

ANCP Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (MELF) Review Terms of Reference

The ANCP Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (MELF) was developed in consultation with ACFID, ANCP NGOs and AusAID and released in May 2012. The MELF will provide the evidence base to demonstrate that ANCP is an effective use of funds and achieves results in poverty reduction. It has been primarily designed as a tool to ensure consistent reporting by Australian NGOs funded under ANCP.

The MELF draws from existing NGO reporting systems and streamlines reporting from ANCP NGOs to present a summary of achievements to AusAID in one format. The MELF does not replace the more complex monitoring and evaluation systems of the ANCP NGOs or their in-country partners.

Purpose of the MELF Review

While the MELF has not been through a full cycle, the review will consider if the MELF is on track to meet the objectives set out in the framework, including:

1. To what extent is there a level of accountability for AusAID funding of Australian NGOs in line with the objectives of ANCP and the broader aid program?
2. To what extent is there sufficient information available on the overall performance of ANCP highlighting areas for improvement and further development?
3. To what extent is there sufficient information available about the range and scope of ANCP funded work in meeting requirements under the Transparency Charter?
4. To what extent is there additional information available about high-level outcomes achieved through ANCP, including reporting against AusAID's results framework as part of the Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework (CAP-F)?
5. To what extent has there been an opportunity to share learning about development effectiveness for both AusAID and ANCP NGOs?

As a way to address whether the MELF is meeting its objectives, the review will also consider the following:

1. Determine if the framework is complete and up-to-date.
 - a. Are the terms of reference for biennial meta-evaluations and thematic reviews still relevant, taking into account feedback from the 2011 Thematic Review?
 - b. Does the MELF reflect any additional reporting requirements for ANCP Partnership NGOs post the Partnership Mid-term Review (MTR)?
2. Determine if the MELF meets AusAID's requirements for reporting on results and effectiveness.
 - a. Analyse quality of ANCP reporting to identify areas of strengths/weaknesses;
 - b. Review NGO use of Annex One indicators against the Australian Government's strategic goals and outcomes as per the results framework under the CAP-F;
 - i. Consider an appropriate process for updating the Annex One indicators; and
 - c. Review reporting templates, taking into account feedback received from NGOs via MELF workshops, ANCP hotline, webinar sessions, etc.
 - i. Are the templates fit for purpose to capture appropriate data from different aid management approaches, such as projects versus programs?

3. Identify evaluation topics from information provided by ANCP NGOs for the 2013 Meta-Evaluation and future thematic review topics.
4. Review methods of communication between AusAID and ANCP NGOs on MELF requirements and subsequent communications with Post and in-country partners:
 - a. Have they been adequate?
5. Consider data needs and information management from MELF in light of Transparency Charter requirements and NGO sensitivities.

Review Methodology

AusAID will reconvene the MELF Reference Group, comprising ANCP NGO representatives and ACFID DPC members, to:

- Identify ways to improve the quality of NGO reporting (e.g. training opportunities, knowledge sharing, online reporting systems, etc.);
- Identify ways to communicate the MELF with other agencies; and
- Advise on 'theme selection' in planning future meta-evaluations and thematic reviews.

This may take the form of developing a MELF Review Plan to formalise the framework.

AusAID will also:

- Provide ANCP NGOs with the opportunity to provide formal written feedback on their experience so far with the MELF;
- Undertake a random sampling of partner, full and base NGO reports to assess whether the level of information provided in ADPlans and Performance Reports was useful and if the MELF format restricted or enabled reporting by NGOs;
- Meet with AusAID Thematic Areas to discuss relevance and utility of ANCP data for use in Thematic Performance Assessment Frameworks (PAFs);
- Consider in-country feedback (e.g. NGO & Business Branch visit to Bangladesh in November 2012, which included meetings with Post, Caritas, Baptist World Aid, Fred Hollows and Oxfam); and
- Draft Terms of Reference for the MELF Reference Group.

Background

In 2012, the MELF was trialled for the submission of 2012–13 Annual Development Plans (ADPlans) and the 2011–12 Annual Performance Reports, including financial acquittals. Recently submitted in October and November 2012, ANCP Performance Reports will provide quantitative and qualitative information about the contribution being made by Australian NGOs to the aid program's strategic goals linked to the Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework (CAP-F).

At the same time, the ANCP Thematic Review *'How do ANCP activities engage with the poorest and most marginalised people'* was finalised, providing the opportunity for 'Learning' under the MELF. The thematic review enabled a more in-depth exploration of development effectiveness issues identified by AusAID and ANCP NGOs. Reflections on the process and a discussion of recommendations were held at the ACFID Council in October 2012.

In line with the MELF, a biennial meta-evaluation of completed ANCP evaluations over the past two years is proposed for the first half of 2013. The meta-evaluation will focus on examining and

reporting on lessons learnt and overall quality and range of outcomes for ANCP. The focus will be determined in consultation between AusAID and ANCP NGOs.

Issues

Broader results context

Since the release of the MELF in May 2012, the CAP-F and Civil Society Engagement Framework (CSEF) were released. Results provided by ANCP NGOs link directly to reporting requirements under the CAP-F and tell a broader story of the program achievements with the introduction of the new Performance Report template.

Objective One of the CSEF relates to improved effectiveness and impact through the development of an *Effectiveness Assessment Methodology* and an *agency-wide CSO Monitoring and Evaluation Framework*. Findings from the MELF Review will inform the direction of both of these approaches.

ANCP process/template

AusAID decided to move the ANCP reporting templates from Word into an Excel format to improve in-house data management and to feed into a longer term online grants management system currently under development. While the template formats will remain in Excel, they will undergo a review based on NGO feedback and AusAID data analysis.

Deliverables

A draft report due by 31 January 2013 for consideration and discussion.

A final report due by end of March 2013 that addresses progress on MELF objectives and informs broader policies of AusAID: CAP-F and CSEF.

Indicative Timeline

Activity	Responsibility	Date
1. Communicate to all ANCP NGOs by providing cleared MELF Review ToR and a questionnaire	NGO P&Q	Late November
2. Hold teleconference with MELF Reference Group to discuss MELF Review process and Meta-Evaluation	NGO P&Q and Consultant (LK)	18 December
3. Consult with AusAID Thematic Areas on their Performance Assessment Frameworks (PAFs) and utility of ANCP MELF Indicators	NGO P&Q	December/January
4. Assess a sample of ANCP Reports on effectiveness and efficiency	NGO P&Q and Consultant (LK)	1st two weeks of January
5. Draft report to inform AusAID of key issues arising from the MELF review that influence CSEF Action items— <i>Effectiveness Assessment Methodology and agency-wide CSO M&E framework</i>	NGO P&Q	By 31 January 2013
6. Hold follow-up teleconference with MELF Reference Group to review draft report findings and finalise the Meta-Evaluation topic	NGO P&Q and Consultant (LK)	7 February 2013
7. Draft MELF Review Report to ADG for clearance	NGO P&Q	Mid February 2013
8. Refine and finalise ANCP MELF documentation	NGO P&Q and Consultant (LK)	February 2013
9. Cleared MELF Review Report and finalised MELF to share with ANCP NGOs	NGO P&Q	Early March 2013