR. Programs between \$15 million and \$50 million will continue to use a combination of performance benchmarks and investment level monitoring and evaluation frameworks as the basis for assessing performance for 2019-20. Performance assessment frameworks and benchmarks should be discussed with specialist areas such as MPB and sector/thematic groups during APPR drafting.

### PEER REVIEW

A peer review meeting is **mandatory** for programs with ODA of \$50 million and above. Peer review meetings should be chaired at the SES level.

The peer review process aims to ensure that assessment and reporting of program performance is robust and credible and that suitable management actions are identified and implemented. Peer review meetings should ensure that PAFs and performance benchmarks are well-defined and credible. Comments on draft APPRs, including drafting suggestions and appropriateness of ratings, should be sought from relevant areas including MPB, ODE and sectoral/thematic specialists in advance of the peer review meeting.

The peer review meeting should be used to focus on strategic issues and management actions. They should not be used as drafting sessions. Representatives from MPB ([qualityreports@dfat.gov.au](mailto:qualityreports@dfat.gov.au)), Office of Development Effectiveness ([ode@dfat.gov.au](mailto:ode@dfat.gov.au)) and Gender Equality Branch must be invited to peer review



meetings. Other participants are at the discretion of the Chair and invited on the basis of contributing to a strategic-level discussion. Senior level involvement from relevant thematic groups is encouraged.

## APPROVAL AND PUBLICATION

After **endorsement** by Head of Mission, final APPRs are **approved** for public release by the relevant FAS. It is the responsibility of each FAS to ensure that final ratings are consistent with evidence provided and comments received from peer review feedback. The FAS also ensures that APPRs do not exceed their maximum page limits.

To meet the publication date of 20 September 2019, final approved APPRs should be sent to Digital Production Section (DRS), Communications and Parliamentary Branch, no later than Tuesday 17 September 2019. DRS will also require:

- an accessible word version of the APPR ((information on DFAT accessibility requirements can be found [here](#))
- a short 1-2 paragraph summary for the landing page of the APPR ((see example landing page [here](#)) and
- the approving officer's name.

Final APPRs sent to DRS ([internet.publishing@dfat.gov.au](mailto:internet.publishing@dfat.gov.au)) should also be copied to MPB ([qualityreports@dfat.gov.au](mailto:qualityreports@dfat.gov.au)) and ODE ([ode@dfat.gov.au](mailto:ode@dfat.gov.au)).

## ODA DELIVERED BY OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

As far as possible, APPRs reflect all significant Australian ODA in a country or region, not only that delivered by DFAT. Program areas are responsible for collecting other government department (OGD) performance information and a practical, proportionate approach is recommended. APPRs should not attempt to comprehensively cover all aid delivered by OGDs. Rather, they should focus only on major financial and/or strategic investments. All statistics on OGD expenditure should be confirmed by the ODA Statistics and Reporting section ([aidstatsinquiries@dfat.gov.au](mailto:aidstatsinquiries@dfat.gov.au)).

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

For further information and advice on the APPR process or the structure and content of APPRs contact Performance Benchmarks and Implementation Support Section ([qualityreports@dfat.gov.au](mailto:qualityreports@dfat.gov.au)).

Divisional performance and quality (P&Q) areas can assist in ensuring that APPRs are an evidence-based assessment of progress. Thematic areas can provide technical input and gender equality specialists can assist with gender analysis. These resources should be contacted early for their input and advice.

Each year ODE assesses the robustness of reports and summarises the overall performance findings presented in APPRs. The [ODE 2017 Quality Review of APPRs](#) offers guidance on how to improve the quality of performance assessments in APPRs as well as examples of good practice. The [Aid Programming Guide](#) provides more guidance and tools on the aid management cycle. You may wish to look at the Program Planning and Management: Self Assessment Tool.